

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

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

Alignment is a fundamental aspect of an assessment practice. It is viewed as the central aspect of a high quality assessment practice which supports learning (Cheng & Fox, 2017). Cheng and Fox (2017) define an alignment as a degree among the curriculum, instruction, standards, and assessments. O'Reilly (2007) states, "alignment is a connection between learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment". It can be said that alignment is an agreement between learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessments.

Cheng and Fox (2017) stated that learning outcomes are statements of criteria that describe skills, knowledge, attitude, and capabilities that the students should achieve during a period of learning. O'Reilly (2007) refers them as learning objectives. Learning objectives are clear statements about what students will be able to do when they complete a course (O'Reilly, 2007). It can be concluded that learning outcomes are statements that describe what student will be able to do and what they should achieve in a period of learning.

In order to check whether students have met the required expectations, teacher needs to collect that information by means of assessment (Cheng & Fox, 2017). Assessment is a system and a process of collecting evidence about students' learning process (O'Reilly, 2007). However, Cheng and Fox (2017) define assessments as activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. It can be said that an assessment is a system or a process of collecting information about students' learning process.

It is important to keep the learning outcomes in alignment with the assessment tasks. Alignment between learning outcomes and assessment tasks will keep the learning process in the right direction (O'Reilly, 2007). O'Reilly (2007) pointed out that teacher needs to consider whether the learning outcomes are in alignment with the assessment. If the learning outcomes, the learning activities, and the assessment are aligned, the learning process will be effective and the students can achieve the learning target (O'Reilly, 2007).

Textbook is one of the learning materials that can be used to support teaching and learning process. The MOEC ministerial decree number 8 of 2016 states that textbook is the 'core instructional resource' to facilitate effective achievement of the core and basic content standards mandated in the National School Curriculum (KEMDIKBUD, 2016). There are some advantages in using textbook as a learning material. A textbook can save teachers' time and effort in preparing the lesson (McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2014; Smart & Jagannathan, 2018). Not only

saving time and effort for the teachers, textbook also provides methodological support for teachers who are untrained or inexperienced (McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2014). A textbook also provides students a resource for reference and self-study (Smart & Jagannathan, 2018). McGrath (2013) also adds that textbook is a convenient resource for the students. Textbook enables students and also teachers to look ahead to what will be done in a lesson or look back on what have been done in a lesson (McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson, 2014). McGrath (2013) also pointed out that textbook may provides a variety of learning sources such as such as, teacher's guide, audio cassettes, worksheets, and videos. In order to achieve an effective learning, the teacher needs to select an appropriate learning source, in this case, the textbook. According to Smart and Jagannathan (2018), a good textbook can guide and stimulate good pedagogy in the classroom to make the learning process more interactive and successful.

This study focuses on the alignment between learning outcomes and assessment tasks with special attention on 'writing' skills development. Writing is one of the basic language skills. According to Harmer (2004), there are four reasons why writing skill is important. First, writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use. Second, writing is often used as means of reinforcing language that has been thought. Third, writing is frequently used as preparation for some other activity. The last reason is that writing can be used as an integral part of a large activity where the focus is on something else.

It is important for students to have good writing skills because it can increase the confidence level of the students. In these days, the public judges one's idea,

ability, and values from their writing skills. Regardless of the occupation, everyone has to write, whether it is just a simple message, a formal business memo, and a report. To avoid miscommunication between the writer and the reader, it is important for the student to have good writing skills. Writing skills also can broaden students' knowledge base. As they continue to write, they also need to read to widen their knowledge. However, if the students only focus on their writing skills, it will be difficult for them to speak because they cannot pronounce the word. It is important for the teacher to integrate the four skills in their lesson. The teacher can do a dictation and repetition to the students so they can familiar with the pronunciation of the words. After that, the students have to write the sentences based on what they have heard. This activity can help to develop their listening and writing skills.

However, in Indonesia, the students are still facing problems in writing. According to Novariana, Sumadi, and Tarjana (2018), there are internal problems which came from the students, such as: the low motivation in learning English, the difficult to arrange words in writing, the lack of vocabulary, the difficult to arrange words in appropriate order, the difficulty to spell words, the difficulty to write sentences in appropriate grammar, and the tendency to be passive learners in classroom activities. For the external problems, they happen because of the lack of practice. There is also no feedback on their writing. To enhance the student's writing abilities, the teachers need to choose appropriate learning activities and exercises.

This study uses Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (BRT) table as the framework of reference in conducting data collection and interpretation. This is considered as most appropriate with reference to mandated process standards specified in MOEC document (KEMDIKBUD, 2016b). The Bloom's Revised Taxonomy has been recommended to be used as the framework reference in designing instructional plans, activities, and assessments.

Many alignment studies have been conducted by scholars in various areas and levels. The first study was conducted by Kozikoglu (2018). This qualitative descriptive study was aimed at evaluating alignment between the objectives of 8<sup>th</sup> grade English curriculum and the TEOG exam questions (national exam) with regards to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Findings of the study reveal that the objectives and question items in the TEOG exams are not well-aligned. 50% of the objectives are distributed on level C3 (Apply, Procedural Knowledge) whereas 68% of the exam questions are distributed on level A1 (Remember, Factual Knowledge).

