

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the background of study, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Background of the Study

English proficiency has become essential in Indonesia in the context of globalization, as it is not only a vital component of international communication but also a method of gaining access to a wide range of technology and knowledge sources. The ability to speak English not only opens up opportunities for access to global information but also becomes the key to helping students compete in an increasingly internationally connected job market (Crystal, 2003).

Within the Indonesian educational context, English is progressively gaining importance as a medium of instruction for various fields of study. The government's commitment to equipping the younger generation to compete globally and face the challenges of the digital age is reflected in its designation as a compulsory subject across all levels of secondary education (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003). Secondary school English language learning focuses on the development of the four fundamental skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading rather than just vocabulary and grammar.

Reading comprehension is one of the most important of these four abilities. Students' capacity to comprehend English-language texts is crucial for knowledge access, staying up to date with scientific and technical developments, and cultivating critical thinking skills (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Without good reading comprehension abilities, students will find it challenging to understand other English-language content and may even find it more difficult to learn different language skills. It is a well-known fact that many Indonesian students still struggle to reach their ideal reading comprehension levels, frequently as a result of ineffective teaching methods or irrelevant reading material (Ariyani & Anam, 2021).

Textbooks are a useful tool for self-study and presentation material during the English language learning process. They enhance the teaching and learning process

by offering exercises, activities, a curriculum framework, and accessible reading material (Richards, 2001). As a result, the standard of these textbooks has a big impact on how well students meet learning goals, particularly the vital growth of their reading comprehension. A good textbook should present authentic, relevant, and varied texts, complemented by exercises and encourage effective reading strategies (Tomlinson, 2012).

At the Junior High School (SMP) level in Indonesia, various English textbook options are used. Regarding these several choices, the two textbooks that were the subject of this study were 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' Grade 9 students at SMP Bina Insani Bogor use these particular books. With a distinct educational approach, the school's curriculum used both books in different semesters: 'Lower Secondary World English' is used in semester one, following the Cambridge curriculum, and 'Bright: an English' is used in semester two, following the Merdeka curriculum.

In this regard, the Cambridge Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum offer different approaches to learning English. The Cambridge Curriculum, which is widely implemented in international schools in Indonesia, offers a more structured and systematic approach based on international standards. It focuses on developing deeper and more applicable language skills, with an emphasis on understanding and using English in a global context (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019). On the other hand, the Merdeka Curriculum is more flexible and allows schools to tailor their materials and teaching methods to the needs of their students. In the Merdeka Curriculum, English learning is more geared towards developing students' overall skills, with a more exploratory and project-based approach (Kemendikbud, 2021). This distinct dual-curriculum implementation offers a rich opportunity for a comparative study, as it allows for an in-depth examination of how different pedagogical frameworks translate into reading comprehension content and how they consequently aid students' skill development. Given these distinct approaches and materials, it is critical to examine how these two textbooks aid in the development of students' reading comprehension skills.

Considering how important textbooks are for developing reading comprehension skills, content analysis becomes an essential step to systematically

assess the features and materials offered in textbooks, particularly those pertaining to the reading comprehension aspect (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). This analysis covered the authenticity and the quality of the text and the variety exercise presented in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English'. The primary goal of this content analysis was to identify significant similarities and differences between the two books' approaches to reading comprehension content and to evaluate how well they align to the principles of modern reading pedagogy.

However, content analysis alone does not provide a comprehensive picture of a textbook's effectiveness. The perception of teachers is a vital component that complements content analysis. Teachers are the primary implementers who directly test the effectiveness or suitability of textbooks in the actual classroom learning environment (Cunningsworth, 1995). The experience, judgment, and input offer deep insights into how well the material in textbooks can be applied, how student receive it, and whether it genuinely helps improve their reading skills. Teachers also have a unique ability to notice any differences between the explanations in both 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks and the actual needs of the students in the classroom.

