

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CULTURALLY RELEVANT
MATERIALS (CRM) TO ENHANCE WRITING ENGAGEMENT IN EFL
CLASSROOMS**

THESIS

Submitted By:

BUNGA HUMAIRA

NIM. 220203030

**Student of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training
Department of English Language Education**



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
AR-RANIRY STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY BANDA ACEH
2026 M / 1448 H**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CULTURALLY
RELEVANT MATERIALS (CRM) TO ENHANCE WRITING
ENGAGEMENT IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

THESIS

Has Been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis Munaqasyah Defense As One the
Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree in the Field of English Language
Education

By

BUNGA HUMAIRA

Student ID: 220203030

Student of English Language Education Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Ar-
Raniry State Islamic University Banda Aceh

Approved by:

Supervisor

Head of Department



Chamisah, S.Ag., M.Ed
NIP. 197002051999032004



Syarifah Dahliana, M.Ag., M.Ed., Ph.D.
NIP. 197504162000032001

It has been defended in *Sidang Munagasyah* in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

On:

May, 20th 2026 M

Wednesday,

03 Dzulhijjah 1447 H

In Darussalam, Banda Aceh

Board of Examiners,

Chairperson

Chamisah, S.Ag., M.Ed

Secretary

Asma, S.Pd.I., M.Ed

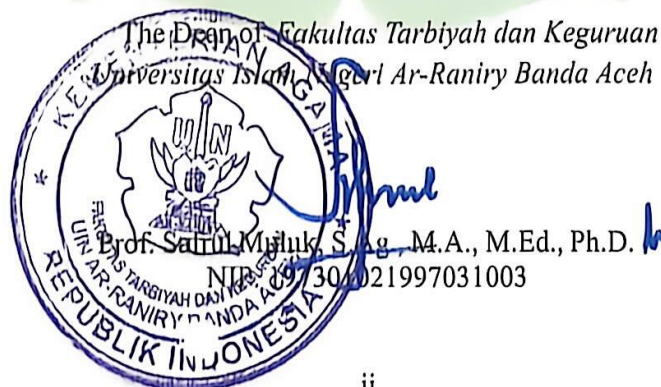
Examiner 1

Siti Khasinah, S.Pd., M.Pd

Examiner 2

Rita Hermida, M.Pd

Certified by:



SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN
(Declaration of Originality)

Saya yang bertandatangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Bunga Humaira
NIM : 220203030
Tempat/Tanggal Lahir : Jakarta, 06 Juni 2005
Alamat : Jl. Nasional Jeram Beutong Desa Blang Baro, Kec.
Seunagan, Kab. Nagan Raya

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa Skripsi yang berjudul:

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CULTURALLY RELEVANT
MATERIALS (CRM) TO ENHANCE WRITING ENGAGEMENT IN EFL
CLASSROOMS**

adalah benar-benar karya saya (kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya). Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

Banda Aceh, 20 Mei 2026

Saya yang membuat surat pernyataan,



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah SWT, who has granted the researcher health, strength, mercy, and guidance to complete this undergraduate thesis. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, whose teachings continue to guide us toward knowledge and righteousness.

My deepest appreciation goes to my thesis supervisor, Mrs. Chamisah, S. Ag., M.Ed., Ph.D. for her patience, guidance, valuable suggestions, and continuous encouragement throughout the completion of this thesis. Her support and dedication have greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Safrul Muluk, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, and to Miss Syarifah Dahliana, S.Ag., S.E., M.Ag., M.Ed., Ph.D., Head of the English Language Education Department, as well as all lecturers and staff of the department and faculty for their invaluable knowledge, guidance, and support throughout my academic journey.

I am also sincerely thankful to all participants who generously shared their time, experiences, and perspectives, making this study possible and contributing significantly to the completion of this research.

To my beloved parents, Aby Mahlil, M.E. and Umy Sri Rahma Yanti S.Sos, words cannot fully express my gratitude for your endless love, prayers, sacrifices, and

unwavering support. Thank you for always believing in me, standing by my side through every challenge, and encouraging me to keep moving forward. Your love and support have been my greatest source of strength throughout this journey.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to M. Achlil Al Farisy for his continuous support, encouragement, patience, and understanding throughout the completion of this thesis. Thank you for always being present during both the difficult and joyful moments and for motivating me to keep moving forward.

I would also like to thank my friends and companions who have shared this academic journey with me. Thank you for the support, encouragement, laughter, and memorable moments that made this experience more meaningful and enjoyable.

Finally, the researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, any suggestions and constructive feedback are highly appreciated for future improvement. It is hoped that this thesis will be beneficial for readers and contribute to the development of English language teaching.

Banda Aceh, 20 Mei 2026

Bunga Humaira
220203030

ABSTRACT

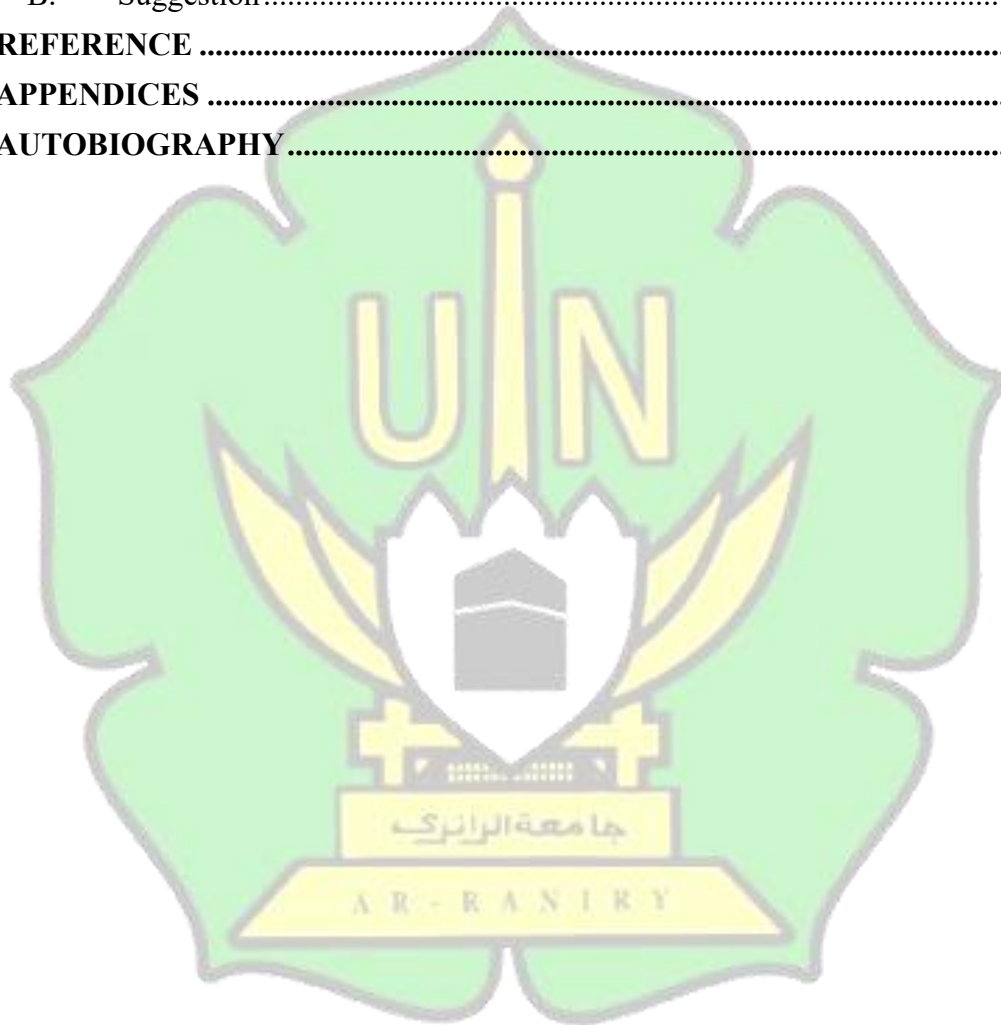
Name : Bunga Humaira
Student No. : 220203030
Faculty : Faculty of Education and Teacher Training
Major : Department of English Language Education
Title : Students' Perceptions of Using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) to Enhance Writing Engagement in EFL Classrooms
Main Supervisor : Chamisah, M.Ed
Key Words : Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM), Writing Engagement, Students' Perceptions

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) to enhance writing engagement in EFL classrooms. Writing is often considered one of the most difficult English skills because students frequently experience difficulties in generating ideas, organizing thoughts, and maintaining motivation during writing activities. Therefore, this study investigated how culturally relevant materials influenced students' engagement and participation in writing tasks. This research used a descriptive qualitative design. The participants of this study were nine students from the English Language Education Study Program at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke. The findings revealed that students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of CRM in writing activities. Students stated that culturally familiar topics helped them generate ideas more easily because the materials were closely related to their daily life, local traditions, and personal experiences. In addition, CRM increased students' motivation, confidence, participation, and interest in writing activities. Students also felt that writing tasks became more meaningful and enjoyable when the topics reflected their own cultural background. However, several challenges were also identified, including difficulties in translating cultural terms into English, limited references about local culture, lack of detailed cultural knowledge, and differences in students' confidence levels. Overall, the study concluded that Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) positively influenced students' writing engagement in EFL classrooms. Therefore, the use of culturally relevant topics is recommended to create more meaningful, engaging, and student-centered writing instruction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL LETTER	i
EXAMINERS SHEET	ii
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. Research Questions	2
C. Research Aims	3
D. Significance of the Study	3
E. Terminology	4
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	6
A. Concept of Culturally Relevant Material (CRM) in EFL Education	6
B. Writing Engagement	10
C. Students' Perception in EFL Learning	15
D. Challenges and Research Gap of CRM in EFL Writing	19
E. Previous Related Studies	22
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	28
A. Research Design	28
B. Research Setting	30
C. Participants	31
D. Research Instruments	34
E. Data Collection Procedures	36
F. Data Analysis Technique	39
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	42
A. Overview of Data Collection	42

B.	Research Findings	46
C.	Themes Identified from Interview Data	55
D.	Discussion	56
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....		59
A.	Conclusion	59
B.	Suggestion	62
REFERENCE		65
APPENDICES		67
AUTOBIOGRAPHY.....		72



LIST OF TABLES

Table 2. 1 several previous studies	24
Table 4. 1 Interview data	55



LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Appoitment Letter of Supervisor
Appendix B	Appoitment Letter From <i>Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan</i> To Conduct The Research
Appendix C	Interview Questions
Appendix D	Interview Transcripts
Appendix E	Documentation of Telephone Interview



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Writing was one of the most essential skills in learning English, as it enabled students to express their ideas, thoughts, and experiences in a structured and meaningful way. However, for many EFL students, writing was often perceived as the most challenging skill to master. Writing required not only adequate grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to generate ideas, organize them logically, and relate them to a given topic. In classroom practice, many students struggled to develop their ideas independently and tended to rely heavily on examples provided by the teacher, which indicated limited confidence in writing. Another problem commonly found in EFL writing classrooms was students' low motivation and limited engagement in writing activities. Many students viewed writing as a difficult and uninteresting task rather than a meaningful form of self-expression. This condition was often influenced by the writing materials and topics used in the classroom, which were frequently perceived as less relevant to students' real lives. When students were asked to write about unfamiliar themes or foreign cultural contexts, they often found it difficult to connect the topic with their own experiences, resulting in minimal participation and low enthusiasm during writing lessons.

