

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

A textbook is one of the most important teaching and learning tools to inform and guide students toward achieving learning objectives (Sadora et al., 2021). It aligns with Arisman et al. (2024) who agree that textbooks are valuable resources that allow students to independently revisit explanations and examples whenever they face challenges, enabling them to learn at their own pace. Additionally, textbooks are highly effective for learning English because they enhance content through various skills, language levels, and graphic elements (Gunawan et al., 2023). It can be concluded that a textbook is a tool that can help teachers in teaching activities because it enriches with graphic elements that can engage students to study and various assessments that can improve students' listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.

One of the English skills that students must master is reading because it can develop language abilities that help them extract and absorb information from incredible sources (Laila & Fitriyah, 2022). In addition, to extract and absorb information students must comprehend the meaning of the text. Comprehension and understanding of the text is the process of understanding words, phrases, and related content (Istiqomah et al., 2023). In reading comprehension, both perception and thinking are involved. Istiqomah et al. (2023) stated that comprehending a written text requires readers to employ various skills, including prior knowledge, vocabulary, and grammar. This process is both cognitive and interactive, as it involves interpreting the author's messages, which may include opinions, facts, emotions, and arguments.

Reading comprehension is closely linked to critical thinking, a skill that allows students to analyze and evaluate texts without relying solely on external aids like dictionaries (Damanik & Zainil, 2019). Critical thinking is essential in

modern education, as it equips students to navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving world (Setyowati et al., 2022). Critical thinking skill aligns with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy because it is engaged in analyzing, evaluating, and creating levels that are involved in the HOTS category (Aghaei, 2018). The HOTS levels are particularly crucial for fostering critical thinking, enabling students to evaluate information, make connections, and propose innovative solutions (Ginting & Kuswandono, 2020). Thus, HOTS is essential to incorporate into reading activities.

According to Manurung and Sari (2020), reading activities should help students develop their higher-order thinking skills by providing a broader perspective on critical thinking. The primary goal of the HOTS questions, which were distributed to the students, was to get them to think critically about the texts they had read while using any helpful strategies (Ballakrishnan and Mohamad, 2020). Encouraging the learning process in the HOTS category is regulated by the curriculum. Nowadays, schools in Indonesia use *Kurikulum Merdeka* for their curriculum (Arisman et al., 2024). Therefore, fostering higher-order thinking skills through reading activities is essential for developing students' critical thinking abilities. The integration of HOTS questions encourages deeper engagement with texts and aligns with the educational goals outlined in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

The *Kurikulum Merdeka*, introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, was developed in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic during the new normal period (Ripalga and Fitrawati, 2023). This curriculum strongly emphasises fostering critical thinking, empathy, and complex problem-solving skills, which are integral to character development and align with the competencies outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile. By prioritizing these skills, the government aims to equip students with the ability to think critically and logically in their daily lives (Priantini et al., 2022; Arisman et al., 2024). As a result, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* prepares students to effectively navigate real-world challenges, ensuring they are well-prepared to thrive in an increasingly complex and dynamic society.

There are some previous studies conducted about thinking processes in English textbooks. Firstly, Damanik & Zainil (2019) found that the reading comprehension questions in the English textbook at grade X of the SMAN 2 Padang textbook predominantly used the analyzing level of the HOTS category and conceptual knowledge. Secondly, Saputra & Pujiati (2021) found that “English in Mind Starter Second Edition (Student’s Book) Special Edition” for Junior High School published by Cambridge focused on the remembering level of the LOTS category for cognitive process and facts for its knowledge dimension. Lastly, AJR et al. (2024) found that the “English for Nusantara” textbook for seventh-grade students in junior high school predominantly used the remembering level of the LOTS category and factual knowledge for its knowledge dimension.

Based on the three previous studies, it can be concluded that English textbooks, especially in Indonesia, predominantly emphasize the Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) category rather than Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). As a result, if students and teachers use these textbooks, it may not align with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which aims to promote critical and logical thinking in students to help them navigate their daily lives. In addition, the HOTS activities in the English textbook, especially in senior high school, are essential for developing students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and self-confidence, as stated in *Capaian Pembelajaran Kurikulum Merdeka No. 008/H/KR/2022* (Kemendikbud, 2022).

Therefore, the research aims to examine the cognitive domain that is emphasized in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris: Train of Thoughts" by examining its alignment with Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy. Moreover, the “Bahasa Inggris: Train of Thoughts” textbook is yet in alignment with Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, which has not been thoroughly examined. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the textbook’s reading activities, including reading instructions and questions, to examine the cognitive domain. By doing so, this research will provide insights into the cognitive demands placed on students and offer



recommendations for enhancing the textbook's effectiveness in promoting critical thinking and advanced cognitive skills, especially in reading activities because reading is essential to support their academic achievement in various subjects.

## **1.2 Research Question**

1. What cognitive domain are reflected in the reading activities of the “Bahasa Inggris: Train of Thoughts” textbook?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

To examine the cognitive domain in the reading comprehension activities, including reading instructions, tasks, and questions using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on 141 reading comprehension activities, including reading instruction tasks and reading questions, from Units 1 to 5 of the English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris: Train of Thoughts,” designed for twelfth graders. This textbook was published in 2022 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. In Unit 1, the title is “Digging the Hidden Gem of Borneo (Kalimantan),” with 21 reading comprehension forms of short answers, chasing the meaning, and complex multiple-choice. In unit 2, the title is “Connected to Social Media” with 34 reading comprehension forms of short answers, fact/opinion/react, and multiple choice. In unit 3, the title is “Get in Touch with Nature” with 21 reading comprehension forms of chasing the meaning, short answers, matching task, and fact/opinion/react. In unit 4, the title is “Future Method of Payment” with 34 reading comprehension forms of matching the task, short answers, multiple choice and complex multiple-choice. In Unit 5, the title is “Today's Life” with 31 reading comprehension forms of matching the task, short answers, and complex multiple-choice. Furthermore, this research focuses on pre-

reading activity, while-reading activity, and post-reading activity that distributed in Unit 1 to Unit 5.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study's outcome will be expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. From a theoretical perspective, this study will help curriculum development create materials that meet the intended learning objectives to help students improve their critical thinking. From a practical perspective, this study will help teachers choose an appropriate textbook for teaching and learning activities. This research also expects that teachers will be able to address this book's weaknesses by implementing teaching strategies that enhance students' performance, particularly in reading comprehension.