This study aimed to fill a gap in previous studies that mostly concentrated on the content analysis of particular textbooks for different curricula and educational levels. The studies by Ni'mah's (2023) used the book 'Bright: an English' for seventh grade as the object of her research, Prasetyaningtyas (2022) with the same book title but chose a different level, that is for eighth grade, and Purwaningtyas (2022) analyzed a different book "Bahasa Inggris" for eleventh grade. In addition, Wachyuni (2024) analyzed two books, "English as a Second Language" and "English Nusantara." This study's main contribution is its comprehensive comparison of the reading comprehension material in two distinct textbooks, 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English'," for junior high school students in 9th grade. This analysis was lacking in the literature, especially for the level and focus on authenticity, quality and variety of the reading comprehension content. Furthermore, although there is research on teacher perceptions of textbook use, such as that conducted by Gunawan et al. (2023), the study focuses more on general perceptions and adaptation of materials, rather than on specific teacher

perceptions of reading comprehension content from two different textbooks in a comparative context. However, this study combines content analysis with an english teacher perception study at SMP Bina Insani Bogor, providing relevant local context and a comprehensive knowledge of how reading comprehension components in both textbooks are received and used in practice. In addition to providing useful viewpoints from textbook user, this will give external validation for the content analysis findings. This combined approach is expected to offer significant insights into the development of teaching materials and English language teaching practices.

Therefore, this study focused on analyzing the content of reading comprehension in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade, as well as comparing and exploring the perceptions of English teachers at SMP Bina Insani Bogor about the quality and applicability of reading comprehension content in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' for Grade 9. SMP Bina Insani Bogor was specifically chosen as the research location for this study because its uniquely dual-textbook usage allows for a direct analysis from the perception of the same teachers.

This study provided insightful information and valuable contributions to a variety of stakeholders. These findings could provide writers, and designers of textbooks with useful information for creating better textbooks that better meet the needs of teachers and students. This study could help English teachers choose and modify the best textbooks to help students become more proficient in the English language and improve their reading comprehension. Lastly, this study can be used as a starting point for future, more in-depth studies on the standard of English textbooks in Indonesia.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background explained above, here are the following specific problems:

1. To what extent do the reading comprehension text in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade meet the criteria of an effective reading comprehension content in terms of authenticity, quality and variety?
2. To what extent do the reading comprehension text in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade indicate the similarities and differences in terms of authenticity, quality and variety?
3. How does the teachers perceive the reading comprehension content in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade at SMP Bina Insani Bogor?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the specific's problems explained above, the purpose of the study were as follows:

1. To examine the reading comprehension text in 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade meet the criteria of an effective reading comprehension content in terms of authenticity, quality and variety.
2. To analyze and describe the similarities and differences in reading comprehension content presented in the 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade.
3. To explore and understand the perceptions of English teachers at SMP Bina Insani Bogor regarding the quality and applicability of the reading comprehension content in both the 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright: an English' textbooks for 9th grade.

D. Research Significances

This study is significant because it might support and contribute significantly to a range of education stakeholders, including:

1. Theoretical Significances

This study offered an improved understanding of English language textbooks, especially when it comes to reading comprehension and combines content analysis with valuable insights from the teachers who use these books. The improvement significantly boosted how to evaluate textbooks. By looking specifically at material

from both the Cambridge and Merdeka curricula within Indonesian junior high schools, this study shed light on the unique pedagogical and cultural relevance of different teaching materials for Indonesian students. This integrated view truly bridged the gap between textbook theory and real-world classroom, showing us how teachers genuinely interpret and understand these learning theories to life. Ultimately, this study added insightful comparative data for English Language Teaching (ELT) research, guiding the creation of more effective curricula and resources in the future.