This problem was still commonly found in EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesian contexts. Teaching and learning activities tended to rely heavily on

textbook-based materials, many of which were adapted from Western-based textbooks. In classroom practice, locally available cultural resources that students were familiar with, such as local traditions, social practices, and daily experiences, were rarely integrated into writing instruction. As a result, the materials used did not adequately reflect students' local culture, traditions, or social realities. This situation caused students to feel disconnected from the content they were asked to write about, which negatively affected their writing engagement. One possible way to address this issue was through the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). These materials incorporated cultural elements that reflected students' local traditions, values, and daily experiences, making learning more meaningful and relatable. When students were provided with writing topics that were connected to their own cultural background, they were more likely to feel confident and motivated to express their ideas. According to Gay (2018) and Rahmawati and Widodo (2022), culturally relevant teaching encouraged learners to connect classroom learning with their identity and lived experiences, which supported both language development and cultural awareness.

B. Research Questions

1. What are students' perceptions of the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in EFL writing classrooms?
2. What challenges do students face when using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing tasks?

C. Research Aims

1. To investigate students' perceptions of the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in EFL writing classrooms.
2. To identify the challenges faced by students when using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing tasks.

D. Significance of the Study

This research was expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to English language teaching, especially in the area of writing engagement and culturally relevant pedagogy. Theoretically, it enriched the understanding of how students perceived the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in enhancing writing engagement and supported previous studies that emphasized the importance of linking classroom materials with students' cultural backgrounds to make learning more meaningful.

Practically, the findings of this research served as a reference for English teachers in designing writing activities that were more interesting, contextual, and connected to students' real lives. When teachers used materials related to students' own culture, they helped students feel more confident, motivated, and engaged in expressing their ideas in English. For students, this research showed that writing in English was not only about language accuracy but also a way to express identity and share their cultural experiences. In addition, this research could be used as a reference for future

researchers who were interested in exploring culturally relevant approaches in developing more engaging and effective writing instruction for EFL learners.

E. Terminology

To avoid misunderstanding, the operational definitions of key terms used in this research were explained as follows:

1. Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM)

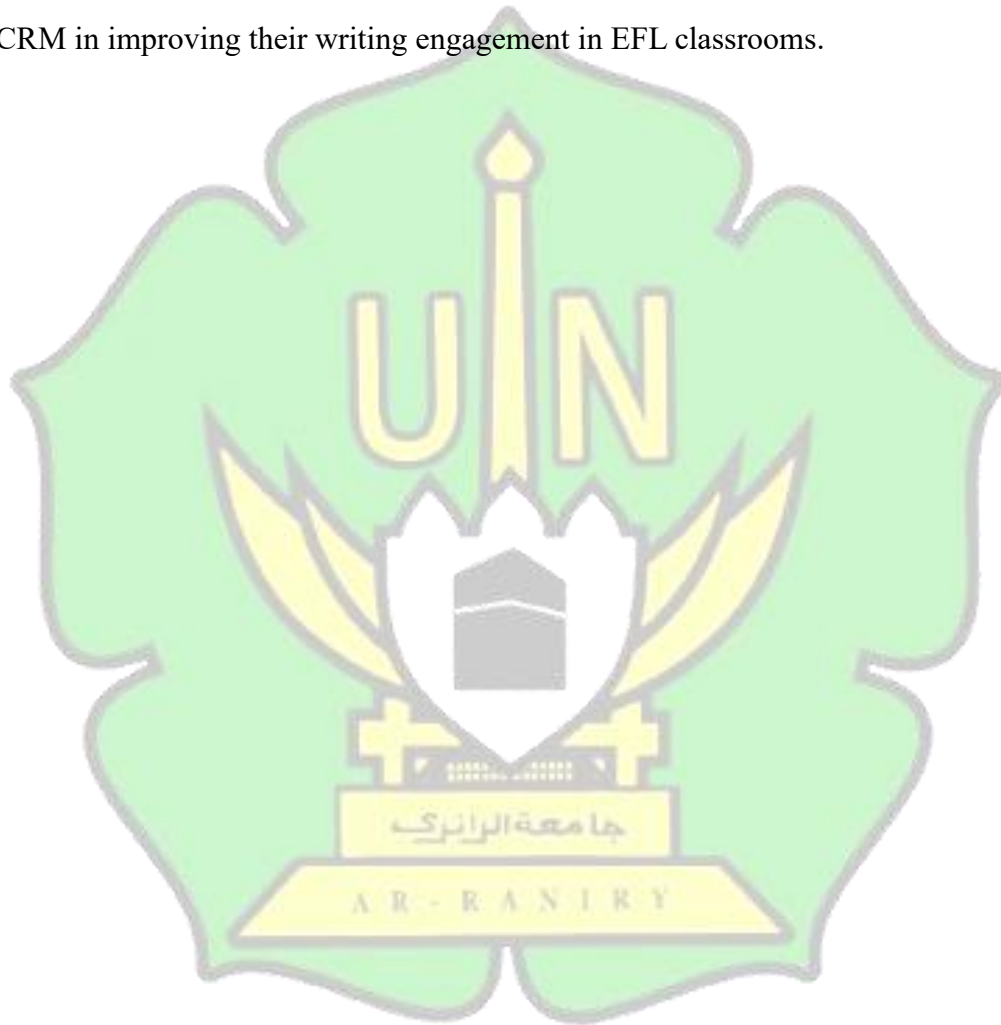
Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) referred to English teaching materials that integrated cultural aspects familiar and meaningful to students. These materials were based on the idea that learning became more effective when it was connected to students' real-life experiences, values, and local traditions. In this research, CRM were defined as teaching materials used in writing activities that were closely related to students' cultural background and personal experiences. The use of CRM aimed to create meaningful writing experiences that made students feel more motivated, engaged, and confident while learning English.

2. Writing Engagement

Writing engagement referred to the level of students' active involvement, motivation, and effort during the writing process. It included behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of students' participation in writing activities. In this study, writing engagement was defined as students' active participation, emotional connection, and thinking process during writing activities that used culturally relevant materials.

3. Students' perceptions

Students' perceptions in this research referred to students' opinions, thoughts, and feelings about the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing classes. It showed how students interpreted their learning experiences and evaluated the use of CRM in improving their writing engagement in EFL classrooms.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Concept of Culturally Relevant Material (CRM) in EFL Education

Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) are instructional resources that connect English language learning with students' cultural backgrounds, values, and everyday experiences. These materials are grounded in the idea that learning becomes more effective when students can relate the content to their own lives. By integrating familiar contexts into instruction, CRM helps reduce the distance between abstract language concepts and students' real-world understanding. As a result, students are more likely to engage with the material in a meaningful way. The concept of CRM is closely related to culturally relevant pedagogy introduced by Ladson-Billings (1995). This pedagogical framework emphasizes three key principles: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. Academic success refers to students' ability to achieve learning goals, while cultural competence involves maintaining and valuing one's cultural identity. Critical consciousness encourages students to reflect on social issues and inequalities. Together, these principles support a more holistic and inclusive approach to education.

In addition, Gay (2018) highlights that culturally responsive teaching uses students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and learning styles as essential components of instruction. This approach recognizes that students come from diverse backgrounds, and these differences should be seen as strengths rather than obstacles.

By incorporating cultural elements into teaching, educators can create learning environments that are more inclusive, supportive, and responsive to students' needs. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), CRM plays an important role in bridging the gap between language learning and students' socio-cultural realities. Learning a foreign language can often feel distant and disconnected from students' daily experiences. However, when cultural elements are integrated into the learning process, students are able to see the relevance of English in their own lives. This connection enhances both motivation and engagement.

Furthermore, integrating cultural elements into EFL instruction is not merely an additional teaching strategy but a transformative pedagogical approach. It allows students to connect new linguistic knowledge with their existing knowledge, thereby improving comprehension and retention. When students can relate new information to what they already know, learning becomes more meaningful and easier to process. This also supports long-term understanding rather than surface-level memorization. In English language learning, particularly in writing, the use of culturally relevant materials is especially beneficial. Writing is often considered a challenging skill because it requires students to generate and organize ideas. When students are given topics that reflect their own culture, such as local traditions, folklore, or social issues, they find it easier to express their thoughts. This familiarity reduces anxiety and encourages creativity in writing (Gay, 2018; Richards, 2021).

Moreover, writing tasks that incorporate local cultural content help students realize that English is not merely a foreign language but also a tool for self-expression.

(Rahmawati & Widodo, 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2024). Students begin to see that they can use English to share their identities, experiences, and perspectives with others. This shift in perception increases their confidence and willingness to participate in writing activities. Consequently, the learning process becomes more personal and meaningful. CRM is also closely aligned with constructivist learning theory (Richards, 2021), Which suggests that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction with meaningful contexts. In this perspective, learning is not a passive process but an active one in which students build understanding based on their experiences. By integrating culture into writing instruction, teachers enable students to draw upon their own knowledge, thereby facilitating idea generation and reducing cognitive load during the writing process (Rahmawati & Widodo, 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023).

Teachers can design culturally relevant materials by incorporating local culture, authentic language, and content that reflects students' immediate environment. These materials can take various forms, such as short stories, articles, images, or writing prompts related to students' social lives. According to Rahmawati and Widodo (2022), the use of culturally familiar materials encourages students to become more active and confident in expressing their ideas. In addition, this approach helps strengthen students' cultural awareness and appreciation. Several recent studies (Lee & Kim, 2023; Sutrisno et al., 2024; Pattimura, 2025) support the effectiveness of CRM in language learning. These studies indicate that students demonstrate higher levels of motivation, participation, and confidence when learning materials are connected to their cultural backgrounds. Therefore, culturally relevant materials are believed to create a more

positive and engaging learning environment. In the context of this study, CRM is examined from students' perspectives, focusing on how they perceive and experience these materials in writing activities, as well as how such materials influence their engagement and learning outcomes.

Another important aspect of CRM in EFL learning is its role in promoting students' identity development (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). When students see their own culture represented in learning materials, they feel acknowledged and respected within the educational environment. This sense of recognition contributes to a stronger sense of identity and belonging, which is essential for effective learning. Students are more likely to participate actively when they feel that their voices and experiences matter in the classroom. In addition, CRM supports the development of intercultural competence, which is a crucial skill in learning a global language such as English. While students engage with their own cultural contexts, they also gain opportunities to compare and contrast them with other cultures. This process encourages openness, tolerance, and critical thinking. As a result, students do not only learn the language but also develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity in a global context.

The implementation of CRM in writing instruction also encourages critical thinking skills (Lee & Kim, 2023; Pattimura, 2025). When students are asked to write about cultural topics or social issues related to their environment, they are required to analyze, reflect, and express their opinions. This goes beyond basic language practice and promotes higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, students become not only

language learners but also critical thinkers who are able to articulate their perspectives effectively. However, the use of culturally relevant materials also presents certain challenges for teachers. One of the main challenges is the need for careful material selection and (Tomlinson, 2020; Richards, 2021). Teachers must ensure that the materials are appropriate, accurate, and relevant to students' cultural backgrounds. In addition, teachers need sufficient knowledge and sensitivity to avoid stereotypes or misrepresentation of culture. Without proper understanding, the use of cultural content may not achieve its intended goals.

B. Writing Engagement

Writing engagement is considered one of the most important factors influencing students' success in writing activities. Engaged students are more likely to participate actively, demonstrate positive attitudes toward learning, and invest effort in completing writing tasks. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing engagement is particularly important because writing requires students to generate ideas, organize information, and communicate their thoughts effectively in a second language. Therefore, understanding students' engagement in writing activities can help teachers create learning environments that encourage active participation and meaningful learning experiences.

According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), engagement is a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. These three dimensions are interconnected

and collectively influence students' learning experiences. In writing activities, each dimension contributes to students' involvement during different stages of the writing process.

1. Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement refers to students' active participation in learning activities and their observable involvement in academic tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004). This dimension focuses on students' actions, effort, persistence, and participation during classroom activities. Behavioral engagement is often considered the most visible form of engagement because it can be observed directly through students' behavior.

