CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

This study aims to analyze the classification of language skills in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH: COURSE FOR SMP/MTs GRADE VII PHASE D*. In English language learning, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL), well-designed learning materials contribute significantly to learner motivation, engagement, and language acquisition (Rasool & Winke, 2021, p. 659). On top of that, one of the learning materials is are textbook, which is essential in EFL because it is the main source of learning. In this case, the published and accessible EFL textbooks must be thoroughly examined.

EFL textbooks not only function as teaching media but also reflect broader educational policies and ideologies in the context of language learning. Although many significant elements go into teaching English, the textbooks as teaching resources that language teachers frequently employ are the most vital components of many ESL/EFL programs and classrooms (Litz, 2005, p.5). Therefore, the analysis of EFL Textbooks must be done well so that it can become a good textbook from the aspects mentioned previously.

However, in this case, there is a major challenge that determines how the analysis of EFL textbooks can occur. The challenge is none other than what components need to be analyzed in the textbooks. This is because a book, especially an educational textbook that contains language learning, has various important components. Examining and understanding the EFL textbooks thus requires careful

consideration. Furthermore, limitations regarding the related components to be analyzed must be determined.

Moreover, language skills in an EFL textbook are an important aspect that can also be used as a limitation regarding the components of the textbook that can be analyzed. Akram & Malik (2010, p.5) mentioned that teachers have to learn various ways to integrate language skills learning to increase the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom. The preface of the EFL textbook entitled *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH: COURSE FOR SMP/MTs GRADE VII PHASE D* merely outlines the general language skills that the students would learn from the textbook. There is no specific statement regarding what language skills are taught in each activity section. From this challenge, it can be concluded that analyzing how the classification of language skills in the activities of the textbook is an important component that must be analyzed in an EFL textbook.

In this context, the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands in 2007 becomes a relevant approach to exploring language skills integration in EFL textbooks. The theory provides four strands, including Meaning-focused Input (MFI), Meaning-focused Output (MFO), Language-focused Learning (LFL), and Fluency Development (FD), that are related to learning language skills and what should be considered in them. According to Nation (2007, p.3), each strand should be given roughly equal time in a well-balanced course that attempts to cover both receptive and productive abilities. Although this theory focuses on course learning, Nation (2014, p. 35) mentioned that the textbooks containing foreign language learning he wrote mostly use the Four Strands principle. This proves that Nation's theory can also be applied in the analysis of language skills classification in textbooks.

While substantial research has been conducted on various components of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), there remains a notable gap in the comprehensive analysis of how EFL textbooks classify language skills through the lens of the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands. Existing studies highlight the importance of textbooks as key tools in ESL/EFL instruction and acknowledge their role in reflecting broader educational ideologies and policies. However,

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determining which specific components of textbooks should be prioritized for analysis, especially regarding the classification of language skills, poses a significant challenge.

There are several previous studies that analyze the content of EFL textbooks, but do not specifically underscore the classification of language skills or the use of Paul Nation's Four Strands theory. Such as in the study by Ni'mah & Ulfatin (2023) titled "The Evaluation of English Language Skills by Alan Cunningsworth's Theory in 'Bright An English' Textbook". This study analyzes the same textbook, *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH*, but uses Alan Cunningsworth's Theory. On the other hand, Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw's (2021) "EFL Textbooks, Culture and Power: A Critical Content Analysis of EFL Textbooks for Ethnic Mongols in China" highlights how EFL materials must take a critical multicultural approach to better meet the requirements and cultural understanding of ethnic Mongol students.

Although previous research analyzes language skills in educational settings, limited attention has been given to how Nation's theory can be systematically applied to evaluate these aspects in EFL textbooks. This research gap calls for an in-depth exploration of how language skills are represented and classified within textbook content. Addressing this gap is expected to enhance our understanding of the potential implications for language learning and contribute to the creation of more effective and equitable EFL resources.

The importance of analyzing the classification of language skills in EFL textbooks through the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands cannot be ignored. It is anticipated that this study will provide insight into how textbooks create space for students to develop language skills properly. In order to examine the ways in which ideology and power influence how instructional materials are presented. Therefore, the results of this study can contribute to the development of textbooks to create more effective and inclusive English language teaching curricula and practices.

B. Research Questions

From the research background, the problem is formulated into the following two questions:

1. To what extent are the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) represented in the activities section in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level?