The second study was conducted by Wahidin (2018) who investigated alignment between the intended learning outcomes and assessment tasks in teachers' lesson plans using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) as the framework of reference in the study. Findings of the study reveal that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and assessment tasks (ATs) in teachers' lesson plan are not well-aligned. 32% of the ILOs are distributed on level B2 (Understand, Conceptual Knowledge) whereas 64% of the ATs are distributed on level A2 (Understand, Factual Knowledge).



The third study was conducted by Maghfiroh (2019) who investigated alignment between the intended learning outcomes and student's tasks in "BSE Grade VIII semester 2" English textbook using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) as the framework of reference in the study. Findings of the study reveal that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and student's tasks (STs) in the textbook are not well-aligned. 54% of the ILOs are distributed on level A2 (Understand, Factual Knowledge) whereas 37% of the STs are distributed on level A1 (Remember, Factual Knowledge).

Another study was conducted by Gusti (2019) who investigated alignment between the ILOs, Teaching Learning Activities (TLAs), and ATs in SMPN 225 Jakarta teacher's lesson plans using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) as the framework of reference in the study. Findings of the study reveal that the ILOs, TLAs, and ATs in SMPN 225 Jakarta teachers' lesson plans are not well-aligned. 25% of the ILOs are distributed on level A2 (Understand, Factual Knowledge) whereas 32% of the TLAs are distributed on level B2 (Understand, Conceptual Knowledge), and 28% of the ATs are distributed on level A2 (Understand, Factual Knowledge).

The four studies have presented alignment in different grades and areas. A little attention, however, has been given to alignment between learning outcomes and assessment tasks in textbooks related to the development of students' writing skills. Writing skills are important because writing assists students with their social development (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). It also encourages students to focus on accurate language use and reinforce them to use the language that has

been thought (Harmer, 2004). However, a number of studies show that the students still have problems with their writing skills development. The findings show that the students have problems with the lack of vocabulary, trouble with grammar, the lack of practice, and the lack of motivation and interest from the students (Novariana, Sumardi, & Tarjana, 2018; Toba, Noor, & Sanu, 2019; Moses & Mohamad, 2019; Vernanda, Listia, & Febrianti, 2020). The problems also come from the teacher. It was found that there is lack of feedback from the teacher when the students do writing exercises (Novariana, Sumardi, & Tarjana, 2018). The inadequate teaching and writing process by the teacher and lack of professional experience can also be the cause of the problem for students' writing skills development (Moses & Mohamad, 2019; Toba, Noor, & Sanu, 2019). In order to develop students' writing skills, the teachers have to select the appropriate learning materials, in this case, the textbook.

## 1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. To what extent does content of the Assessment Tasks (ATs) on 'writing' skills development in "Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)" textbook match that of the Learning Outcomes (LOs)?

1.1 How is the percentage frequency of the LOs distribution on ‘writing’ skills development in “Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)” textbook in terms of their content with regards to BRT?

1.2 How is the percentage frequency of the ATs distribution on ‘writing’ skills development in “Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)” textbook in terms of their content with regards to BRT?

1.3 How well-aligned are the distribution of LOs and ATs on ‘writing’ skills development in “Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)” textbook in terms of their content with regards to BRT?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to obtain a profile of alignment between the learning outcomes and assessment tasks on ‘writing’ skills development in “Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)” textbook with regards to Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study aims to obtain a profile of the content alignment in an English textbook entitled “Pathway to English Grade X (*kelompok peminatan*)”. The ‘content’ in this study refers to ‘what the students are expected to know and be able to do’ (Näsström & Henriksson, 2008; Cheng & Fox, 2017). This study focuses on how the assessment tasks corresponded to the learning outcomes stated



in the textbook. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) suggest that ‘content’ of instruction — reflected in instructional objective, activity, and assessment task items — has two dimensions: *knowledge* and *cognitive process* dimension. The *knowledge* dimension refers to ‘what the students are expected to know’ in a learning process and consists of four sub-categories: *factual knowledge*, *conceptual knowledge*, *procedural knowledge*, and *meta-cognitive knowledge*. The *cognitive process* dimension, on the other hand, refers to ‘what the students are expected to be able to do’ with the knowledge they have just learned, and consists of six categories: *remember*, *understand*, *apply*, *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *create*. Thus, ‘alignment’ refers to the complete match or agreement or consistency of instructional content that covers both dimensions — *knowledge* and *cognitive process*—as a whole (Sulastini, 2020).

The learning content is described based on the *knowledge dimension* and *cognitive process dimension* which reflected in the formulation of the learning outcomes statements, and the question items of the assessment tasks in the textbook. This study focuses on the learning outcomes and assessment tasks with special attention on ‘writing’ skills development.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

Findings of this study reveal important empirical data on strengths and weaknesses of the textbook in question of the study that shall provide better insights into the importance of alignment between learning outcomes and assessment tasks in instructional designs. As stated by O'Reilly (2007), the alignment will help drive learning process towards the desired results. In addition, the study provides alternative model of analysis for teachers to use in selecting learning materials that can support them in delivering more effective classroom instructions. Such information shall also be useful to teacher education and training providers as it informs them of one area of competency they need to include in their curriculum. Finally, the findings also offer significant feedback for textbook writers and publisher should they wish to produce learning materials that can support effective implementation of the national curriculum standards.