In the context of writing activities, behavioral engagement can be reflected through students' attendance, participation in classroom discussions, completion of writing assignments, involvement in brainstorming sessions, and willingness to follow instructions during the writing process. Students who are behaviorally engaged tend to contribute actively during classroom activities and demonstrate responsibility in completing writing tasks.

Reschly and Christenson (2022) emphasize that behavioral engagement is associated with students' active involvement in academic activities and their commitment to learning responsibilities. Students who regularly participate in classroom activities are more likely to develop positive learning habits and achieve better academic outcomes. Therefore, behavioral engagement serves as an important indicator of students' participation in writing activities.

Furthermore, behavioral engagement may also be reflected through students' persistence when facing difficulties in writing. Students who remain involved despite encountering challenges demonstrate a higher level of engagement than those who withdraw from learning activities. This persistence is important because writing often requires continuous effort, revision, and improvement before a final piece of writing can be completed successfully.

2. Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement refers to students' feelings, attitudes, interests, and emotional reactions toward learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004). This dimension includes enjoyment, enthusiasm, motivation, confidence, and a sense of belonging during the learning process. Emotional engagement plays a significant role in determining whether students perceive learning activities positively or negatively.

In writing activities, emotional engagement can be observed when students demonstrate interest in writing topics, express enjoyment during writing tasks, and show confidence when communicating their ideas in written form. Students who experience positive emotions toward writing are generally more motivated to participate in classroom activities and invest greater effort in completing assignments.

According to Lee and Kim (2023), meaningful and culturally relevant learning materials can strengthen students' emotional engagement because students feel more connected to the topics being discussed. When students perceive writing activities as meaningful and relevant to their lives, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward writing and become more willing to participate in learning activities.

In addition, emotional engagement contributes to students' confidence in expressing opinions and sharing personal experiences through writing. Positive emotional experiences may reduce anxiety and encourage students to participate more actively in writing activities. Consequently, emotional engagement supports students' motivation and willingness to improve their writing abilities.

3. Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to the mental effort students invest in learning activities and their willingness to use strategies that enhance understanding and academic performance (Fredricks et al., 2004). This dimension focuses on students' thinking processes, problem-solving abilities, and commitment to learning.

In writing activities, cognitive engagement can be reflected through students' efforts to generate ideas, organize information logically, revise drafts, evaluate their own work, and apply writing strategies to improve the quality of their writing. Students who demonstrate cognitive engagement are not satisfied with simply completing assignments; instead, they actively seek ways to improve and refine their written work.

Fu and Liu (2022) explain that cognitive engagement encourages students to invest greater mental effort in learning activities and supports deeper understanding of academic content. In writing instruction, cognitive engagement enables students to analyze information critically, connect ideas effectively, and develop coherent written texts.

Moreover, cognitive engagement is associated with students' ability to reflect on their learning process. Students who review and revise their writing demonstrate

cognitive engagement because they are actively evaluating their performance and identifying areas for improvement. This process is essential in writing activities because effective writing often requires planning, drafting, revising, and editing before producing a final version.

4. Relationship among the Indicators of Writing Engagement

Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement are closely related and cannot be separated from one another. Students who enjoy writing activities are more likely to participate actively, while active participation often encourages greater cognitive investment in learning tasks. Similarly, students who invest significant mental effort in writing are likely to remain involved throughout the learning process.

Fredricks et al. (2004) argue that engagement should be viewed as a multidimensional concept because each dimension contributes to students' overall learning experiences. Therefore, examining behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement provides a comprehensive understanding of how students participate in writing activities.

Based on the explanations above, this study adopts behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement as the indicators of writing engagement. These indicators are used to examine how students engage with Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) during writing activities and to understand the ways in which CRM influences students' participation, interest, and effort in the writing process.

C. Students' Perception in EFL Learning

Students' perceptions play a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness of instructional approaches in language learning. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), how students perceive learning materials significantly influences their motivation, confidence, and overall engagement in classroom activities. Perception is not merely a passive reaction but an active cognitive and affective process through which learners interpret their learning experiences. When students perceive instructional materials as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to participate actively and invest effort in learning. According to Liu (2023), students' perceptions are closely linked to their level of engagement, particularly in writing activities that require sustained effort and personal involvement. Therefore, examining students' perceptions provides important insights into how teaching strategies affect learning outcomes, especially in EFL writing contexts.

Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) refer to instructional resources that incorporate students' cultural backgrounds, values, and lived experiences into the learning process. The concept is rooted in culturally relevant pedagogy proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995) and further developed by Gay (2018), who emphasize the importance of connecting academic content with students' cultural identities. In EFL classrooms, CRM serves as a bridge between language learning and students' socio-cultural realities. When students encounter familiar cultural elements in learning materials, they are more likely to feel represented and valued (Gay, 2018). This sense

of representation contributes to a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, which ultimately enhances students' willingness to engage in writing activities.

Positive perceptions toward CRM are strongly associated with increased motivation and willingness to participate in writing tasks. When students perceive learning materials as relevant to their cultural background, they tend to develop a stronger emotional connection with the content. This emotional engagement encourages them to express their ideas more freely and confidently. Rahmawati and Widodo (2022) found that students who learned through culturally familiar materials showed higher levels of participation and confidence in expressing their ideas. Similarly, Sutrisno et al. (2024) reported that culturally responsive instruction significantly improved students' motivation and engagement in EFL classrooms. These findings suggest that students' perceptions of relevance play a key role in shaping their engagement in writing.

Empirical evidence further demonstrates the relationship between students' perceptions of CRM and their writing engagement. Students exposed to culturally responsive writing instruction often report higher levels of confidence and personal involvement. For instance, Lee and Kim (2023) found that integrating cultural elements into writing tasks increased students' participation and critical thinking skills. When students feel that their cultural background is acknowledged, they are more willing to contribute ideas and engage in meaningful discussions. This indicates that perception is closely related to affective engagement, which is essential for successful language learning. In addition to increasing motivation, culturally relevant writing tasks help

reduce anxiety, which is a common challenge in EFL writing. Many students experience difficulty in writing due to unfamiliar topics and lack of ideas. However, when students are provided with culturally familiar topics, they can focus more on organizing their thoughts and expressing meaning. Qatrunnida and Ardini (2023) found that students were more motivated and persistent in writing when tasks were connected to their personal experiences. This reduction in anxiety allows students to participate more actively and confidently in writing activities, thereby enhancing their overall engagement.

The role of CRM in enhancing writing engagement can also be explained through its connection to students' prior knowledge. According to constructivist learning theory, learning becomes more effective when new information is connected to existing knowledge. In this context, CRM allows students to draw upon their own experiences when generating ideas for writing. Pattimura (2025) highlights that cultural-rhetorical awareness plays an important role in how students construct meaning in EFL writing. By integrating cultural elements, students can produce more meaningful and coherent texts, which improves both their writing quality and engagement. Writing engagement itself is a multidimensional construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components. Fredricks et al. (2004) explain that behavioral engagement refers to students' participation in classroom activities, emotional engagement involves their feelings toward learning, and cognitive engagement relates to their mental effort in completing tasks. In the context of EFL writing, these dimensions are interconnected and influence each other. Fu and Liu

(2022) further emphasize that students' positive perceptions of learning materials can enhance all three dimensions of engagement simultaneously. Therefore, CRM plays a significant role in fostering comprehensive writing engagement.

Recent studies also highlight the importance of task relevance in promoting writing engagement. When writing tasks are meaningful and connected to students' experiences, students are more likely to engage actively. Qatrunnida and Ardini (2023) found that students who were actively engaged in writing tasks demonstrated better performance and more positive attitudes toward writing. This supports the idea that CRM, which provides relevant and meaningful content, can significantly enhance students' engagement in EFL writing classrooms. CRM supports learner-centered pedagogy, which emphasizes active participation and interaction. In this approach, students are encouraged to share their experiences, collaborate with peers, and take an active role in the learning process. Zhang and Hyland (2021) argue that student-centered writing instruction promotes deeper engagement and improves writing performance. By integrating CRM into writing activities, teachers can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment where students feel more involved and motivated.

In conclusion, students' perceptions of culturally relevant materials play a significant role in enhancing writing engagement in EFL classrooms. Positive perceptions lead to increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and greater confidence in writing. Empirical studies consistently show that integrating cultural elements into writing instruction improves engagement, participation, and learning outcomes.

Therefore, understanding students' perceptions is essential for developing effective and culturally responsive teaching strategies. This study aims to explore how students perceive the use of CRM and how these perceptions influence their engagement in writing activities in EFL classrooms.

D. Challenges and Research Gap of CRM in EFL Writing

The implementation of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in EFL writing classrooms has been widely recognized for its potential to enhance students' engagement and create meaningful learning experiences. However, despite its benefits, the integration of CRM also presents several challenges that may affect its effectiveness. Teachers often face difficulties in aligning cultural content with language learning objectives, which can influence both teaching practices and student outcomes. According to Richards (2021), effective language teaching requires a balance between materials, learners' needs, and instructional goals. Therefore, understanding the challenges in implementing CRM is essential to ensure its successful application in EFL writing classrooms. (Richards, 2021; Tomlinson, 2020)

One of the most common challenges is the limited availability of culturally appropriate teaching materials. Many textbooks used in EFL contexts are designed based on Western cultures, which may not reflect students' local experiences. As a result, teachers are often required to adapt or create their own materials. This process requires time, creativity, and pedagogical knowledge. Tomlinson (2020) emphasizes that developing effective materials involves careful consideration of learners' cultural

and linguistic backgrounds. Without adequate support, teachers may struggle to design materials that are both meaningful and pedagogically sound. Another challenge is the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds. In many EFL classrooms, students come from different social and cultural contexts, making it difficult to select materials that are equally relevant to all learners. Some students may feel included, while others may feel excluded if their culture is not represented. This can affect their motivation and participation. Gay (2018) argues that culturally responsive teaching requires inclusivity and sensitivity toward all learners. Therefore, teachers must carefully select materials that reflect diverse perspectives and promote equal representation (Gay, 2018).

Linguistic challenges also play a significant role in the implementation of CRM. Students may have rich cultural knowledge but lack the language proficiency needed to express their ideas in English. This creates a gap between what students know and what they can communicate in writing. Hyland (2021) explains that second language writing requires both linguistic competence and the ability to organize ideas effectively. Without sufficient language support, students may feel frustrated and less confident in writing tasks (Farrel, 2020). Institutional factors further contribute to the challenges of implementing CRM. Curriculum constraints often limit teachers' flexibility in selecting and adapting materials. In addition, there is often a lack of professional training related to culturally responsive teaching. Farrell (2020) highlights that teacher development is essential for adopting innovative teaching approaches. Without adequate training and institutional support, teachers may find it difficult to implement CRM effectively in their classrooms.

Another important challenge is balancing cultural relevance with language learning objectives. While CRM emphasizes meaningful and culturally connected content, teachers must also ensure that students develop linguistic accuracy and fluency. Nation (2001) states that effective language learning requires a balance between meaning-focused input and language-focused instruction. Therefore, CRM should be carefully integrated to support both cultural understanding and language development (Nation, 2001). Assessment is also a complex issue in the use of CRM. Traditional writing assessment often focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and structure, while culturally relevant writing tasks require evaluation of ideas, creativity, and cultural expression. Brown and Abeywickrama (2020) emphasize the importance of using comprehensive assessment methods that reflect different aspects of language learning. Teachers need to develop appropriate rubrics that consider both linguistic and cultural elements in students' writing (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2020).

Despite these challenges, CRM remains a valuable approach in EFL writing classrooms. However, existing research indicates several gaps that need to be addressed. One major gap is the limited focus on students' perceptions of CRM in writing contexts. While many studies discuss culturally responsive teaching, fewer explore how students perceive these materials. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) highlight that learners' perceptions play a significant role in shaping motivation and engagement, yet this area is still underexplored. Another research gap is the lack of studies that examine the relationship between perception, engagement, and challenges in an integrated manner. Most studies tend to focus on a single variable without considering

how these factors interact. Reschly and Christenson (2022) argue that student engagement is a multidimensional construct influenced by various interconnected factors.