2. To what extent is the alignment of the classification of language skills in the activities section in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level with Paul Nation's Four Strands theory?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions, the problem is formulated into the following two questions:

1. To determine the extent to which the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are represented in the activities section in EFL textbooks *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level.

2. To determine the extent of the alignment of the classification of language skills in the activities section in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level with Paul Nation's Four Strands theory.

D. Research Significance

It is anticipated that this research will yield valuable theoretical and practical insights. Indeed, this study is significant for the teachers, the students, and the researchers:

Theoretical significances:

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1. For English teachers, the result of this study provides English teachers' knowledge related to the classification of language skills in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level.

2. For students, the results of this research can provide an understanding of the portion of language skills to improve their skill development, as it aligns with their learning needs in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level.

Practical significances:

1. For teachers, this research can be an inspiration and insight in determining and innovating textbooks that are more appropriate to the level of students taught in English language teaching in terms of the balanced portion of language skills.

2. For researchers, this research could offer additional information and sources, particularly for researchers who are expected to conduct research related to the classification of language skills in EFL textbooks using the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands theory.

E. Research Scope

Language skills classification in EFL textbooks has been the subject of numerous studies. However, this study fosters two strands of the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands in the analysis, which are Meaning-focused Input (MFI) and Meaning-focused Output (MFO). Nation's theory provides insight to educators in the form of guidelines that can be used as a comparison with other lists of principles. The analysis was conducted using this theory to analyze the integration of language skills in EFL textbooks.
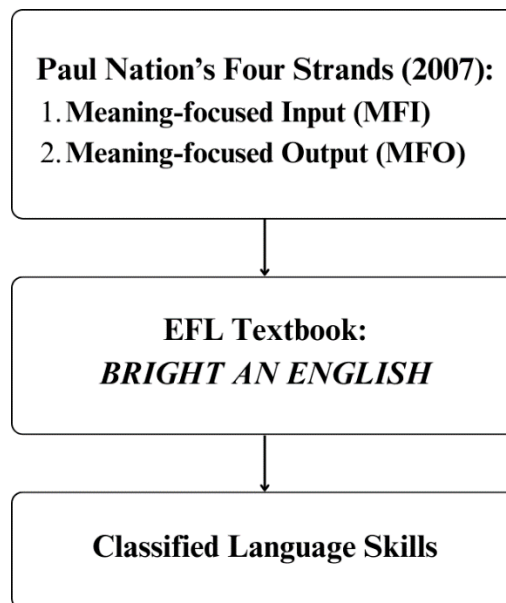
The EFL textbook that the researcher analyzed is a book entitled *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH: COURSE FOR SMP/MTs GRADE VII PHASE D*. This textbook was written by Nur Zaida and published by Erlangga in 2022. It is specifically

designed for Grade VII students in Indonesian junior high schools (SMP/MTs) as an EFL textbook and consists of eight chapters. The focus of this research is related to the classification of language skills in the activities section of the textbook.

BRIGHT AN ENGLISH is a popular textbook used in English learning in the area around the researcher. Specifically, the researcher chose this book for the seventh-grade junior high school level. The reason is that at that level, students face the transition from childhood to adolescence. This also makes it an interesting point for the researcher to conduct this research. For these reasons, the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH: COURSE FOR SMP/MTs GRADE VII PHASE D*, was chosen by the researcher to be used as the EFL textbook that the researcher analyzed using Nation's theory.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research is a qualitative design research to analyze the classification of language skills in EFL textbooks using the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands theory in 2007. The following is the conceptual framework carried out in the following qualitative research.

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│  Paul Nation's Four Strands (2007):  │
│  1. Meaning-focused Input (MFI)       │
│  2. Meaning-focused Output (MFO)      │
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                   │
                   ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│           EFL Textbook:              │
│         BRIGHT AN ENGLISH            │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
                   ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Classified Language Skills    │
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Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrated in the diagram highlights the interconnected relationship between the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands (2007), EFL textbooks, and classified language skills. At the foundation of this research is the Nation's theory, which serves as the guiding framework. According to Nation (2007, p. 9), the four strands of language skills principles are provided as a guide for educators. Among the four strands, researchers use two strands, which are Meaning-focused Input (MFI) and Meaning-focused Output (MFO), because the strands focus on the four language skills of MFI on reading and listening, and MFO on writing and speaking.