2. Practical Significances

- a. For The Teachers: The findings may help teachers at SMP Bina Insani Bogor and beyond to make better choices when picking or implementing English textbooks for reading comprehension, giving them an overview of each material's needs and issues. Additionally, teachers were better able to identify any shortcomings in the current textbooks, such as an inappropriate text, which will enable them to modify the materials already in place or add new resources to better meet the needs of their students. Furthermore, teachers' perceptions might point out typical problems or successful approaches, which is crucial for developing focused professional development initiatives.
- b. For Textbook Developers: This study offers specific recommendations for improving English textbooks in the future. Together with teachers' input, our thorough content analysis could help them create authentic and engaging texts, and design varied exercises that enhance effective reading techniques. Additionally, publishers can use the findings to make sure their textbooks are properly in line with the particular needs and details of curricula, such as the Cambridge and Merdeka curricula in Indonesia, particularly with related to reading comprehension.
- c. For Curriculum Developers and Policymakers: This study provides a practical examination of how textbook selection affects the implementation of national and international curricula. Curriculum designers can use this practical viewpoint to evaluate the quality of current resources and guide their future choices about textbook adoption and approval. This study also contributes to the continuous effort to improve the standard of English language teaching

within Indonesia by identifying the areas in which the reading comprehension resources currently in use are effective or insufficient.

E. Research Scope

The scope of this study focused on two English textbooks used by 9th-grade students at SMP Bina Insani Bogor: 'Lower Secondary World English' and 'Bright an English'. The research mostly focused on a qualitative analysis of these resources to ensure an effective and in-depth investigation. The reading comprehension content in both textbooks specifically examined, with an emphasis on identifying similarities and differences. Analyzing the characteristics of texts including the types and quality, and the variety of comprehension exercises is all part of this, specifically evaluating them in terms of the authenticity, the quality and the variety as criteria for effective reading comprehension content. The study additionally explored how the English teachers at SMP Bina Insani Bogor perceive the quality and applicability of this reading comprehension content in the classroom, in addition to this document analysis. This conducted as a comparative study focusing on the unique experience of teachers using both textbooks. The purpose of this study is to make a targeted and significant addition to the understanding of English language teaching materials in this specific educational setting by focusing on these particular factors, textbooks, and the research site.

F. Conceptual Framework

Textbooks are essential for studying English since they are not only informational resources but also pedagogical instruments that help students meet learning goals. According to Tomlinson (2012), textbooks give students a conceptual framework and an instructional structure to help in their gradual and systematic understanding of the material. The quality of textbooks has a direct impact on students' ability to learn the language, particularly reading. Richards (2001) supports this by stating that the most effective learning results will be promoted by teaching materials that are well-structured and suited to the students.

However, textbooks are not inflexible teaching aids. Textbooks aren't fixed instructions; instead, they are "proposals for action" (Cunningsworth, 1995). As a result, while assessing textbooks, a thorough examination of the content's coherence with the curriculum's objectives, its applicability to students' needs, and the appeal

of the methodological approaches presented is required. For teachers to modify their lesson plans based on actual classroom situations, this kind of assessment is necessary.

Reading comprehension is one of the main goals of studying English at the secondary level. Reading comprehension, a key to acquiring knowledge and fostering critical thinking, is described by Grabes and Stoller (2011), reading is a complex process that involves both the integration of meaning from the text being read and the activation of prior knowledge. It is not only a matter of recognizing words. This is in line with Anderson and Pearson's (1984) schema theory, which sees reading as an interaction between the reader and the text.

Building on this theoretical foundation, the present study analyzed reading comprehension materials in textbooks based on Cunningsworth's (1995) comprehensive criteria for effective reading evaluation. Cunningsworth emphasizes that while assessing textbooks, a thorough examination of the content's coherence with the curriculum's objectives, its applicability to students' needs, and the appeal of the methodological approaches presented is required. Within this broader framework, three key criteria that are particularly crucial for effective reading comprehension content are the authenticity, the quality and the variety. Authenticity refers to the inclusion of materials not specifically designed for language learning but rather for real-world communication (Nunan, 1989). The presence of authentic texts in textbooks is crucial, as students are exposed to genuine language use, which enhances motivation, and better prepare them for real-life reading situations, thereby reflecting a higher quality of the texts as advocated by Cunningsworth (1995).

