CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research question of the study, objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Nowadays, environmental issues have become a concern for the globe. People started to understand that taking care of the environment is the responsibility of all (Boca & Saracli, 2019). Hence, it is essential to increase the knowledge about the environment, including its problems and solutions. Education can be essential in communicating environmental issues, especially to school students. It is in line with Meilinda et al. (2017), who assert that education has the power to influence students' attitudes, including the attitude toward the environment. For further impact, students' consciousness about the environment would also affect the public consciousness (Nugroho, 2019), which can generate people to preserve the environment.

In the context of English language teaching (ELT), the teaching is believed to not only teach students language skills but also to be familiar with issues around the world (Alter, 2015), including environmental issues. Moreover, considering environmental issues as an essential concern for the globe, ecological themes should be given a compulsory place in all curricula of both English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Brown, 1991 as cited in Zahoor et al., 2019). In Indonesia, the education system also focuses on environmental issues, as seen in the 2013 curriculum that places environmental themes on integrated thematic lessons for the primary school level. Furthermore, the involvement of environmental issues in the Indonesian education system can also be seen in the new curriculum, *Kurikulum Merdeka,* projects students to be more concerned about the issues around them by reflection on *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Kurikulum Merdeka – Pusat Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran, 2022). Therefore, the ELT in Indonesia will probably involve environmental themes, especially at the primary school level.

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Such phenomena have increased a focus on incorporating the content about environmental issues and their solutions or the action to take care of the environment in EFL materials (e.g., Dahniar et al., 2019; Saiful, 2020). According to Emilia et al. (2017), in the context of EFL, the materials supposedly can unconsciously affect students. Hence, it is crucial to focus on incorporating such content in EFL materials to subconsciously increase students' knowledge about environmental issues. In Indonesia, the usage of EFL materials is very generic. Schools, from the primary to the secondary levels, use EFL materials in many forms, like modules, textbooks, and so on, for their ELT. The materials are usually provided by the government and commercial publishers or arranged by the teachers themselves. Such materials also often represent environmental issues.

Nevertheless, environmental issues represented in EFL materials do not necessarily direct students to discuss how they save and preserve the environment. EFL materials typically represent environmental issues concerning human needs. It is in line with Akcesme's study that investigated 120 environmental texts from seven ELT textbooks employed in EFL classrooms globally. The study found that nature in those texts is mainly only represented by how it can be used for human needs and desires. Likewise, Adugna (2015) indicates that environmental ideology represented in children's literature used in schools may either influence students to be more eco-friendly or oppositely. Therefore, it is vital to investigate how environmental issues are represented in EFL materials.

There are several reseachers who have investigated environmental issues in their studies. (see Akcesme; 2013; Apriati, 2013; Xiong, 2014; Adugna, 2015; Mliless & Larouz, 2018; Zahoor & Janjua, 2019; Faramarzi & Janfeshan, 2021). Based on the studies analysing five series of EFL textbooks used in China (Xiong, 2014) and six English textbooks for Iranian high schools (Faramarzi & Janfeshan, 2021), environmental issues are underrepresented. Meanwhile, Mliless & Laraouz (2018) who examined seven ELT textbooks for Moroccan high schools found that the euphemism used in the textbooks cuts the dangers of environmental issues in reality; the agency used in the textbooks does not obscure meaning; and the passive voice used in the textbooks hides someone's responsibility as a perpetrator of natural destruction. In the meantime, based on the studies exploring 120 texts from

seven ELT textbooks that are employed in EFL classrooms globally (Akcesme, 2013), more than 50 Ethiopian children's narratives (Adugna, 2015), and Pakistani English textbooks for primary school (Zahoor and Janjua, 2019), most of the materials imply an anthropocentric view or concentrate more on how nature can be used for human needs and desires. On the other hand, Apriati (2013), who investigated the relationship between humans and nature in a children's book, found that the book represents both good and bad relationships.

Despite myriad studies investigating the existence of environmental issues in EFL materials, most of the studies emphasized this matter in verbal texts of the materials and less attention paid to the visual texts. According to Damayanti (2014), visual texts are not considered as just illustrations to go with verbal texts since meaning construction is multimodal. Therefore, to be able to fill in the gap, by using a qualitative textual analysis with a multimodal approach, this study explores how environmental issues are depicted in the relations of verbal and visual texts of an EFL module for primary school.

1.2 Research Question

Regarding the problem mentioned above, the existing study addresses the following question: How are environmental issues depicted in the relations of verbal and visual texts of an EFL module for primary school?