Finally, there is still limited empirical research that specifically investigates how CRM influences writing engagement as a multidimensional construct. Writing engagement involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive components, yet few studies examine all these aspects together. Fredricks et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of analyzing engagement holistically. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by exploring students' perceptions, examining the role of CRM, and identifying the challenges in EFL writing classrooms (Mercer & Dornyei, 2020; Reschly & Christenson, 2022; Fredricks et al., 2019).

E. Previous Related Studies

Several previous studies have examined the implementation of culturally relevant materials and their impact on students' engagement in English language learning. Anyichie (2023) investigated how culturally responsive teaching practices enhanced student engagement. Using a qualitative approach involving teachers and students, the study found that integrating students' cultural backgrounds into classroom activities increased participation and created more positive classroom interactions. The findings suggest that cultural relevance plays an important role in promoting student engagement.

In the Indonesian context, Herdi (2023) explored the integration of local culture into English language teaching. The study employed a descriptive qualitative design involving EFL teachers and students. The findings revealed that local culture-based materials increased students' enthusiasm and confidence in learning English, particularly in writing activities. This study demonstrates the importance of connecting learning materials with students' cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, Miqawati (2024) examined the integration of local culture in English language teaching through classroom observations and interviews. The study found that culturally familiar content made learning activities more meaningful and encouraged greater student participation. Students became more motivated because the learning materials reflected their real-life experiences and cultural identity.

Another relevant study was conducted by Qatrunnida and Ardini (2023), who investigated students' engagement in online writing learning. The findings showed that students demonstrated stronger emotional and cognitive engagement when writing about familiar and culturally relevant topics. This study highlights the relationship between cultural relevance and students' writing engagement.

Furthermore, Zhang and Hyland (2021) examined meaningful writing activities in EFL classrooms. Their study revealed that writing tasks connected to students' experiences and interests increased motivation, participation, and confidence. Students became more actively involved in writing when the topics were personally meaningful. These findings support the idea that culturally relevant materials can positively influence students' engagement in writing activities.

Table 2. 1 several previous studies

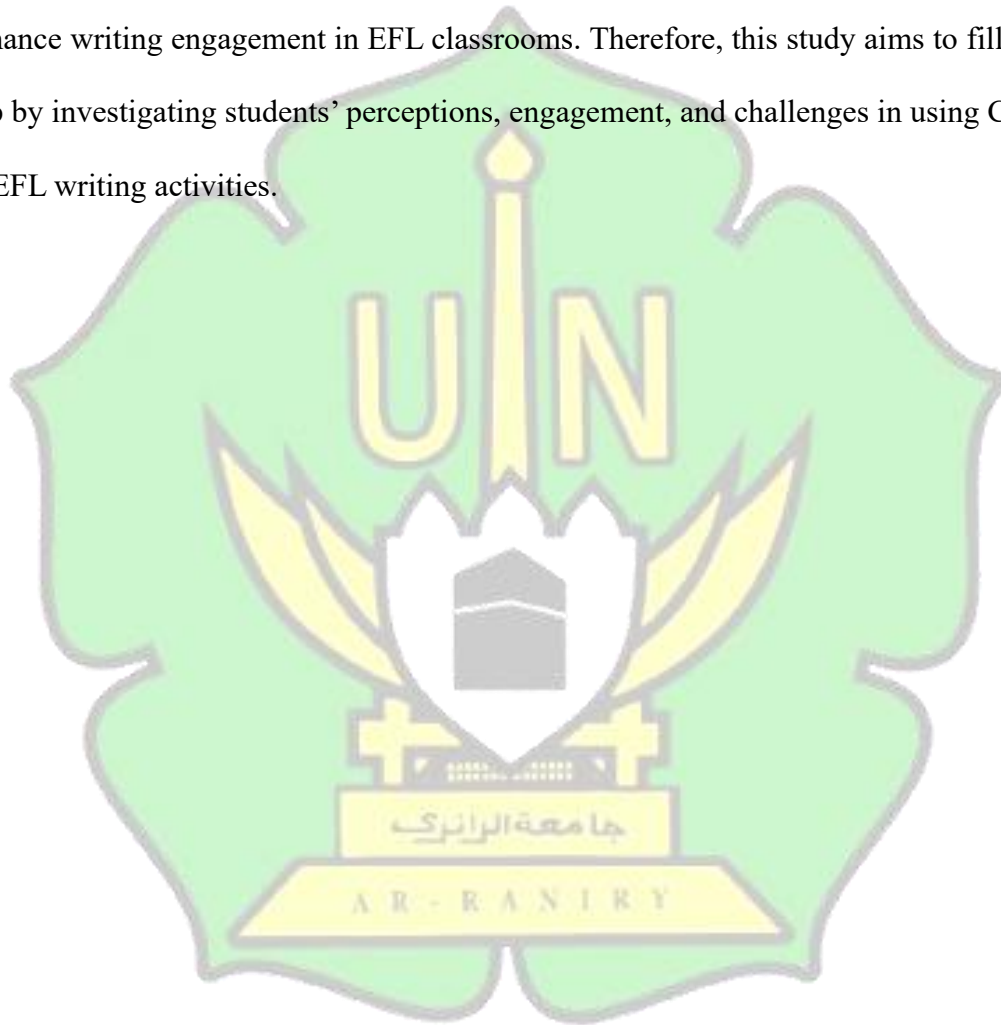
No.	Researchers / Years	Title / focus	Method & Participants	Findings	Relevance to current study
1.	Anyichie (2023)	<i>Exploring Teacher Practices For Enhancing Student Engagement Through Culturally Responsive Teaching</i>	Qualitative research with teachers and students	The study showed that teachers who included students' cultural backgrounds in lessons observed higher participation and more positive classroom interaction.	This study highlighted that integrating culture into learning increased students' engagement and interest, which related to students' perceptions of CRM.
2.	Herdi (2023)	<i>Integrating Local Culture in English Language Teaching (Indonesia)</i>	Descriptive qualitative with Indonesian EFL teachers and students.	The study reported that local culturebased materials made students more enthusiastic and confident when writing in English.	This study supported the Indonesian context and showed that students responded positively to culturally familiar materials.
3.	Miqawati (2024)	<i>Integrating Local Culture into English Language Teaching</i>	Classroom observation and interviews.	The study found that embedding local culture into lessons increased learners' participation and made learning	This study provided real examples of how culturally relevant topics enhanced students' involvement and motivation.

				tasks more meaningful.	
4.	Qatrunnida & Ardini (2023)	<i>Students' Engagement In Online Writing Learning</i>	Qualitative study using surveys and interviews	The study showed that students who wrote about familiar or culturally relevant topics demonstrated stronger emotional and cognitive engagement.	This study was closely related because it connected writing engagement with students' personal and cultural experiences.
5.	Yongyan Zhang & Ken Hyland (2021)	<i>Fostering Student Engagement in EFL Writing Classrooms through Meaningful Writing Activities</i>	Qualitative study involving EFL students through interviews and observations.	The study found that meaningful and relevant writing activities increased students' motivation, participation, and confidence in EFL writing classrooms. Students became more emotionally and cognitively engaged when writing tasks were connected to their experiences and interests.	This study is relevant to the current research because both studies focus on students' engagement in EFL writing classrooms. It also supports the idea that meaningful and culturally relevant materials can enhance students' participation and motivation in writing activities.

6.	Fredrick et al. (2019)	<i>Students Engagement as a Multidimensional Construct</i>	Literature review on student engagement.	The study emphasized that student engagement consists of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that are interconnected in the learning process.	This study supports the current research because writing engagement is analyzed through students' involvement, motivation, and participation in writing activities.
7.	Reschly & Christenson (2022)	<i>Student Engagement and Influenced Factors</i>	Conceptual and empirical review.	The study found that student engagement is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including learning environment, teaching practices, and students' personal backgrounds.	This study is relevant because it highlights how culturally relevant materials may contribute to students' engagement by connecting learning content with their cultural experiences.

The previous studies indicate that the use of culturally relevant materials and culturally responsive teaching practices can positively influence students' motivation, confidence, participation, and engagement in English language learning. In addition, studies on student engagement emphasize that engagement is a multidimensional

construct consisting of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects. However, most previous studies focused either on the implementation of culturally relevant materials or on student engagement separately. Only a limited number of studies specifically explored students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) to enhance writing engagement in EFL classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating students' perceptions, engagement, and challenges in using CRM in EFL writing activities.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This research used a descriptive qualitative design to explore and describe students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) to enhance their writing engagement in EFL classrooms. According to Creswell (2023), qualitative research aimed to understand human experiences and meanings from participants' perspectives rather than measuring them numerically. Therefore, this design was considered appropriate because the researcher intended to gain an in-depth understanding of how students perceived the use of culturally relevant materials in writing activities. In this study, the researcher did not attempt to test hypotheses or use statistical data. Instead, the research focused on describing students' real opinions and experiences in their own words. This approach allowed the researcher to explore students' feelings, views, and interpretations related to the use of culturally relevant materials in writing classes. As explained by Sandelowski (2021), descriptive qualitative research aimed to present a clear and detailed description of participants' perspectives about a phenomenon in everyday terms.

Creswell (2023) proposed several steps in conducting qualitative research, namely identifying the research problem, reviewing related literature, specifying the research purpose and research questions, selecting participants, collecting qualitative data, analyzing and interpreting the data, validating the findings, and reporting the

research results. However, in this study, the researcher focused on several steps that were considered the most relevant to the purpose of the research. The first step applied in this study was identifying the research problem. This step was chosen because the researcher found that many students experienced difficulties, low motivation, and limited engagement in writing activities. The second step was reviewing related literature. This step was important to help the researcher understand theories and previous studies related to Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM), students' perceptions, and writing engagement. The third step was specifying the research purpose and research questions. This step was used to determine the main focus of the study, namely exploring students' perceptions, writing engagement, and the challenges faced when using CRM in EFL writing classrooms. The fourth step was selecting participants. The researcher used purposive sampling because the study required participants who had experience in English writing activities and were able to provide relevant information related to the research topic. The fifth step was collecting qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. This step was selected because interviews allowed participants to explain their opinions, experiences, and feelings in depth using their own words. The sixth step was analyzing and interpreting the data using thematic analysis.

This step helped the researcher identify themes and patterns related to students' perceptions and writing engagement. Finally, the researcher reported the findings descriptively in narrative form to explain the results of the study clearly and systematically. These steps were selected because they were considered appropriate for the descriptive qualitative design used in this study and supported the researcher in

obtaining detailed information about students' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of CRM in writing activities. The data were collected mainly through interviews to explore students' perceptions of using culturally relevant materials and how these materials made writing activities more meaningful and engaging. The researcher conducted the interviews, transcribed the responses, and analyzed the data to identify common themes related to students' writing engagement. Therefore, this research design was suitable because it provided an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions of CRM and how it supported their motivation and confidence in writing.

B. Research Setting

This research was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh. This setting was selected because it provided a relevant academic environment for conducting research related to English language learning, particularly writing engagement in EFL contexts. In this study program, English was used as the main medium of learning, and writing was considered one of the important skills that students were expected to develop. As university students majoring in English Education, the participants had experienced various writing activities, which allowed them to share deeper opinions and experiences related to the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing classes.

Although Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) had not been formally implemented as a specific teaching approach in all courses, some lecturers had included

topics related to local culture, social issues, and students' real-life experiences in writing activities. Therefore, this setting was considered appropriate to explore students' perceptions of using CRM and how such materials supported their writing engagement. In addition, this setting reflected a real higher education EFL learning environment where writing activities were conducted naturally as part of academic learning. This condition allowed the researcher to obtain authentic data about students' experiences and perceptions related to culturally relevant materials in English writing learning.

