

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

With the recent implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, the English language has been reintroduced as a mandatory subject in Indonesian schools. Unlike previous curricula, the recent one offers teachers more flexibility in the class. Nonetheless, the government has provided guidelines and textbooks for them to use albeit not mandatory.

Textbooks in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms hold great significance in ensuring the success of the learning process. Muslich (2010: 15) argues that textbooks hold a central position and are a key source of learning activities. Indeed, they give rich instructional values and resources for classroom activities to both teachers and students. As a result, the presence of textbooks in an ELT setting is critical.

The latest national curriculum, the Kurikulum Merdeka, allows English teachers to use any textbooks that they think are suitable to achieve the core values set by the government. In addition, the textbooks must also be in line with the recommended approach and materials. In other words, although the teachers can choose their preferred textbooks and resources for their English classroom, they must abide by government-mandated guidelines.

According to the Kurikulum Merdeka, seventh-grade students are categorised as beginner English learners. Thus, the recommended materials are designed to accommodate students with no prior English knowledge. For these students, the government has provided a recommended textbook entitled “English for Nusantara”. In the guideline, it is stated that the textbook accommodates the text-based teaching approach focusing on descriptive and procedural texts. Also, four issues are highlighted in the textbook. Those are environmental awareness, digital safety, nutrition and wellness, and digital literacy.

The textbook being studied in this research is "English in Mind". It is a textbook series created by Herbert Puchta and Jeff Stranks. The first edition of "English in Mind Starter" was published in 2004. The textbook designed for language learners, particularly those at the beginner or starter level. The textbook is intended to be used in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, providing structured content and learning materials to help students develop their English language skills. The second textbook, “English for Nusantara” is a state-sponsored textbook designed to facilitate English language learning for seventh-grade students based on the Kurikulum Merdeka, a more flexible curriculum framework that adapts to students' abilities. The topics in the material and activities are related to the representation of Nusantara's cultural diversity, global

diversity, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) issues, indicating a broader perspective that includes both local and global contexts.

The decision to undertake this research on "English in Mind" as an English textbook for seventh graders of junior high school is because of an interest in optimizing the English Language Teaching (ELT) experience for young learners. Furthermore, the decision to compare "English in Mind Starter" with "English for Nusantara" was inspired by the need to assess the suitability of both textbooks within the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka and Permendikbud Ristek No. 7 Tahun 2022. It is important to understand whether these textbooks effectively encompass the required interactional and transactional texts, daily vocabulary and expression, nonverbal language, and basic skills outlined by the government's educational guidelines.

Moreover, the book also worth researching because firstly, the textbook is specifically designed to beginner-level English learners, making it appropriate for seventh-grade students who are at the early stages of their language learning. Understanding how well the textbook meets the needs of these young learners is important to optimize their language development and learning experience. Secondly, "English in Mind" aligns with the Common European Framework (CEFR) A1 equivalent, which is a widely recognized language proficiency standard. Evaluating it's with the local curriculum, including the Kurikulum

Merdeka and Permendikbud Ristek No. 7 Tahun 2022, is important to determine its suitability within the educational context of junior high schools' education.

Given the importance of textbook evaluation, there is a wealth of research that analyses textbooks. A relevant previous study is the one Nuarrifa Prabasari and Agus Widyanoro conducted in 2018. The research sought to determine whether the English textbook titled Interactive English matched the requirements for a good textbook proposed by Pusat Perbukuan (Pusbuk) and some ELT specialists, as well as whether the material was relevant to the 2013 Curriculum. The results showed that Interactive English for Junior High School met the criteria for a good textbook with a score of 61%.

Kurnia Fitri Arifah (2019) did the second relevant study on textbook appraisal. The study looks at an English textbook for tenth-grade pupils called 'Bahasa Inggris', which was produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The study sought to determine if the book matched the skills and methodology of the 2013 Curriculum, as well as to describe the pattern of competency attribution and scientific approach in the textbook. The outcome demonstrates that the English textbook contains the core skills and fundamental competencies of the 2013 Curriculum. The material also corresponds to the core and fundamental English language

competences proposed by the Minister of Education and Culture. It was also discovered that the textbook implicitly portrays a scientific method.