1.3 Aim of the Study

Related to the problem investigated, this study aims to explore how environmental issues are depicted in the relations of verbal and visual texts of an EFL module for primary school.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the representation of environmental issues in an EFL module for primary school. Specifically, the data of this study were collected from an EFL module for primary school made by the students of EYL Course Design course in the English education department of one university in Bandung. This study uses a multimodal analysis to reveal how environmental issues are represented across verbal and visual texts and its relations in an EFL module for primary school. The Transitivity system of functional grammar proposed by

Halliday and Mathiessen (2014), the 'Visual Grammar' developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and the framework of Ideational-intersemiotic Complementarity developed by Royce (1998), were utilized as the frameworks to analyse the data.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The current study is significant, at least from three perspectives as follows:

- Theoretical Significance

  Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to be able to enrich the literature and references regarding study related to the representation of environmental issues across verbal and visual texts and its relations in EFL materials, especially in an EFL module for primary school.

- Practical Significance

  Practically, the findings of the study are expected to be useful for EFL pre-service teachers and EFL teachers in examining the strengths and the weaknesses of the representation of environmental issues when making, arranging, choosing, and using EFL materials for primary school in their ELT. By being aware of in what ways environmental issues are being represented in EFL materials, teachers can identify and evaluate whether it can guide students to preserve the environment or not.

- Professional Significance

  Professionally, the findings of this study are expected to become a beneficial input for EFL pre-service teachers, EFL teachers, schools, EFL materials authors, and the decision-makers, especially The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, in considering the existence of environmental issues in EFL materials, including EFL modules, for primary school.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

As the prevention of possible misunderstanding, some terms used in the study are explained as follows:

- Environmental Issues

    Environmental issues refer to the discussion about environmental conditions including the ways people can find its solutions and do the action to preserve the environment. Given the increasingly worrying environmental conditions, there are several fields that give their attention to environmental issues, three of them are environmental education, ecocriticism, and ecolinguistics.

- EFL Module

    Module has been deemed as an instructional unit that usually focuses on one specific topic (Sweet, 2021) and has a purpose to help students achieve particular learning objectives (Meidayanti, 2020). In this study, the module refers to an EFL module for primary school made by the students of EYL Course Design course in the English education department of one university in Bandung.

- Verbal Texts

    Verbal texts have been deemed as any written text, such as words, that can be encompassed or not encompassed in shapes, letters, and so on (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). In this study, verbal texts refer to passages, exercises, and reflection available in the selected EFL module for primary school. The verbal texts, then, were analysed by using the Transitivity framework.

- Visual Texts

    Visual texts refer to elements like pictures, shapes, and symbols embodied in a multimodal text. Furthermore, visual texts have been deemed as the elements that are utilized to bond other related elements so that they can be coherent (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). In this study, visual texts refer to any pictures that go with the verbal texts in the selected EFL module. The visual texts, then, were analysed by using the Visual Grammar framework.

- Verbal-visual Relations of Meanings

    This term refers to the ways the verbal texts interact with the visual texts in the selected EFL module for primary school to make meanings.

The meanings in this study, specifically, refer to environmental issues. To do so, the Ideational Intersemiotic Complementarity framework developed by Royce (1998) was utilized.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The research study is divided into five chapters and each chapter has its own sub chapters which serve the more detailed information about the chapter. The research study is organized as follows:

- Chapter I – Introduction

    This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions of the study, objectives of the study, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

- Chapter II – Literature Review

    This chapter presents theories that will underpin the study such as the explanation of environmental issues, environmental issues and English language teaching, and multimodality. This chapter also presents a brief summary of some previous studies.

- Chapter III – Methodology

    This chapter presents the methodology that used in this study. It describes the research design and method, the research context, the data collection and the selection of the module, and the data analysis procedure.

- Chapter IV – Findings and Discussion

    This chapter presents the findings and discussions of textual analysis with a multimodal approach of an EFL module for primary school by focusing more on the representation of environmental issues. It supplies the answer to the research question. The discussions interpret the findings based on the theories explained in chapter II.

- Chapter V – Conclusion and Suggestions

    This chapter presents the conclusion of the study based on the findings and discussions that have been described previously. This

chapter also contains the implications and the limitations that indicate the benefits and shortcomings of the study. Moreover, this chapter also shows the suggestions for further study.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has offered the principles of the study. In the following chapter, based on the elaboration above, the theoretical background that will underpin the study will be presented.