C. Participants

The participants of this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique from students enrolled in the English for Tourism course at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. This course was selected because the students had participated in writing activities using culturally relevant materials (CRM), making them relevant to the purpose of this study. The selection process was conducted based on several criteria. First, the participants had completed writing-related courses and had experience in English writing activities. Second, they had been exposed to culturally relevant materials during classroom learning. Third, they were willing to participate voluntarily and were able to express their opinions and experiences clearly during the interview. Based on these criteria, nine students were selected because they were considered capable of providing rich and relevant information regarding the use of

culturally relevant materials in enhancing writing engagement. The participants consisted of students from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh who were enrolled in the English for Tourism course. They were selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria, including having experience in English writing activities, being exposed to culturally relevant materials (CRM), and being willing to participate voluntarily in the study. To protect their privacy and confidentiality, the participants' identities were anonymized using codes (P1–P9) throughout the interview transcripts, data analysis, and presentation of the findings.

According to Dörnyei (2021), purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants who met specific research criteria and could provide relevant information related to the research focus. Dörnyei (2021) proposed several steps in purposive sampling, such as identifying the purpose of the study, determining participant criteria, selecting participants who meet the criteria, ensuring participants can provide relevant information, and deciding the number of participants needed in the research. However, in this study, the researcher focused on several steps that were considered the most relevant to the research objectives. The first step applied in this study was determining participant criteria. This step was important because the researcher needed participants who had experience in English writing activities and were able to express their perceptions related to the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). Therefore, the criteria included students who had taken writing-related courses and were actively involved in writing activities. The second step was

selecting participants who met the criteria. The researcher selected participants from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh because they were considered suitable for providing relevant information related to the research topic. The third step was ensuring that participants could provide rich and relevant information. This step was chosen because qualitative research requires participants who are able to explain their experiences, opinions, and perceptions in depth.

The final step applied in this study was deciding the number of participants. The researcher selected nine students because they were considered sufficient to provide detailed qualitative data related to students' perceptions and writing engagement. These steps were selected because purposive sampling allowed the researcher to focus on participants who had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied and supported the researcher in obtaining in-depth information related to the use of CRM in EFL writing classrooms. In this study, the selection criteria included students who had taken writing-related courses, had experience in English writing activities, and were actively involved in classroom learning. This method ensured that the data collected represented students' experiences and perceptions of writing engagement using culturally relevant materials.

Before the data collection process began, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to all participants and ensured that their participation was voluntary. The researcher also maintained the confidentiality of participants' identities and allowed them to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. These ethical considerations were intended to create a comfortable and trustworthy research

environment. The data obtained from the participants were analyzed to describe how students perceived the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in enhancing their writing engagement in EFL classrooms.

D. Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher played the role of the main instrument who directly collected, interpreted, and analyzed the data. According to Creswell (2023), the researcher was the key instrument because they interacted directly with participants, interpreted responses, and drew conclusions based on the findings. In addition to the researcher, This study used semi-structured interviews as the main research instrument. Creswell (2023) stated that interviews are commonly used as one of the main instruments in qualitative research to explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and opinions in depth. In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews because they allowed participants to answer the questions freely while still focusing on the research topic. This instrument was considered suitable for the study since the research aimed to explore students' perceptions and writing engagement related to the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in EFL writing classrooms. The interview allowed participants to freely express their perceptions, experiences, and opinions regarding the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing activities. The semi-structured format was chosen because it provided flexibility for the researcher to ask follow-up questions and explore participants' responses in more depth.

1. Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was used to collect data systematically. It consisted of several open-ended questions designed to explore students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) and how these materials influenced their writing engagement. The questions were developed based on key aspects such as students' motivation, interest, participation, and emotional involvement in writing activities.

2. Audio Recording Device

An audio recording device, namely a mobile phone, was used to record all interview sessions with the participants' consent. The recordings ensured that all participants' responses were captured accurately and completely, minimizing the possibility of missing important information during the interview process. Furthermore, the audio recordings facilitated the transcription process, allowing the researcher to review the interview data repeatedly to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the transcriptions. The use of an audio recording device also enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data because the researcher could verify participants' responses throughout the data analysis process.

3. Interview Transcript (General)

The interview transcript was used as the written record of participants' responses after the interview sessions. The transcripts helped the researcher review, organize, and analyze the data systematically. This instrument also

supported the researcher in identifying important statements related to students' perceptions and writing engagement.

Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher consulted the interview questions with the thesis supervisor to ensure that the questions were valid, relevant, and appropriate to the research objectives. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to allow participants to express their ideas more comfortably and naturally

This study did not conduct a pilot study before the main data collection process. The interview questions were reviewed and discussed with the thesis supervisor to ensure their relevance and appropriateness to the research objectives. Therefore, the data analyzed in this study were obtained from the main data collection process involving nine participants from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The main data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted via telephone calls and served as the primary source of information for answering the research questions.

E. Data Collection Procedures

In this research, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview technique was chosen because it allowed the researcher to obtain deeper information about students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) and how these materials influenced their writing engagement. According to Ary et al. (2020), interviews were useful for collecting detailed and personal information that

might not appear through observation or questionnaires. Ary et al. (2020) proposed several steps in conducting interviews in qualitative research, such as preparing the interview questions, selecting participants, conducting the interviews, recording participants' responses, transcribing the interview results, and organizing the data for analysis. However, in this study, the researcher focused on several steps that were considered the most relevant to the research objectives. The first step applied in this study was preparing semi-structured interview questions related to students' perceptions, writing engagement, and the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). This step was important to ensure that the interview questions were relevant to the research objectives and research questions. The second step was selecting participants who met the research criteria. The third step was conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants.

This step was selected because semi-structured interviews allowed participants to explain their opinions, experiences, and feelings more freely and deeply. During the interview sessions, the researcher recorded the participants' responses using a mobile phone after obtaining their consent. The audio recordings were used to ensure that all information provided by the participants was documented accurately and completely. After the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed verbatim and served as the primary data for thematic analysis. The fourth step was recording participants' responses using a mobile phone to ensure that all information was captured accurately during the interview process. The fifth step was transcribing the interview results into written form for further analysis. This step helped the researcher

review and analyze the data systematically. Finally, the researcher organized the interview data before analyzing it using thematic analysis. These steps were selected because they supported the researcher in obtaining detailed qualitative data and understanding students' perceptions and experiences related to the use of CRM in EFL writing classrooms.

Therefore, this method was considered appropriate for this study, which focused on describing students' perceptions of how CRM enhanced their writing engagement.

1. The data collection process was conducted in several steps as follows:

Permission from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training and ethical clearance. The researcher requested formal permission from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training before collecting the data. Ethical clearance was also obtained to ensure that all research activities followed academic and ethical standards.

2. Conducting interviews

The researcher conducted interviews with several students. The interviews were carried out to explore students' opinions, experiences, and perceptions regarding the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing activities. Each interview session lasted approximately 15–30 minutes and was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to make participants feel more comfortable and confident in expressing their ideas.

3. Recording and transcribing data

All interviews were recorded using an audio recording device to ensure that the information was captured accurately. After that, the researcher transcribed all recordings into written form. The transcripts were reviewed to identify statements related to students' writing engagement and their perceptions of using CRM.

All interviews were recorded using a mobile phone. The recording was used to ensure the accuracy of the data and to avoid losing important information during the interview process. It also helped the researcher to transcribe the data more accurately for further analysis.

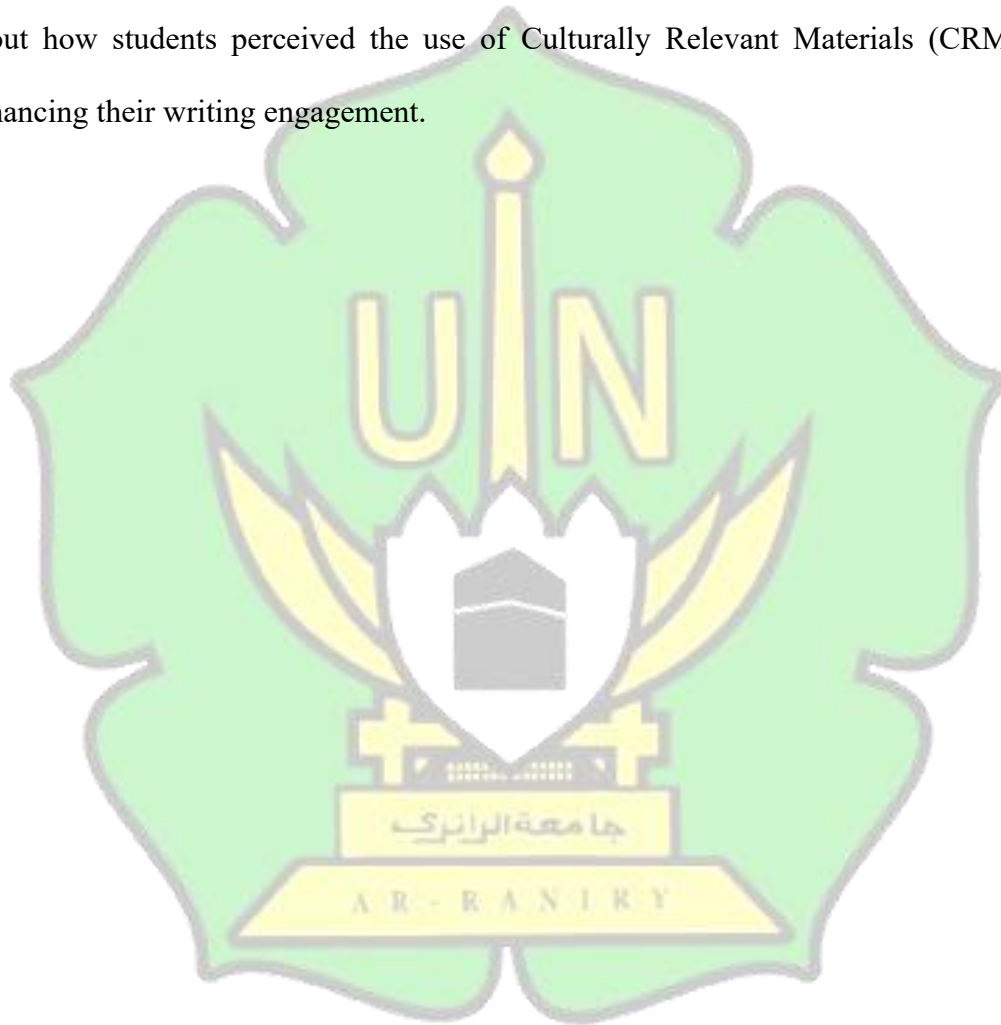
F. Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. In this study, thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and interpret recurring patterns or themes that appeared in the interview data, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed several steps in thematic analysis, namely familiarizing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. In this study, the researcher applied all of these steps because they were considered appropriate for analyzing qualitative interview data systematically. The first step was familiarizing the data by reading the interview transcripts repeatedly to understand participants' responses in depth. The second step was generating initial codes by identifying important statements

related to students' perceptions, writing engagement, and the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). The third step was searching for themes by grouping similar codes into broader themes related to the research topic. The fourth step was reviewing themes to ensure that the themes were relevant and consistent with the interview data. The fifth step was defining and naming themes in order to make the findings clearer and easier to understand. Finally, the researcher produced the report by presenting the findings descriptively in narrative form. These steps were chosen because thematic analysis helped the researcher analyze qualitative data systematically and obtain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of CRM in EFL writing classrooms.