Furthermore, variety emphasizes the importance of a wide range of text types (e.g., narratives, expository, descriptive, argumentative) and topics. Cunningsworth (1995) specifically highlights the need for diverse text types and a variety of reading exercises that encourage different engagement levels, which is essential to cater to diverse student interests and learning styles, and to develop different reading strategies (Harmer, 2001). The goal of this analysis was to indicate the characteristics of both textbooks— 'Lower Secondary Word English', which is based on the Cambridge curriculum, and 'Bright: an English', which is used in the

second semester and follows the Merdeka Curriculum—to examine the extent to which the materials enhance students’ reading skills.

In addition to analyzing textbook content, this study took teachers’ perceptions into account as a significant variable in the conceptual framework. The teacher has personal experience with textbooks in the classroom and play a central role in the teaching and learning process. Teachers are crucial in assessing and adapting learning materials, according to Cunningsworth (1995). As a result, their knowledge of the usefulness, adaptability, and appropriateness of textbooks is a helpful source of information. This means that teachers’ evaluations are shaped not only by observed outcomes but also by their internal meaning-making processes. According to Gibson et al. (1996), perception is a cognitive process that individuals use to interpret and understand the external stimuli to produce meaning, rather than just being an opinion. This aligns with the perspective of Kotler (2000) and Devito (1997), state that teacher perception is the process by which an individual selects and organizes incoming information that affects the senses, that triggers responses to develop meaningful understanding and shape behavior towards certain phenomena that then interact with the environment.

The implementation context of this study further illustrates how both textbooks are used in real classrooms. SMP Bina Insani Bogor's English teachers experienced a unique opportunity using two different textbooks in a single academic year. This experience allowed teachers to compare the content’s usefulness, the flexibility of the material, and their impact on students' reading comprehension due to the experience. The results of Gunawan et al. (2023), which demonstrate that teachers frequently modify textbook information to reflect students' capacity levels and classroom situations, support this.

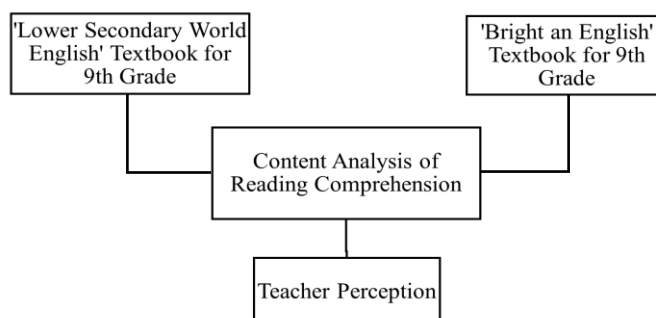


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

To provide a holistic overview of how well the ‘Lower Secondary Word English’ and ‘Bright: an English’ textbooks help 9th-grade students improve their reading skills, this conceptual framework combines objective analysis of textbook content with subjective teachers’ perceptions. In addition to enhancing the research's validity, this integrated approach offered theoretical and practical insights into the selection and development of appropriate and flexible textbooks for Indonesian secondary school students' English language learning needs.

G. Previous Studies

Previous studies have extensively evaluated textbook quality, identified the relevance of content to curricula, and explored the challenges and strategies teachers employ in their instructional processes. A review of this earlier research is essential to provide a solid theoretical foundation for the current study. It helps identify existing findings, highlight research gaps, and refine research questions.

First, a study by Wachyuniyah et al. (2024) titled “A Comparison of Two English Textbooks Used in Indonesian Secondary Education: English as a Second Language (Cambridge IGCSE) vs. English for Nusantara (Kurikulum Merdeka),” employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a comparative analysis design. The primary data sources were two main textbooks, ‘English as a Second Language’ (Cambridge IGCSE) and ‘English for Nusantara’ (Kurikulum Merdeka), specifically for grades 7-9. Data collection involved documentation and in-depth analysis comparing the structural aspects of the textbooks, the language skills emphasized, and the exploration of how both aspects support students' intercultural learning. The findings revealed similarities between the two textbooks, particularly in language skill development and thematic focus. However, significant differences were found in their structure and curricular approaches, reflecting the distinct educational philosophies of each curriculum. This study underscores the importance of considering the alignment between textbooks and curriculum objectives, as well as how textbooks can facilitate intercultural understanding.

