

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Indonesia has been directed to develop students' spoken and written language by using visual texts in English to communicate according to the situations, purposes, and audiences/readers. The Merdeka Curriculum is designed to develop students' competencies in a more holistic manner, by emphasizing critical and creative thinking abilities. It provides greater freedom and flexibility in the learning process. Merdeka curriculum is an education system introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022 as an effort to respond to the dynamics of educational needs in the modern era.

To achieve the goals, EFL writing instructions must be developed in accordance with the previous principles such as: structuring, editing or evaluating, and revising. One of the main focuses of this curriculum is the development of writing skills in various text genres. Therefore, teachers should continually seek and analyze better ways in the implementation of this curriculum and evaluate or adapt new challenges in analyzing and measuring students' writing skills, especially related with the different types of texts they must master.

Different types of texts-such as narrative, recount, procedure, descriptive, expository, argumentative, and persuasive - require distinctive writing techniques and different strategies. For example, descriptive text requires the ability to describe objects in detail, while recount requires the ability to convey information clearly and in a structured manner. This difference requires students' knowledge and specific writing skills according to the genres.

According to Nation (2009), writing is one of the basic important skills in English. It is as an activity that can usefully be prepared for work in the other skills of listening, speaking, and reading. So, learning English writing is very important for students' success in English. Writing is a personal act in which the writer expresses the idea through written form. In addition, writing is a complex activity as Pratiwi (2015) maintains that it encourages thinking and learning. It motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. For this reason, writing also functions as a way to explore students' minds to create good and interesting written work. Writing does not only required knowledge or mastery of vocabulary and grammar, but also the ability or skills to convey ideas clearly and effectively.

Sumarsih (2019) maintains that a paragraph is a group of sentences, that are closely related in thought and which serve one common purpose, often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place

looks like, and what object looks like. It can describe physical appearance, personality, and behavior.

The complexity of confusing as the effects of students' lack knowledge and skills was a typical of students' writing in descriptive text in the Senior High School level as reflected in the following observations at MAS Al-Falah Padang. Most students did not organize the paragraph based on the principles of genres, and students miss used of words and grammars in expressing specific ideas. Students' flaws of paragraph were clearly seen in crowded words and spellings, suggesting that mechanical aspects of writing were untouchable. These phenomenons have been in the field as reported in several studies. Eni and Abdul (2020) for example state some common problems faced by students in writing descriptive text such as difficulties in generic structure, grammar, and spelling.

Other studies such as (Dewi, Didin and Lia 2021), concluded that difficulties in writing text are the students cannot develop their idea, the students had insufficient knowledge about the subject to be described and students had difficulties in using a simple present. Moreover, Frisca (2022) comments that in writing text, the students concerned with learners' background, teachers', technique, and learners' environment. Furthermore, Husna (2017) concludes that students' difficulties in writing text were found in organizing ideas and developing ideas.

The phenomenon above raised the issue that needs to be clarified such as: Did the teachers in MAS Al-Falah Padang put the principles of correct teaching and learning process of writing in their classroom? The logic behind this issue lies on the fact that, first, students' writing competence or skills are mostly the results of teaching and learning experienced by the students; second, learning to write in EFL context such as Indonesia must be built upon integrated skills (not separate skills), and that teacher's approach and method should be consistent with their techniques and activities performed by the students. Therefore, to answer the question above, it is necessary to do a research entitled ***"The Development of Students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Perspective of Merdeka Curriculum: A case in Learning to Write at MAS Al-Falah Padang"***.

B. Focus of the Study

Based on the background of study the research is focused on analyze in developing students' critical thinking skills in learning writing descriptive text at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang.

C. Formulation of the Problem

The problems above are formulated into the following Research Question as follows:

1. How did the teacher put the overall teaching and learning process of writing into practice (as written in the Module) at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang?
2. How was process of writing or critical thinking skills developed throughout the learning process at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang?
3. What were the students' average scores in writing at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang?

D. Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, the goals of the study are set into the following purposes:

1. To investigate the teachers' concept of teaching writing in the perspective of Merdeka Curriculum at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang.
2. To find out Process of developing students' critical thinking in writing descriptive text at MAS Al-Falah Padang.
3. To find out the students' average scores in writing descriptive text at second grade MAS Al-Falah Padang

E. Signification of the Study

The significances of the study focus on the impact of Merdeka curriculum on student critical thinking. It explores the importance of a curriculum in education, focusing on effective information analysis and evaluation. The study also examines the role of Merdeka curriculum in enhancing students' learning process and developing their skills and competencies according to their needs and potential. The research was conducted at MAS Al-Falah Padang, a school with unique characteristics in demographics and teaching methods. The study also emphasizes the importance of research in education, providing valuable information for curriculum development and teaching practices.

F. Definition of Key Term

Critical thinking : Banning (2006), critical thinking involves scrutinizing, differentiating and appraising information as well as reflecting on the information that will be used to make judgments and inform clinical decisions.

Descriptive text : (Gerot and Wagle, 1994; knapp and Watkins 2005)
Descriptive text is a type of text which used by the writer to describe particular thing, person, animal, place and or event to the readers or hearers.

Writing : O'Malley and Lorraine (1995) stated writing is a personal act in which the writer expresses the idea in written form.