Agus Wahyudi, Soni Mirizon, and Rita Inderawati conducted the third relevant study in 2020. In their publication, they examine how English textbooks such as Erlangga, Kemendikbud, and Bumi Aksara, used by senior high schools in Banyuasin, matched the standards of Curriculum 2013. The researchers want to know which textbooks matched the TEFL objectives based on Curriculum 2013, and what teachers thought about the English textbooks used in Banyuasin's senior high schools. The findings revealed that the three textbooks met the requirements of the 2013 Curriculum, with Kemendikbud rating the highest and Erlangga scoring the lowest. It was also discovered that the teachers have a favorable opinion of those three textbooks.

This research however, differ from the aforementioned research in a way that this research offers valuable contributions by examining how well "English in Mind Starter" aligns with the requirements of the Kurikulum Merdeka and Permendikbud Ristek No. 7 Tahun 2022. This comprehensive evaluation will shed light on the textbook's compatibility with the educational guidelines set by the government, ensuring that it meets the necessary criteria for effective language learning in the junior high school context.

The aim of this research is to evaluate and analyze the content of the English textbook "English in Mind Starter" (2nd Edition) and its suitability for seventh-grade students in junior high school. The research seeks to study how well the textbook aligns with the requirements of the Kurikulum Merdeka and Permendikbud Ristek No. 7 Tahun 2022. Additionally, the research aims to compare "English in Mind Starter" with another textbook, "English for Nusantara," in terms of meeting the curriculum criteria. The ultimate goal is to determine whether "English in Mind Starter" can be effectively used in the English Language Teaching (ELT) setting for seventh-grade students, and whether it fulfills the necessary criteria to support students' language learning and development.

B. Formulation of the Problems

This research is expected to answer the following questions:

1. Is the English textbook entitled "English in Mind Starter" 2nd edition written by Herbert Puchta and Jeff Strank, and published by Cambridge University Press in 2010 relevant to Kurikulum Merdeka?
2. Does the English textbook entitled "English in Mind Starter" 2nd edition written by Herbert Puchta and Jeff Strank, and published by Cambridge University Press in 2010 fulfil the good criteria of the English textbook according to guidelines set by Indonesian government?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out whether the English textbook entitled “English in Mind Starter” 2nd edition is relevant to Kurikulum Merdeka
2. To find out whether the English textbook entitled “English in Mind Starter” 2nd edition has the criteria of a good textbook according to guidelines set by Indonesian government.

D. Focus of the Study

Kurikulum Merdeka raised several questions not only on the pedagogical level but also administrative level. There have been concerns raised at the administrative level about curriculum dissemination, teacher training, and textbook distribution. This administration level is also called macro-evaluation because it deals with how the new curriculum impacts textbooks on a much larger scale which also involves not only the content but also things outside the textbook. However, in this study, the researcher focuses on micro-evaluation which consists of things such as material or task evaluation of textbooks. Moreover, due to time constraints, the researcher also designated a particular textbook to be evaluated; the sole focus of this study is “English in Mind Starter” 2nd edition textbook by

Herbert Puchta and Jeff Strank which was published in 2010 by the Cambridge University Press.

E. Significances of the Study

The result of this research serves as the significances of the study. It is expected to give several significant contributions as follows:

1. In theory, this research should make useful and referential contributions to the field of textbook analysis.
2. In practice, the findings of this study are projected to benefit:
 - a. Other researchers: This study will perhaps provide more insight for other scholars who want to investigate comparable problems. The findings of the study should also be useful to fresh scholars who want to do additional research on the same or similar topic.
 - b. Teacher: The study's findings should provide a succinct method for teachers to evaluate English textbooks used in their lessons. This research is also expected to assist teachers in selecting and evaluating good textbooks before deciding to utilize them in their classes.

- c. Author: Hopefully, this research can be used as a reference in developing a better and more effective textbook.

F. Operational Definitions

1. ELT Textbook

ELT Textbook is a type of supporting media used by teachers to teach English in the classroom. It can serve as a guide for teachers in developing a general lesson plan and providing students with additional learning materials (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). English in Mind Starter by Herbert Puchta and Jeff Stranks was utilized as the ELT textbook in this study. Cambridge University Press is the publisher of the textbook.

2. Kurikulum Merdeka

In education, a curriculum refers to the set of courses, educational content, and learning experiences designed to achieve specific learning goals and outcomes for students. It serves as a blueprint or roadmap for teachers to plan their instructional activities and assessments (Tyler, R. W., 2005). Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with numerous intra-curricular learning opportunities in which the content is optimized so that students have ample time to

investigate concepts and build competency. Teachers have the freedom to select numerous teaching materials in order to tailor learning to students' learning requirements and interests (Kemendikbud, 2022).