This method was considered suitable because it helped the researcher organize a large amount of qualitative data into meaningful categories that reflected students' writing engagement and their perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). After all interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher began the process of familiarizing herself with the data by reading the transcripts several times to understand the content deeply. Then, the researcher identified and highlighted key words or phrases that represented important ideas related to the research questions. These key ideas were given initial codes to help categorize the data based on their meanings. Next, the researcher grouped similar codes to form broader themes that described general patterns found in participants' responses. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the data and were relevant to the focus of the study. Each theme was defined and named clearly to reflect its main idea

and relationship with the research objectives. Finally, the researcher presented the findings in descriptive form by explaining each theme in detail and supporting them with direct quotations from participants' responses. Through this process, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to interpret the data meaningfully and draw conclusions about how students perceived the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in enhancing their writing engagement.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Data Collection

In this study, the data were collected through interviews with students from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing activities. A total of nine students participated in this study. The participants were selected purposively because they had experience in learning writing through culturally relevant materials. The interviews were conducted individually through telephone calls to provide flexibility and convenience for both the researcher and participants. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes and was conducted on different dates depending on the availability of the participants. Before the interview sessions began, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and informed the participants that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. The participants also gave their consent to participate in the interview process.

During the interviews, the researcher used semi-structured interview questions to allow participants to share their opinions, experiences, and feelings freely. This interview format also enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions whenever additional information or clarification was needed. The questions mainly focused on students' experiences in using culturally relevant materials, their feelings toward

writing activities, the benefits they perceived, and the challenges they encountered during the learning process. All interview sessions were recorded using a mobile phone to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. Recording the interviews helped the researcher avoid missing important information during the conversation. After the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed into written form for further analysis. The transcription process was conducted carefully to maintain the originality of participants' responses.

After all the data had been transcribed, the researcher organized and analyzed the interview data using thematic analysis. The researcher identified several recurring themes and patterns related to students' perceptions of using CRM in writing activities. The findings from the interviews were then categorized into different themes based on similarities in participants' responses. This process helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and experiences regarding the implementation of culturally relevant materials in writing classes.

A total of nine students from the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh participated in this study. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they met the criteria established for this research. Specifically, the participants had experience in learning writing through the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) and were considered capable of providing information relevant to the research objectives. Their experiences and perspectives were essential in helping the researcher gain a deeper understanding of how CRM influences students' writing activities.

To protect participants' privacy and maintain research ethics, the researcher used participant codes (P1–P9) instead of real names throughout the study. These codes were used consistently during the data analysis and presentation of findings. The use of participant codes ensured confidentiality while allowing the researcher to present direct quotations and responses accurately.

The primary data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted individually via telephone calls. This interview format allowed the researcher to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions in greater depth while maintaining flexibility during the conversation. The semi-structured format also enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions whenever additional clarification or elaboration was needed. As a result, the interviews generated detailed and meaningful responses that contributed significantly to the understanding of the research topic.

The interviews were conducted at different times based on the participants' availability and convenience. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes, although the duration varied depending on the depth of participants' responses and the flow of the discussion. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to share their experiences freely and provide detailed explanations regarding their writing activities, their engagement when using culturally relevant materials, and the challenges they encountered throughout the writing process.

The interview questions focused on three main areas related to the research objectives. First, the participants were asked about their perceptions of using Culturally

Relevant Materials in writing activities. Second, they were asked about their engagement during writing activities involving culturally relevant topics. Finally, the participants were invited to discuss any difficulties or challenges they experienced while writing about cultural topics in English. These areas provided a comprehensive framework for understanding students' experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of CRM in writing instruction.

After the interviews had been completed, all interview recordings were carefully transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the data. The transcriptions were then reviewed several times to familiarize the researcher with the content and to identify meaningful responses related to the research questions. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. Through this process, the researcher identified recurring themes, patterns, and categories that emerged from participants' responses. These themes later formed the basis for the presentation of findings and discussion in this study.

Overall, the interview data provided valuable insights into students' experiences with Culturally Relevant Materials in writing activities. The information obtained from the participants enabled the researcher to examine not only their perceptions of CRM but also the ways in which culturally relevant topics influenced their engagement and writing experiences. Therefore, the interview data served as the primary source of evidence for answering the research questions and achieving the objectives of this study.

B. Research Findings

Based on the interview data collected from nine participants, several findings were identified regarding students' perceptions of using Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in writing activities. The findings show that most students have positive perceptions toward the use of culturally relevant materials because the topics are related to their daily life, culture, and personal experiences. However, some students also mentioned several difficulties when writing about cultural topics in English.

The interview results revealed that culturally relevant materials helped students feel more confident and motivated during writing activities. Most participants stated that they could generate ideas more easily because they were already familiar with the topics discussed. In addition, the use of local culture and personal experiences made the learning process more meaningful and enjoyable for the students. Several participants also mentioned that CRM encouraged them to express their opinions and experiences more freely in their writing.

Despite these positive perceptions, some students still experienced challenges in using English to explain cultural concepts. A few participants reported difficulties in finding appropriate vocabulary, organizing ideas, and translating certain cultural terms into English. Some students also felt uncertain about grammar and sentence structure when describing cultural topics. Nevertheless, most participants believed that the use of CRM still provided a positive impact on their writing activities and helped them become more engaged in the learning process.

1. Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Culturally Relevant Materials

Based on the interview results, most participants expressed positive perceptions toward the use of culturally relevant materials in writing activities. The participants explained that cultural topics were more familiar because they were related to their daily life, local culture, and personal experiences. As a result, students felt more comfortable and confident when writing about topics connected to their own culture compared to unfamiliar topics from foreign cultures. The findings indicate that culturally relevant materials helped students understand the topic more easily and encouraged them to express their ideas in writing.

Participant 1 explained that writing about local cultural topics was easier because the stories and traditions had been known since childhood. According to the participant, familiarity with the topic made it easier to generate ideas and organize them into written form.

“Local cultural topics such as folklore are more familiar because we have known them since childhood.” (P1)

This response shows that students' background knowledge played an important role in supporting their writing process. Since the participant already understood the cultural stories and traditions, the participant did not need to spend too much time thinking about the content of the writing. Instead, the participant could focus more on developing ideas and arranging sentences. This finding suggests that culturally relevant materials can reduce students' difficulties in generating ideas during writing activities.

Participant 2 also mentioned that writing about cultural topics helped students understand the topic better because it was related to their everyday life and personal experiences. The participant stated that familiar cultural topics made the writing activity more meaningful and interesting.

“Writing about cultural topics is interesting because it helps me understand the culture that is close to my daily life.” (P2)

The response indicates that culturally relevant materials may increase students’ engagement and motivation in writing activities. When students feel connected to the topic, they become more interested in expressing their opinions and experiences. In addition, the participant’s statement suggests that writing activities not only improved writing skills but also increased students’ awareness and understanding of their own culture.

Similarly, **Participant 4** stated that writing with culturally related topics felt more comfortable compared to writing about unfamiliar topics. The participant explained that familiar topics made it easier to describe ideas and experiences because the participant already had sufficient knowledge about the topic.

“Writing using materials related to our culture feels more comfortable because the topic is closer to our daily life.” (P4)

This finding demonstrates that familiarity with the topic can help students feel more relaxed during the writing process. Students may experience less anxiety when writing about subjects they already understand. Therefore, culturally relevant materials may create a more supportive learning environment and help students participate more

actively in classroom writing activities. Furthermore, several participants mentioned that culturally relevant materials helped them develop ideas more easily because they could relate the topic to real experiences in their environment. The students explained that discussing local traditions, foods, folklore, or social habits provided them with enough information and inspiration to continue writing. This condition made the writing process smoother and more enjoyable for the students. Overall, the findings reveal that students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of culturally relevant materials in writing activities. The participants believed that familiar cultural topics helped them generate ideas, understand the topic more easily, and feel more confident during writing activities. In addition, culturally relevant materials also increased students' interest and engagement because the topics were closely connected to their daily life and personal experiences.

2. Students' Engagement in Writing Activities

The findings also show that culturally relevant materials can increase students' engagement in writing activities. Many participants mentioned that they felt more interested and motivated when writing about topics related to their culture and personal experiences. The participants explained that familiar cultural topics made the writing activities feel more meaningful because the topics were closely connected to their real life. As a result, students became more active and participated more confidently during writing activities in the classroom.

Participant 5 explained that writing about cultural topics made the writing activity more interesting and easier to develop. The participant believed that understanding the context of the topic helped students organize and expand their ideas more effectively.

“Writing about our own culture makes it easier to develop ideas because we already understand the context.” (P5)

This response indicates that students’ familiarity with cultural topics supported their engagement during the writing process. Since students already understood the background of the topic, they could focus more on expressing their ideas rather than trying to understand unfamiliar information. In addition, students may feel more confident because they are discussing topics that are already part of their daily life and experiences. This condition may encourage students to participate more actively in writing activities.

Participant 6 also mentioned that cultural topics helped students generate ideas more quickly during writing tasks. According to the participant, familiar topics reduced the difficulty of thinking about what to write.

“When the topic is related to our culture or daily life, the ideas come more easily.” (P6)

The participant’s statement suggests that culturally relevant materials can support students’ creativity and idea generation in writing activities. Students may experience fewer difficulties in brainstorming because they can directly connect the topic with their own experiences and knowledge. As a result, the writing process

becomes smoother and less stressful for students. This finding also indicates that culturally relevant materials may help students become more engaged because they do not feel pressured when completing writing tasks.

Participant 7 explained that writing about familiar cultural topics, such as Ramadan activities made the writing task more enjoyable and meaningful.

“Writing about Ramadan activities in my village is more enjoyable because I have experienced it directly.” (P7)

This response demonstrates that personal experience plays an important role in increasing students’ interest in writing activities. Since the participant had directly experienced the cultural activity, the participant could describe the event more clearly and confidently. Writing about real experiences may also help students express their feelings, opinions, and ideas more naturally. Therefore, culturally relevant materials can create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and encourage students to become more involved in classroom activities.

Participant 8 also mentioned that culturally relevant topics made students more active in during writing activities.

“Topics related to our culture make students more interested and active in writing tasks.” (P8)

The response shows that culturally relevant materials may positively influence students’ classroom participation. When students feel interested in the topic, they are more willing to share ideas, ask questions, and participate in discussions related to writing activities. In addition, familiar topics may reduce students’ anxiety because

they already have enough knowledge about the subject being discussed. This condition can help students feel more comfortable and motivated to complete writing tasks. Overall, the findings indicate that culturally relevant materials positively influenced students' engagement in writing activities. The participants believed that familiar cultural topics helped them generate ideas more easily, increased their motivation, and made writing activities more enjoyable. Furthermore, culturally relevant materials encouraged students to participate more actively because the topics were closely related to their daily life, experiences, and cultural background.

3. Students' Difficulties in Writing Using Culturally Relevant Materials

Although most participants had positive perceptions toward the use of culturally relevant materials in writing activities, some students also experienced several difficulties when writing about cultural topics in English. The participants explained that the difficulties were mostly related to vocabulary, lack of references, limited cultural knowledge, and confidence in expressing ideas in English. These findings indicate that even though culturally relevant materials may help students generate ideas more easily, students may still face challenges during the writing process.

Participant 2 explained that some cultural terms were difficult to translate into English because certain local word or expressions did not have direct equivalents in english.

“Some cultural terms are difficult to translate into English because there is no direct translation.” (P2)

This response suggests that language differences became one of the main difficulties faced by students when writing cultural topics in English. Some traditional terms, local expressions, or cultural concepts may only exist in the students’ native culture, making them difficult to explain accurately in English. As a result, students may struggle to choose appropriate vocabulary and may worry that the meaning of the cultural term cannot be fully understood by readers. This difficulty may also affect students’ confidence during the writing process because they are unsure whether their explanations are correct or clear enough.

Participant 2 also mentioned that local cultural topics sometimes had limited references compared to Western cultural topics.

