

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, which explains the alignment with government education policy, the importance of Deep Learning in English language education, and the role of textbooks in promoting Deep Learning. This chapter also presents the study's research questions, purpose, scope, and significance.

1.1. Background of the Study

In the ever-evolving world of education, primary and secondary education in Indonesia must prepare young Indonesians appropriately to be competent for the future. This requires strong and creative initiatives and efforts to improve the quality of education through various learning approaches. To address this, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has designed a new approach based on Deep Learning. This approach aims to help students not only master knowledge but also find meaning in learning and prepare the younger generation to face global challenges with critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills (Muvid, 2024). With the Deep Learning approach, the government hopes that education in Indonesia will be more advanced and adaptive to the times. It can produce a generation that has critical thinking and better problem-solving skills and is more active in exploring concepts and connecting various disciplines, from cognitive science to its application in the real world (BKHM, 2025). This approach allows teachers to design learning experiences that engage students to use new knowledge in authentic contexts (Fine & Mehta, 2024).

Deep Learning aims to foster six Global Competencies: citizenship, character, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Fullan & Scott, 2024). Among these competencies, this study focuses more on communication and creativity, as they are the most directly observable competencies in EFL reading materials. Both communication and creativity are directly related to language learning, especially in reading, which is the main focus of this study. Communication is a fundamental skill in English language education, reflecting the primary purpose of language learning: to express and exchange meaning (Muste, 2016). Similarly, creativity is not only limited to the arts but also leads students in EFL reading to generate new ideas, interpret texts, and express flexible thinking. These two competencies are also interrelated and often implemented in language tasks, especially in reading materials that require interpretation, expression, and ideas (Kim, 2023).

Including aspects such as Communication and Creativity in the reading material aligns with the principles of Deep Learning that aim to develop the six points of Global Competence. Everyone needs to improve their communication and creativity skills to get through life in the future. These skills needed in the twenty-first century can be used to achieve a higher standard of living. They must be developed during the education process and taught to students so that they graduate equipped with comprehensive skills and competencies that enable them to effectively meet the demands and challenges of the twenty-first century (Novia et al., 2024).

Every action individual perform occurs in direct or indirect relationships, including communicative aspects (Dilshoda, 2023). Communication is done to share feelings and thoughts that aim to connect with others, such as inspire, motivate, command, entertain, direct, control, inform, and educate (Muste, 2016; Keyton, 2011). Communication is one of the most important skills for any student. One of the goals of English lessons is to help children communicate in a new language and develop communication skills (Al-Alawneh *et al.*, 2019).

Creativity has an 'entrepreneurial eye' for economic and social opportunities, asking the right questions to generate novel ideas and demonstrating leadership to implement those ideas (Fullan & Scott, 2024). When people define creativity, most mistakenly assume that creativity only relates to the visual and other arts. Creativity crosses all fields and relates to making something new in all fields. Creativity can be taught and nurtured, and we can build classrooms where creativity thrives (Piirto, 2011).

In implementing Deep Learning, reading materials in EFL textbooks are very important. According to constructivist learning theory, meaningful learning is created when students actively "construct" their knowledge and skills through meaningful interactions with materials, peers and teachers who will help them through independent learning (BADA, 2015). In line with this, reading tasks that reach higher levels of cognitive demands, based on Bloom's Taxonomy, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, are more instrumental in promoting Deep Learning (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2016).

Textbooks are one of the most important media in the learning process because they can help students develop their thinking skills and learn independently, which aligns with the primary objective of the Deep Learning approach (Garinger, 2022). Textbooks are one of the main tools to achieve the curriculum goals created by the government. However, most previous analyzes of EFL textbooks have focused only on linguistic or surface learning elements, like grammatical accuracy and vocabulary range), without explicitly addressing the integration of Deep Learning elements such as communication and creativity (Mukundan, 2011). Very little research systematically addresses how well textbook reading materials integrate 21st-century competencies such as communication and creativity, especially from a Deep Learning perspective.

The “Wider World 2” textbook, written by experts and published by Pearson Education, is recommended for use and complementary in implementing English language learning. However, whether the book can reflect the objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka and support Deep Learning through its reading materials remains a question. This study aims to address this gap by conducting a content analysis of the reading materials in the Wider World 2 textbook, focusing on how communication and creativity are represented based on validated indicators and in line with the principles of Deep Learning. In this study, Deep Learning is defined according to Fullan and Scott’s (2024) framework, which encompasses six global competencies: citizenship, character, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Communication and creativity are selected for closer examination because they are the most directly observable and measurable within

EFL reading materials, and they play a central role in facilitating comprehension, interpretation, and idea generation. The analysis draws upon the communication framework of Metusalem et al. (2017) and the creativity framework of Lai et al. (2018), which are adapted to match the nature of Wider World 2 reading tasks by contextualizing their indicators for task instructions, text content, and learner output. Evaluating this alignment is critical to ensure that the reading materials in internationally designed and globally recognized textbooks are appropriate for the national education context emphasized in the Kurikulum Merdeka, particularly in strengthening communication and creativity competencies as key components of Deep Learning.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the problems above, the research question of this study is formulated as follows:

1. How are communication and creativity competencies represented in the reading materials of the Wider World 2 textbook based on Deep Learning principles?
2. In what ways do the reading task instructions promote student engagement in communication and creativity?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To analyze how the communication and creativity competencies represented in the reading materials of the Wider World 2 textbook based on Fullan and Scott's (2024) Deep Learning principles.

2. To investigate how the reading task instructions foster student engagement in developing communication and creativity

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the presence and promotion of communication and creativity aspects in the reading materials of the Wider World 2 textbook, assessed through the lens of Deep Learning principles. The reading materials to be analyzed refer to both the reading texts and the tasks or questions following them. The reading materials analyzed in this study are the reading texts and accompanying tasks or questions in Units 1 to 9, which contain the core content of the readings. Unit 0 was excluded because a preliminary review indicated that its activities mainly served as an introduction and review, without any substantial alignment with the communication and creativity indicators. This analysis considers both the explicit presence of indicators in task instructions and implicit inclusion through tasks that may lead to the targeted competencies, even if not stated overtly. Only student-directed materials from the Wider World 2 Student Book were examined; teacher guides from the Teacher Book were excluded to maintain the focus on student-directed content. Qualitative content analysis was conducted, complemented by frequency coding of indicators to capture the depth and distribution of competencies across units, using indicator tables adapted from Metusalem et al. (2017) for communication, Lai et al. (2018) for creativity, and Fredricks et al. (2004) for student engagement.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study were expected to be helpful and insightful to these stakeholders in the educational field, such as students, teachers, English textbook authors, and other researchers.

1. For students, this study may increase their awareness and improve their communication and creativity skills as essential components of English learning.
2. For teachers, this research is expected to offer insights into how communication and creativity are embedded in textbook materials. Teachers may use the findings to design supplementary tasks that deepen student engagement with communication and creativity. Teachers may also consider choosing the textbook *Wider World 2* as learning material and integrating it with the Deep Learning approach during lesson planning.
3. For other researchers, this study contributes to the growing discourse on aligning international textbook content with national education policies through a Deep Learning perspective. It can also give a reference point for other researchers to explore other aspects integrated into English proficiency, expand the scope of the study, and use various research designs.