The first strand of Paul Nation's Four Strands theory is Meaning-focused Input (MFI). This first strand involves listening and reading with 'meaning-focused' meaning that the learning should focus on their interest in familiarity with the material being taught. The second strand is Meaning-focused Output (MFO), which includes language skills, speaking, and writing. This strand contains activities with 'output' such as talking in conversation and writing a letter (Nation, 2007, pp. 2, 3).

Paul Nation's Four Strands provides comprehensive descriptors and standards for language proficiency. It emphasizes the importance of the

implementation of core language skills. These principles form the basis for evaluating and analyzing teaching materials, particularly in how they foster holistic language development.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks act as the practical application of the principles of Paul Nation's Four Strands. These textbooks are central to the research, serving as tools for examining how Nation's theory guidelines are implemented in real-world teaching contexts. The analysis focuses on various aspects, including the alignment of textbook content with the theory of Paul Nation's Four Strands proficiency descriptors, the balance of skill-specific and integrative tasks, and the progression of activities across different levels. By critically assessing these elements, the study aims to understand the extent to which EFL textbooks facilitate the classification of language skills in meaningful and communicative ways.

The final outcome of this study is to evaluate how effectively language skills are addressed in EFL textbooks. Classification refers to tasks that encourage the simultaneous use of multiple skills, such as listening and reading or speaking and writing, within communicative and authentic contexts. The research examines whether the textbooks align with the Nation's theory of an action-oriented approach and promote the development of communicative competence through such integration. Findings from the study are expected to provide valuable insights into the strengths and gaps in existing textbooks, offering recommendations for improving their design to better support skill integration and holistic language learning.

G. Previous Studies

Previous research related to EFL textbook analysis and evaluation has provided valuable insights into the implementation and integration of language skills in instructional materials. Several studies have explored how textbooks align with theoretical frameworks to support balanced language development. This section reviews relevant prior works, particularly those that examine

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textbooks using content analysis, evaluate language skill distribution, or apply other framework theories. The comparison with these studies helps to contextualize the present research and highlight its contribution to the field of English language teaching, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language.

The first research was compiled by Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw (2021) entitled "EFL Textbooks, Culture and Power: A Critical Content Analysis of EFL Textbooks for Ethnic Mongols in China". This study focused on analyzing the cultural content in an EFL textbook series used in Mongolia, China to explore how multiculturalism and power relations are represented. Using Kachru and Nelson's model of English spread, the study examines which countries and cultural variables (race, gender, class, and disability) are depicted. Findings reveal unbalanced and stereotypical representations lacking diversity, with evident power imbalances across cultures and identities. The study highlights the need for a critical multicultural approach in EFL materials to better support the cultural understanding and needs of ethnic Mongol students.

"English Textbook Evaluation: A Saudi EFL Teacher's Perspective" is the second research by Alshumaimeri & Alharbi (2024). This study evaluates the "Mega Goal" English textbook series used in Saudi Arabia's secondary schools, based on feedback from 773 male EFL teachers. Using a quantitative, survey-based approach, the research assessed various aspects of the textbook, including practicality, language content, layout, language skills, exercises, and cultural elements. Overall, teachers found the textbook usable and generalizable but noted areas for improvement in adaptability, interactivity, and differentiation for varied student proficiency levels. The study highlights the importance of ongoing textbook evaluation to enhance English language teaching effectiveness.

There is a study entitled "Parity of Learning Tasks in New Total English Coursebooks" by Anandi and Mukarto (2024) as the third previous research. According to this study, Coursebooks play a crucial role in language instruction by guiding educators and learners and serving as primary sources of materials

and tasks. However, language programs often fail to equally develop students' language skills. This study analyzed the balance of learning tasks in the New Total English coursebooks using the Four Strands framework: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development.

The last study by Hasanah (2022) entitled "An Analysis of Language Skills in 'Bright' English Course Based on Alan Cunningsworth. This study investigates whether the BRIGHT English textbook for Junior High School (Grade VII), published by Erlangga, aligns with Alan Cunningsworth's criteria for language skills in English textbooks. The research uses a qualitative content analysis method, collecting data through documentation and observation checklists to examine the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Furthermore, from the four research studies above, no research has been related to the classification of language skills in the EFL textbook *BRIGHT AN ENGLISH* at the seventh-grade junior high school level, specifically using Paul Nation's Four Strands (2007) framework. Therefore, this research needs to be carried out as a form of knowledge related to the topic being studied.