

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of problems, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms used in this study.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. The current curriculum, the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to improve teaching methods in various subjects, including English. According to Patriantini et al. (2022), the *Kurikulum Merdeka* offers several advantages for the future generation. First, it is simpler than previous curriculums and focuses more on the development of students' abilities according to their phase. Second, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is more interactive, allowing students to actively explore and discuss real topics related to their lives, such as environmental issues, primarily through project work. Lastly, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is more independent than previous curriculums, meaning students can choose what they want to learn, and teachers can design their resources or supporting tools for their teaching and learning process.

One of the resources that teachers can use is the textbook. To direct and assist teachers and students in their teaching-learning process, the government of Indonesia developed and published new textbooks. One of them is "English for Nusantara: Grade 7," a textbook published to guide grade 7 students and teachers in learning and teaching English. This book has five main chapters with three units for each chapter. Since this book is made for junior high school students in grade seven, most of the content starts from the basics, such as introducing oneself and describing something, whether it is a person, a thing, or how something is made. Various types of texts are included in each unit and chapter, and most texts are accompanied by pictures and bubbles to enhance students' reading comprehension skills. According to Paivio (1991), in his Dual Coding Theory, human cognition is divided into two processing systems: visual and verbal. Stimulating both systems

can enhance a person's comprehension skills. However, it is essential to determine whether students understand the text materials. Asridawati et al. (2021) state, that exercises and activities in textbooks help students practice their skills and understand the materials they learned. The questions used in the exercises should be challenging enough to make students use their critical thinking skills. Fadhilah & Zainil (2020) also validate this by stating that using critical thinking helps students understand the material or texts they read by reflecting and coming up with answers to the questions on their own. Moreover, as mentioned by Marzo, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) in Ripalga & Fitrawati (2023), deeper learning that improves critical thinking is produced through “Higher Level” questions requiring students to analyze information and use a higher level of thinking, not “Lower Level” questions that ask students to remember or recall information requiring a lower level of thinking.

Therefore, because of the importance of having good exercise questions, the textbooks published by the government have been analyzed to determine whether the exercise questions utilize Low Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) or High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Bloom’s Taxonomy is essential for this purpose. As stated by Bloom (1956), individual cognitive thinking is divided into two categories: Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This is the foundation for making good questions for exercises. In 2001, Bloom’s Taxonomy underwent a revision proposed by Anderson & Krathwohl to align with how teachers prepare their materials (Anderson et al., 2001).

The revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy consists of six aspects: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. This revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy will be used to assess reading comprehension tests or reading exercises and activities in the book “English for Nusantara.” The aim is to determine whether it contains more High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) or Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), as several studies have shown that many textbooks used in Indonesia still contain more LOTS than HOTS questions.

A study by Ripalga and Fitrawati (2023) entitled "An Analysis of Questions on Reading Tasks in English Textbook ‘Work in Progress’ in Merdeka Curriculum"

found that despite the presence of HOTS questions, the number was significantly lower than LOTS questions. Therefore, this study will analyze the proportion of the distribution of the level of thinking in the reading section tasks and exercises in the book “English for Nusantara” to determine whether it contains more LOTS or HOTS questions.

### **1.2. Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the research formulates this question;

- What levels of thinking are used in the reading section tasks and exercises in the book “English for Nusantara: Grade 7”?

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this research is:

- To analyze the level of thinking in reading sections tasks and exercises in the book “English for Nusantara: Grade 7

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is divided into two aspects: theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the result of this study can provide additional references for readers to help them understand more about the reading section exercises and tasks in the “English for Nusantara: Grade 7” textbook. Practically, the results of this study will be beneficial for helping teachers in teaching English, especially in deciding whether the book needs more reading tasks and exercises to aid the teaching-learning process. The researcher also hopes this study can serve as a guideline for future research on English textbook evaluation.

### **1.5. Scope and Limitation**

From the background of the study, it is clear that there are several identifications and limitations to the issue that will be discussed in this study. With the textbook “English for Nusantara: Grade 7” as the object of the study, this study will be limited to the reading sections in the textbook. The researcher will not address other sections and will focus on the proportion of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) used in the reading tasks and exercises in the reading section of the textbook based on Anderson’s Bloom taxonomy theory.

### **1.7. Definition of Key Terms**

The following are the definitions of some key terms to help the reader understand the study and have the same perception of those terms as the writer. They are also aimed at avoiding misunderstandings between the reader and the writer. The key terms are explained as follows:

#### **1. Reading Comprehension**

According to Miller (2000), reading comprehension itself is the ability to get the meaning from any type of written material, to comprehend what is being read. That's mean; Reading Comprehension is a skill to understand the meaning of the text read.

#### **2. Reading Tasks and Exercises**

According to Anderson et al. (1985), reading tasks and exercises are structured activities that aimed to develop various aspect of reading proficiency, enhance reading skills, comprehension, and critical thinking.

#### **3. Bloom's Taxonomy**

According to Anderson (2001), Bloom's taxonomy is a framework for categorizing educational goals created by Benjamin Bloom in 1950s. It is used to classify learning objective based on the complexity and specificity of the subject learned. However, in 2001, Anderson and his colleagues revised the Bloom's Taxonomy. They made significant changes in mind of adjusting with the current curriculum at that time.

#### **4. English textbook "*English for Nusantara: Grade 7*"**

*English for Nusantara: Grade 7*, a textbook published by the government to guide teachers and students in their teaching-learning process. This textbook was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic along with a new curriculum. This textbook was made for grade 7 and 8, however, the only book grade 7 is used in this study.