

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of eight sub-chapters. They are (1) Research Background, (2) Statement of Research Problems, (3) Objectives of The Research, (4) Significance of The Research, (5) Scope and Limitation of The Research, and (6) Definitions of Key Terms.

A. Background of The Research

English learning at the junior high school level in Indonesia plays an important role in preparing young generations with language skills to help them compete in this era of globalization. In today's interconnected world, English skills are not only for daily communication but also serve as an important asset for accessing information, technology, and international job opportunities¹. One essential component in mastering English is writing skill, which is known as a productive skill with high complexity because it involves critical thinking, good grammar, and the ability to organize ideas clearly and logically².

Under the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology highlights the importance of strengthening literacy skills, including writing, as a foundation for lifelong learning³. This curriculum promotes student-centered learning and encourages the development of creative, critical, communicative, and collaborative character. Therefore, writing is no longer seen as just the ability to produce texts, but also as a tool for self-expression, argumentation, and cross-cultural communication⁴.

¹ Richards, J. C. (2001). Curriculum development in language teaching. Cambridge university press.

² Hyland, K. (2003). Second Language Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³ Kemendikbud. (2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi.

⁴ Nunan, D. (2003). Practical English Language Teaching. New York: McGraw Hill.

However, according to teachers and previous studies, writing remains a challenge for most junior high school students in Indonesia. Many students find it hard to express their ideas clearly, use proper vocabulary, and build grammatically correct sentences⁵. This problem is made worse by low motivation, which often comes from the lack of interesting and varied writing activities in the classroom. In fact, varied and contextual writing tasks are very important so that students do not only focus on mechanical aspects such as grammar and spelling but also develop higher-order thinking skills⁶.

English textbooks play a crucial role as a bridge between the curriculum and classroom learning practice. According to Cunningsworth (1995), a good textbook should not only contain language materials but also provide relevant, varied, and challenging activities to help students develop all four language skills, including writing. The English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII junior high school is designed to support contextual English learning in line with students' daily lives⁷. However, the effectiveness of this book in developing writing skills still needs to be examined carefully.

Some previous studies show that writing activities in English textbooks in Indonesia usually focus on mechanical tasks, such as filling in blanks or changing word forms, which do not give enough space for students to write complete texts or develop original ideas⁸. This is in line with Tomlinson's (2011) opinion that a textbook must provide communicative and meaningful activities, not just repetitive drills.

⁵ Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

⁶ Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives: complete edition*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

⁷ Kemendikbud. (2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi.

⁸ Mukundan, J., Hajimohammadi, R., & Nimehchisalem, V. (2011). Developing an English Language Textbook Evaluation Checklist. *Contemporary issues in education research*, 4(6), 21-28.

Several researchers have emphasized the importance of evaluating the content of textbooks thoroughly. For example, Fakhrun Nisa (2021) analyzed an English textbook for senior high school and found that while it generally met most evaluation criteria, it still lacked listening material. Therefore, she suggested using additional resources. This shows that content analysis is very important to make sure all language skills are covered well.

In another study, Hanifa (2024) analyzed speaking materials in the English for Nusantara textbook and found that they matched the CEFR A1 level as required by the Merdeka Curriculum. However, her focus was only on speaking skills, while writing, which is more complex than speaking, still needs special attention.

In addition, Aki, Maru, and Oroh (2024) conducted a systematic review using Cunningsworth's criteria and found that although most textbooks met the minimum standards, they still lacked variety and contextual tasks. Similarly, Damayanti and Mukarto (2024) examined the distribution of tasks in English for Nusantara textbook and found that it was unbalanced, with too many mechanical tasks and too few creative and reflective ones. This could limit students' opportunities to practice meaningful writing. Furthermore, Febraningrum and Suroso (2023) also analyzed the same textbook and concluded that although the book offered various topics, its writing activities still needed more improvement to encourage critical and creative thinking.

Based on background of research, the researcher believes that an in-depth and focused analysis of the writing activities in the English for Nusantara textbook for Grade VII is necessary. This research addresses two main points: first, it aims to identify the types of writing activities presented in the textbook; second, it aims to evaluate how well these activities align with Cunningsworth's criteria. By applying these criteria, this study is expected to provide an objective description of the quality of the writing activities and to what extent they support the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum in improving students' writing skills in a comprehensive way.

Therefore, the researcher conducts this study under the title “An Analysis of Writing Activities in English for Nusantara Textbook for Seventh Grade of Junior High School by Using Cunningsworth’s Criteria.” The objectives of this study are: (1) to identify the types of writing activities found in the English for Nusantara textbook for seventh-grade students, and (2) to evaluate whether these writing activities align with the criteria proposed by Cunningsworth. The results are expected to enrich the academic literature on textbook evaluation and EFL learning, and to help teachers plan more varied, effective, and meaningful writing lessons for their students.

B. Statement of The Research Problem

Based on the background above, the research problem is formulated as the following:

1. What types of writing activities are found in “English for Nusantara” textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school?
2. To what extent do the writing activities in the textbook align with Cunningsworth’s criteria?

C. Objective of The Research

Based on the statement of the problem, the objectives to be achieved in this study is:

1. To identify the types of writing activities are found in “English for Nusantara” textbook for seventh grade students.
2. To evaluate the writing activities in the textbook align with the criteria proposed by Cunningsworth.

D. Significance of The Research

In this research, the researcher expects that the significance of this research extends to:

1. For English Teachers

This can help English teachers to better understand how writing tasks are presented in textbooks and how effective they are in helping students improve their writing. Teachers can also decide whether to use the tasks as they are or adapt them to better suit students' needs.

2. For Textbook Developers

The results of this study provide constructive feedback that can be used to improve the design of writing tasks in future editions, ensuring that they are more varied, communicative, and aligned with learners' real needs.

3. For Other Researchers

It can be used as a reference or comparison for similar research. It may also inspire further studies that analyze other skills or textbooks using the same framework.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Research

This research focuses on analyzing the writing activities contained in English textbooks for Junior High School grade VII. The scope of this study is limited to student textbooks published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology under Merdeka Curriculum framework. The analysis centered on identifying and evaluating the types, variety, and relevance of writing tasks present in the textbooks. The analysis used the Cunningsworth criteria as the main theoretical framework to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of these activities in developing students' writing skills. Other parts of the textbook, such as reading, listening, speaking exercises, and teacher's guide activities, were not part of this study's analysis.

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the analysis is limited to just one textbook designed for seventh-grade junior high school students. Because of this, the results cannot be applied to all English textbooks used across Indonesian junior high schools. Secondly, this research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which depends largely on the researcher's personal judgment when identifying and assessing the writing activities. Although efforts were made to use clear and consistent criteria to minimize bias, some subjectivity in the interpretation is inevitable. Finally, this study does not involve input or opinions from students and teachers about the writing activities, which means it may not fully reflect how these tasks are actually used and experienced in the classroom.

F. Definitions of Key Terms

1. Writing Activities

Writing activities are instructional exercises designed to engage students in the process of generating written texts to develop fluency, accuracy, and organization in writing.

2. Textbook

A textbook is a printed or digital book used as the main learning resource in the classroom. It provides materials, explanations, and tasks to guide teachers and students in achieving learning goals.

3. Cunningsworth's Criteria

Cunningsworth's Criteria are a set of standards developed by Alan Cunningsworth to evaluate the quality of English language textbooks, focusing on relevance, variety, appropriate level of difficulty, and effectiveness in developing language skills.