

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introductory explanation of this study. It consists of the background of the study, research problems and objectives, scope, significance of the study, and the clarification of terms as well.

1.1 Background of the Study

Textbooks have been commonly used in schools by both teachers and students as a learning material that contains comprehensive information about a subject the students need. They also consist of instructions that students are required to understand in order to obtain the information and knowledge within the textbook. In the context of teaching, a textbook is commonly used as a comprehensive compilation of content in a branch of study with the intention of explaining it (Oates, 2014). The importance of using textbooks in teaching varies to what the objectives of the school are. But, Oates further elaborates that, for schools, textbooks are used as one of the supportive and effective ways to attain achievements in learning. For teachers, the quality and appearance of textbooks are important so as to allow the teachers to make improvisations in delivering materials within the textbooks in the classroom (O'Neill, 1982). Therefore, textbooks have particularly become the needs of both students and teachers (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Oakes & Saunders, 2004).

In terms of the content, a textbook is composed of many types of instructions and exercises. One of which is by utilizing multimodal texts such as comic strips to help them understand a course they are learning. Comic strip is one of many examples that can be commonly found in school textbooks. It becomes an interesting material used in textbooks considering that they are a multimodal text that utilize verbal and visual modes simultaneously.

Multimodality has been ubiquitously used in various multimodal modes, one of which is a school textbook. A textbook usually contains more than one mode, namely verbal and visual modes. Verbal mode in a textbook is usually

found in written form, such as dialogue or conversation, while visual mode is often found in many kinds of form such as in illustrations, comics, etc.

In classrooms, comic strips have been used widely in EFL textbooks and classrooms to introduce the basic notion of learning multimodality (Megawati & Anugerahwati, 2012; Ravelo, 2013; Wahyudin et al., 2020). In other words, the use of comic strips in a textbook as a learning resource is one of the examples which could be utilized in helping students to achieve the learning outcomes of the current curriculum. Therefore, this study aims to see whether the use of comic strips within a textbook, specifically for junior high school students (Phase D), are useful for students to learn a new language. Furthermore, in the Indonesian context, generally the students are required to learn English to achieve the objectives designated in the new curriculum, the Emancipated Curriculum known as *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Kemendikbud, 2022). It targets students to develop their English communicative skills through various multimodal texts (spoken, written, visual and audio-visual) which can usually be found in a textbook.

According to Kemendikbud (2022), in Phase D, specifically in the 7th grade, the students are expected to attain language skills and the ability to use, communicate, and infer texts in various contexts. Through a variety of learning resources and how textbooks are visually appealing (Richards, 2014), a textbook is expected to meet the requirements, such as language acquisition through language skills in said phase by utilizing its learning resources, including the use of multimodal texts. Therefore, an ideational intersemiotic complementarity analysis was employed. By doing so, this study is expected to reveal the relations between the verbal, which is through the realizations of experiences and goings on (Emilia, 2014), and visual texts through the realization of visual processes embedded within the visual frame of the comic strips (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021) and hence it may be seen that the utilization of both modes within the comic strips from the textbook can help students understand the content and hence makes them meet the expected learning outcomes. This approach is further used to investigate the verbal-visual relations from the textbook content to see whether the use of comic strips can help students attain the designated learning outcomes in *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the relations of both verbal and visual modes.

Several studies regarding the employment of how intersemiotic complementarity analysis is utilized to seek the relations of verbal-visual meanings have increased in the field of language learning. Haris et al. (2023) focused on incorporating the use of verbal and visual modes in a comic book series to seek the relations of the modes and the content of the comic in order to see if the comic books can be considered as a contributor as a reading material for language learning. However, research related to the current study is still limited and thus it is expected for the book writer to encounter challenges especially in finding previous studies related to this study.

1.2 Research Question

In regards to fill in the gap of the previous studies mentioned on the previous subchapter, this study will be conducted in attempt to answer the following question:

How does ideational intersemiotic complementarity in the comic strips of a junior high school textbook represent the learning outcomes of the 7th grade students in *Kurikulum Merdeka*?

1.3 Research Aim

In order to answer the research questions as stated in 1.2, this study aims to:

explore how ideational meanings represent learning outcomes of the 7th grade students within the verbal-visual modes through the analysis of intersemiotic complementarity.

1.4 Research Scope

This study is planned to explore ideational meanings (intersemiotically) from the six selected comic strips to see whether or not the textbook has accommodated the learning outcomes of said grade through its content. Moreover, this study is expected to reveal other findings concerning the content of the textbook.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to give useful information and insight to the literature and other writers:

- Theoretically, this study is expected to add information regarding multimodality for future research. This study is expected to help students and teachers understand more about the utilization of visual and verbal texts in various multimodal texts such as comic strips.
- Practically, this study is expected to guide other undergraduate researchers at UPI in implementing ideational intersemiotic complementarity analysis or the other two SFL metafunctions in EFL textbooks or other multimodal texts.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

There are several terms employed in this study. Hence, the following are the clarifications of each term in order to prevent misinterpretation.

- a. **Intersemiotic complementarity** is an analysis framework derived from and is correlated with Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) view of language as "social semiotic" (Royce, 2007). This framework is about how reading or viewing a visual involves interplay of three components: ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions.
- b. **Ideational intersemiotic analysis** is one of the metafunctions suggested by Halliday's SFL which views various lexico-semantic ways of relating experiential and logical content or subject matter projected in both visual and verbal modes through the intersemiotic sense relations of: (1) repetition, (2) synonymy, (3) antonymy, (4) meronymy, (5) hyponymy, and (6) collocation (Royce, 2007). The ideational intersemiotic used in this current study consists of *represented participants*, *attributes*, *process*, and *circumstances* in which all elements are presented both verbally and visually.
- c. **Comic strips** are a sequence of cartoons which is arranged in a series of interrelated panels to display and form a narrative story (which is often

serialized) with text in balloons and utterance, and visually has characters within them.

- d. **Panels** refer to the border on the comic strips that wraps around a single moment of an occurrence or happening in a specific context; it separates one moment to another. This study focused on doing the analysis by scrutinizing each panel from the total analyzed comic strips. The panels of all the comic strips will each be labeled differently in Chapter 4 to facilitate the readers from reading the panels.
- e. **Learning outcomes** refer to the specific knowledge, skills, abilities, or attitudes that learners are expected to gain or achieve after completing a course.
- f. **Textbook** is a written educational material used in formal education settings to provide structured information and learning content on a specific subject or topic.
- g. **Textbook illustrations** refer to visual representations included within textbooks to help explain and enhance the understanding of the text content.