“Local cultural topics sometimes have fewer references compared to Western topics.” (P2)

The participant’s statement indicates that students sometimes experienced difficulties in finding supporting information about local cultural topics. Compared to Western cultural topics, which are widely discussed in books, articles, and online sources, local cultural topics may have fewer available references in English. This condition may make students feel uncertain when developing their ideas because they do not have enough supporting materials to strengthen their writing. In addition, limited references may reduce students’ opportunities to learn new vocabulary or examples related to local cultural topics in English.

Participant 3 stated that students sometimes felt less confident because they did not know the detailed information about certain cultural topics.

“Sometimes I feel less confident because I do not know the detailed information about the culture.” (P3)

This response shows that not all students fully understood every aspect of their local culture. Although students were familiar with cultural topics in general, some participants still lacked deeper knowledge about certain traditions, historical backgrounds, or cultural meanings. As a result, students sometimes hesitated to write because they were afraid of giving incorrect information or incomplete explanations. This finding suggests that familiarity with cultural topics alone may not always guarantee students’ confidence in writing activities.

Participant 9 also explained that confidence when writing about cultural topics could vary depending on individual confidence and ability.

“Writing about cultural topics can increase motivation, but confidence also depends on the individual.” (P9)

The participant’s statement indicates that students’ engagement and confidence are influenced not only by the topic but also by personal factors. Some students may feel confident expressing ideas in writing, while others may still feel anxious even when the topic is familiar. Differences in vocabulary mastery, writing ability, and self-confidence may influence how students respond to writing activities using culturally relevant materials. Therefore, teachers may still need to provide guidance and support to help students develop confidence in writing. Furthermore, several participants

implied that writing in English itself remained a challenge despite the familiarity of the cultural topics. Students still needed to think about grammar, sentence structure, and appropriate vocabulary while trying to explain cultural ideas clearly. In some cases, students found it difficult to organize their ideas into coherent paragraphs because they were more familiar with discussing cultural topics in their first language rather than in English.

Overall, the findings reveal that students still faced several difficulties when writing using culturally relevant materials. The challenges included difficulties in translating cultural terms, limited references about local culture, lack of detailed cultural knowledge, and differences in students' confidence levels. Although culturally relevant materials helped students feel more engaged and motivated, the findings suggest that teachers should continue providing support, explanations, and guidance to help students overcome these challenges during writing activities.

C. Themes Identified from Interview Data

Table 4. 1 Interview data

No.	Theme	Description	Participants
1.	Familiar Cultural Topics	Students find cultural topics easier because they are related to daily life and local traditions.	P1, P4, P5, P7

2.	Easier Idea Development	Cultural topics help students generate ideas more easily in writing.	P3, P5, P6, P7
3.	Increased Motivation	Students feel more interested and motivated when writing about familiar cultural topics.	P4, P5, P7, P8
4.	Increased Participation	Students become more active in writing tasks when the topic is familiar	P6, P7, P8
5.	Vocabulary Difficulties	Some cultural terms are difficult to translate into English.	P1, P2, P9
6.	Limited References	Local cultural topics sometimes have fewer references than Western topics.	P1, P2, P3
7.	Confidence Issues	Some students feel less confident because they are unsure about cultural information.	P3, P4, P9

D.Discussion

1. The Importance of Culturally Relevant Materials in Writing Activities

The use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) plays an important role in helping students participate in writing activities. By using topics that are closely related to students' culture and daily experiences, the learning process becomes more

meaningful and easier to understand. Students are able to connect new learning materials with the knowledge they already possess, making it easier for them to express their ideas in written form.

This discussion is in line with Gay (2018), who states that culturally responsive teaching should connect learning materials with students' cultural backgrounds. When students are familiar with the topics being discussed, they tend to feel more comfortable and confident during the learning process. In addition, Herdi (2023) found that culture-based materials increased students' enthusiasm and confidence in learning English. Therefore, culturally relevant materials can be considered an effective approach to support writing instruction in EFL classrooms.

2. The Role of CRM in Increasing Students' Engagement

Student engagement is an important factor in successful learning. The use of culturally relevant materials can increase students' interest and participation because the topics are closely related to their real-life experiences. When students feel connected to the learning content, they become more motivated to participate in classroom activities and complete writing tasks.

This discussion supports the theory of student engagement proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004), which emphasizes the importance of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning. Furthermore, Qatrunnida and Ardini (2023) found that culturally familiar topics encouraged greater student engagement during writing activities. Similarly, Zhang and Hyland (2021) reported that meaningful writing tasks

increased students' motivation and participation. Therefore, CRM can contribute to creating a more engaging learning environment for students.

3. Difficulties Encountered by Students in Using CRM

Although culturally relevant materials provide many benefits, students still experience several difficulties during writing activities. These difficulties may arise when students try to express cultural ideas in English or organize their thoughts into a coherent piece of writing. As a result, students may need additional support from teachers during the writing process.

This discussion is supported by Hyland (2021), who explains that writing requires not only knowledge of a topic but also the ability to communicate ideas effectively. In addition, Tomlinson (2020) emphasizes that learning materials should be supported by appropriate instructional guidance. Therefore, teachers play an important role in helping students overcome difficulties and develop their writing skills while using culturally relevant materials.

Overall, the discussion shows that Culturally Relevant Materials have a positive contribution to students' writing activities. The materials help students feel more comfortable, increase their engagement, and make learning more meaningful. Although some difficulties remain, the benefits of CRM indicate that it can be an effective approach in EFL writing classrooms.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore students' perceptions and writing engagement toward the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM) in EFL writing classrooms at the English Language Education Study Program of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative research design because the study focused on understanding students' experiences, opinions, and perceptions in depth. The participants of this study were nine students selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria related to the research objectives. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews because this type of interview allowed the researcher to prepare guiding questions while still giving participants the freedom to explain their opinions, experiences, and feelings in detail. The use of semi-structured interviews was considered appropriate for this study because the researcher needed in-depth information related to students' perceptions and writing engagement toward the use of Culturally Relevant Materials (CRM). During the interview process, participants' responses were recorded using a mobile phone to ensure the accuracy of the data. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that students had positive perceptions toward the implementation of Culturally Relevant Materials in EFL writing

classrooms. Most participants stated that the use of culturally relevant topics helped them understand the learning materials more easily because the topics were closely related to their personal experiences, cultural background, and daily life. The familiarity of the topics made students feel more connected to the learning process and helped them express their thoughts more comfortably during writing activities. Students also felt that CRM created a more meaningful learning experience because the materials reflected situations and cultural contexts that they already knew and understood. In addition, the findings revealed that the use of CRM increased students' motivation and interest in writing activities. Students explained that they felt more enthusiastic and confident when writing about topics related to their own culture and environment compared to unfamiliar topics. The use of culturally familiar materials reduced students' anxiety and difficulties in generating ideas because they already had background knowledge about the topics being discussed. As a result, students were able to develop their ideas more easily and participate more actively during classroom activities.

Furthermore, the study found that CRM positively influenced students' writing engagement in several aspects. Students became more active in classroom participation, discussions, and writing tasks. They were more willing to share opinions, communicate ideas, and interact during the learning process. The participants also explained that culturally relevant topics encouraged them to think critically and connect their personal experiences with the writing materials. This situation helped students become more engaged emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally during writing

activities. In addition, the use of CRM supported students in improving their confidence and comfort in expressing ideas in English writing classrooms. The findings of this study also showed that culturally relevant materials can create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment in EFL classrooms. By integrating students' cultural backgrounds into learning materials, students felt more appreciated and involved in the classroom learning process. The participants believed that the use of CRM not only helped them improve writing engagement but also made the learning activities more enjoyable and interactive. Therefore, the implementation of culturally relevant materials can support students in developing writing skills while maintaining meaningful connections with their cultural identities and experiences.

Overall, this study concluded that the implementation of Culturally Relevant Materials gave positive contributions to students' perceptions and writing engagement in EFL writing classrooms. CRM helped students feel more motivated, confident, active, and engaged during writing activities. The findings indicate that culturally relevant materials can be considered an effective approach to support meaningful learning experiences and increase students' participation in EFL writing classrooms. Therefore, the use of CRM is recommended for English teachers and lecturers who want to create more engaging, interactive, and student-centered writing instruction..

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed for teachers, students, and future researchers regarding the use of culturally relevant materials in writing activities.

1. For Teachers

Teachers are suggested to use materials that are closely related to students' daily life, local culture, and personal experiences, especially in writing classes. Using familiar topics can help students feel more comfortable, confident, and motivated during the learning process. In addition, culturally relevant materials may help students generate ideas more easily because the topics are already connected to their background knowledge and experiences.

Teachers are also encouraged to create a supportive and interactive classroom atmosphere where students feel free to express their ideas without being afraid of making mistakes. Since some students still experience difficulties in vocabulary, grammar, and explaining cultural concepts in English, teachers should provide clear explanations, examples, and guidance during writing activities. For example, teachers can help students understand how to translate cultural terms into English or explain cultural ideas using simple and understandable language.

Furthermore, teachers should provide sufficient practice opportunities so students can gradually improve their writing skills. Writing activities can be combined with discussions, brainstorming sessions, or group work to help students exchange ideas and gain more confidence. Teachers may also introduce various local cultural

topics, such as folklore, traditional ceremonies, local foods, and social traditions, to make the learning activities more meaningful and engaging for students.

2. For Students

Students are expected to become more active and confident in participating in writing activities. They should try to use their own experiences, opinions, and cultural knowledge as sources of ideas when writing. Since writing is a process of learning, students should not be afraid of making mistakes while expressing their ideas in English. Mistakes can help students learn and improve their writing ability step by step.

Students are also encouraged to improve their vocabulary mastery, especially vocabulary related to cultural topics and daily life. Learning more vocabulary can help students explain their ideas more clearly and effectively in writing. In addition, students should practice writing regularly because continuous practice can help them become more familiar with organizing ideas, using grammar correctly, and developing paragraphs.

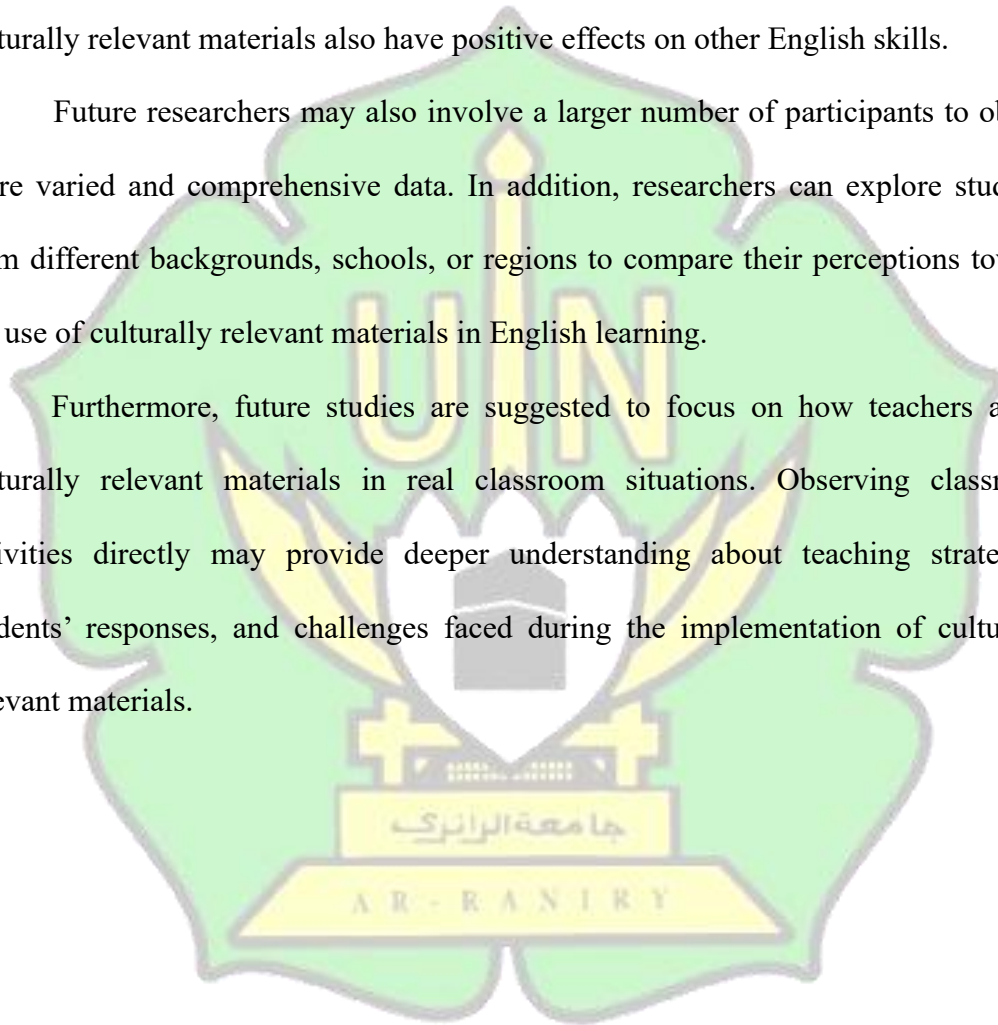
Moreover, students can increase their understanding of local culture by reading books, articles, or other sources related to cultural topics. Having better knowledge about their own culture may help students feel more confident when discussing cultural topics in English. Students are also encouraged to share ideas and discuss writing topics with classmates or teachers to gain more insight and improve their confidence during writing activities.

3. For Future Researchers

Future researchers are suggested to conduct further studies related to culturally relevant materials in different contexts, educational levels, or language skills. Similar studies can be carried out in speaking, reading, or listening classes to explore whether culturally relevant materials also have positive effects on other English skills.

Future researchers may also involve a larger number of participants to obtain more varied and comprehensive data. In addition, researchers can explore students from different backgrounds, schools, or regions to compare their perceptions toward the use of culturally relevant materials in English learning.

Furthermore, future studies are suggested to focus on how teachers apply culturally relevant materials in real classroom situations. Observing classroom activities directly may provide deeper understanding about teaching strategies, students' responses, and challenges faced during the implementation of culturally relevant materials.



REFERENCE

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Walker, D. (2020). Introduction to research in education (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Anyichie, A. C. (2023). Exploring teacher practices for enhancing student engagement through culturally responsive teaching.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2018). Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2023). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2021). Research methods in applied linguistics (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Mercer, S. (2020). Engaging language learners in contemporary classrooms. Cambridge University Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2020). Professional development through reflective practice for English language teachers. Routledge.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109.
- Fu, H., & Liu, Y. (2022). Cognitive engagement in EFL writing: Processes and influencing factors. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(4), 601–610.
- Gay, G. (2018). Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Herdi, H. (2023). Integrating local culture in English language teaching in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 101–110.
- Hyland, K. (2021). Second language writing. Cambridge University Press.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). *Culturally relevant pedagogy: Asking a different question*. Teachers College Press.
- Lee, J., & Kim, S. (2023). The impact of culturally relevant materials on EFL learners' engagement. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Culture*, 6(1), 23–34.
- Liu, Y. (2023). Dimensions of writing engagement in EFL classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 60, 101–120.
- Miqawati, A. H. (2024). Integrating local culture into English language teaching. *Journal of English Education and Innovation*, 8(1), 45–58.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Pattimura, L. (2025). The impact of culturally relevant materials on students' writing engagement in EFL classrooms. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Education*, 13(1), 45–57.
- Qatrunnida, D., & Ardini, S. N. (2023). Students' engagement in online writing learning. *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(1), 42–51.
- Rahmawati, Y., & Widodo, H. P. (2022). Culturally responsive pedagogy in EFL classrooms: Linking culture and language learning. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(3), 653–664.
- Reschly, A. L., & Christenson, S. L. (2022). *Handbook of research on student engagement*. Springer.
- Sutrisno, A., Rahman, F., & Putri, N. (2024). Students' perceptions toward culturally relevant materials in EFL writing classrooms. *Journal of Language and Education Research*, 9(2), 88–101.
- Zhang, Y., & Hyland, K. (2021). Fostering student engagement in EFL writing classrooms through meaningful writing activities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(3), 765–782.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 038 TAHUN 2026

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

Menimbang	a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi; b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa; c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
Mengingat	1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional; 2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen; 3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi; 4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum; 5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi; 6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh; 7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh; 8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh; 9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI; 10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/KMk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum; 11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
MEMUTUSKAN	
Menetapkan	Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.
KESATU	Menunjuk Saudari: Chamisah, S.Ag., M.Ed. Untuk membimbing Skripsi Nama : Bunga Humaira NIM : 220203030 Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Judul Skripsi : Students' Perception of Using Culturally Relevant Material (CRM) to Enhance Writing Engagement in EFL Classrooms
KEDUA	Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
KETIGA	Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025.
KEEMPAT	Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;
KELIMA	Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh

Pada tanggal : 6 Januari 2026

Dekan,


Saiful Muluk

Tembusan

- 1. Salinan Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- 2. Salinan Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- 3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- 4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
- 5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- 6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Administrasi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- 7. Yang bersangkutan;
- 8. Arsip.



Appendix B Appoitment Letter From *Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* To
Conduct The Research



Appendix C Interview Questions

Pertanyaan Wawancara

1. Menurut kamu, bagaimana pengalamanmu mengikuti kegiatan menulis bahasa Inggris yang menggunakan materi yang berkaitan dengan budaya atau pengalaman sehari-harimu?
(pengalaman umum + persepsi awal)
2. Apa perbedaan yang kamu rasakan ketika menulis menggunakan materi yang berkaitan dengan budaya lokal dibandingkan materi yang tidak kamu kenal?
(membandingkan CRM vs non-CRM)
3. Apakah penggunaan materi yang sesuai dengan budaya kamu membuatmu lebih tertarik atau termotivasi dalam menulis? Mengapa?
(emotional engagement)
4. Bagaimana pengaruh materi berbasis budaya terhadap kepercayaan diri kamu saat mengekspresikan ide dalam tulisan bahasa Inggris?
(confidence + emotional engagement)
5. Saat menulis dengan topik yang dekat dengan kehidupan atau budaya kamu, apakah kamu merasa lebih mudah mengembangkan ide? Bisa jelaskan?
(cognitive engagement)
6. Apakah kamu menjadi lebih aktif berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan menulis (misalnya mengerjakan tugas, berdiskusi, atau menyelesaikan tulisan) ketika menggunakan materi berbasis budaya?
(behavioral engagement)
7. Bagaimana perasaan kamu selama proses menulis ketika materi yang digunakan relevan dengan pengalaman atau budaya kamu sendiri?
(emosi, kenyamanan, keterlibatan)
8. Menurut kamu, apakah materi berbasis budaya membantu membuat kegiatan menulis menjadi lebih bermakna? Mengapa demikian?
(makna belajar / meaningful learning)
9. Apakah penggunaan Culturally Relevant Materials membuat kamu lebih tertarik untuk belajar menulis bahasa Inggris ke depannya? Jelaskan alasannya.
(motivasi jangka panjang)
10. Menurut kamu, apakah penggunaan materi yang relevan dengan budaya siswa perlu lebih sering digunakan dalam kelas menulis bahasa Inggris? Mengapa?
(pandangan & rekomendasi siswa)

Appendix D Interview Transcripts

Summary Transcript (Important Parts Only)

- Researcher : Sebelum wawancara dimulai, jawaban Anda akan dirahasiakan dan hanya digunakan untuk penelitian. Dengan izin Anda, percakapan ini akan direkam agar tidak terjadi kesalahan pencatatan. Apakah Anda mengizinkan?
- Participant : Ya, saya mengizinkan.
- Researcher : Bagaimana pengalaman Anda menulis bahasa Inggris menggunakan materi budaya atau kehidupan sehari-hari?
- Participant : Menarik karena saya jadi lebih mengenal budaya sendiri, tapi cukup sulit karena banyak istilah budaya yang susah diterjemahkan ke bahasa Inggris dan referensinya minim.
- Researcher : Apa perbedaan menulis budaya lokal dibanding budaya Barat?
- Participant : Kalau budaya Barat referensinya lebih banyak dan mudah dicari. Kalau budaya lokal kadang referensinya berbeda-beda dan tidak akurat, jadi membingungkan.
- Researcher : Apakah materi berbasis budaya membuat Anda lebih termotivasi menulis?
- Participant : Tidak terlalu. Saya malah sering bingung karena budaya kita punya banyak versi, jadi sulit menentukan mana yang benar.
- Researcher : Bagaimana kepercayaan diri Anda saat menulis tentang budaya sendiri?
- Participant : Saya merasa 50-50. Kadang percaya diri, tapi takut kalau ditanya lebih dalam karena pengetahuan saya terbatas.
- Researcher : Apakah lebih mudah mengembangkan ide ketika topiknya dekat dengan kehidupan Anda?
- Participant : Kalau tentang pengalaman pribadi atau kehidupan sehari-hari lebih mudah. Tapi kalau legenda atau cerita rakyat agak sulit dikembangkan.
- Researcher : Apakah Anda aktif berdiskusi ketika menggunakan materi budaya?
- Participant : Saya lebih pasif karena kurang memahami budaya yang dibahas dan tidak terbiasa belajar budaya dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.
- Researcher : Bagaimana perasaan Anda saat menulis dengan materi yang relevan dengan pengalaman Anda?
- Participant : Menyenangkan kalau topiknya familiar dengan kehidupan saya. Tapi kalau budaya yang belum saya kenal, saya kurang suka.
- Researcher : Apakah materi budaya membuat kegiatan menulis lebih bermakna?
- Participant : Iya, karena jadi menambah pengetahuan tentang budaya sendiri dan membuat saya membaca lebih banyak sebelum menulis.
- Researcher : Apakah culturally relevant materials perlu lebih sering digunakan dalam kelas menulis bahasa Inggris?
- Participant : Iya. Karena bahasa Inggris tidak hanya untuk budaya Barat, tapi juga bisa digunakan untuk memperkenalkan budaya kita sendiri.

Appendix E Documentation of Telephone Interview

<	Semua Rekaman	Edit
balqis (sample 9) 22 Feb 2026		15.17
fadhila (sample 8) 22 Feb 2026		12.11
selvia (sample 7) 21 Feb 2026		13.31
sulis (sample 6) 17 Feb 2026		16.36
chairi (sample 5) 17 Feb 2026		14.56
amira (sample 4) 17 Feb 2026		14.28
raihana (sample 3) 17 Feb 2026		16.45
Izya (sample 2) 17 Feb 2026		19.23
nanda (sample 1) 16 Feb 2026		19.42

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Name : Bunga Humaira
Gender : Female
Place/Date of Birth : Jakarta, 6 June 2005
Address : Jl.Nasional Jeram Beutong Desa Blang Baro, Kec.
Seunagan, Kab. Nagan Raya
Nationality : Indonesian
Religion : Islam
Faculty / Department : Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training /English
Education Department
Phone No. : 082260567454
Email : bungahumaira54@gmail.com

Educational Background

Elementary School : MIN 2 NAGAN RAYA
Junior High School : MTsN 1 NAGAN RAYA
Senior High School : MAS Darut Tahfidz
University : UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh

Parental Information

Father's Name : Mahlil M.E
Father's Occupation : PNS
Mother's Name : Sri Rahma Yanti S.Sos
Mother's Occupation : Housewife
Address : Jl.Nasional Jeram Beutong Desa Blang Baro, Kec.
Seunagan Kab. Nagan Raya