Second, the study “A Content Analysis of Reading Materials Used in The English Textbook Entitled ‘Bahasa Inggris: Used by Eleventh Grade of MAN Kota Magelang’” by Purwaningtyas (2022) focused on analyzing the content of reading materials in an English textbook for eleventh-grade students at MAN Kota

Magelang. This study utilized a descriptive qualitative method with a content analysis approach. The main data source was the reading material from the English textbook, with documentation as the data collection technique. The study specifically analyzed text types, difficulty levels, and the suitability of reading materials with learning objectives. The findings provided a detailed overview of the characteristics of the reading materials presented in the textbook, noting a variation in text types and topics. However, some materials were found to have inappropriate difficulty levels and lacked sufficient variation to fully facilitate the development of students' comprehensive reading skills. The implication of this study highlights the importance for teachers to adapt materials and evaluate the quality and relevance of teaching content.

Third, a study titled “A Content Analysis of Reading Texts in English Textbook Entitled ‘Bright: an English’ For Seventh Grade of Junior High School Based on Alan Cunningsworth’s Language Content Criteria” by Ni’mah (2023) also adopted a descriptive qualitative method with content analysis. This study, however, focused on reading texts in the ‘Bright: an English’ textbook for seventh-grade junior high school students, based on Alan Cunningsworth’s language content criteria, which include aspects such as suitability, completeness, and attractiveness of the material. The ‘Bright: an English’ textbook served as the primary source, with data collected through documentation and systematic analysis of the reading texts. The objective of this research was to assess the extent to which the reading texts in the textbook met criteria like relevance, authenticity, and potential to motivate students. The results indicated that the reading texts in ‘Bright: an English’ for seventh grade sufficiently met Cunningsworth’s language content criteria, especially regarding relevance and clarity. However, there were some aspects where the variety of text types or depth of content could be improved to further stimulate students' reading comprehension and develop their critical thinking skills.

Fourth, another similar study analyzing textbooks, “A Content Analysis of the English Textbook Entitled ‘Bright an English 2’” by Prasetyaningtyas et al. (2022) used a qualitative research design with a content analysis approach to examine the exercises in the ‘Bright an English 2’ textbook for eighth-grade junior high school students. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed using a

descriptive qualitative method. The focus of the analysis included discursive, sociocultural, formulaic, interactional, linguistic, and strategic competencies present in the exercises. The study findings showed that discursive competencies (cohesion and coherence) were evident in the textbook. However, the study also indicated that the distribution of other competencies might not be distributed equitably or sufficiently prominent, suggesting that the textbook could be enriched to support the comprehensive development of students' communicative competence.

Fifth, a study focusing on reading comprehension questions, titled “An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Questions in the ‘Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress’ Textbook for Tenth Grade Students” by Astari and Sutrisno (2024) employed a descriptive quantitative method with a Revised Bloom's Taxonomy approach to analyze 67 reading questions from 6 chapters in the ‘Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress’ textbook for tenth-grade high school students. Data collection was carried out through documentation and analysis to determine the dominant cognitive process dimension category of the questions, as well as the proportion between Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). The study results showed that 59.7% of the reading questions focused on HOTS, with “Analyzing” as the dominant category (45.58%), followed by Understanding (22.05%), Evaluating (17.65%), Remembering (10.29%), and Creating (4.48%). No questions were categorized as “Applying.” This indicates the textbook’s effort to encourage critical thinking but also highlights areas where the distribution of HOTS could be further enriched and balanced across all cognitive dimensions.

The last study, from a different perspective, the study titled “Teacher’s Perception of Using English Textbook in Teaching English for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Munawwaroh Jambi” by Gunawan et al. (2023) applied a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perceptions of using English textbooks and identify the obstacles they faced. Two English teachers at an Islamic elementary school in Jambi participated in this research. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the teachers. The results indicated that teachers generally held a positive attitude towards textbook use, often employing material adaptation strategies such as modifying tasks and adding or removing content. However,

teachers faced key challenges related to inappropriate material difficulty levels and limited teaching aids. This study provides valuable insights into the practical implementation of textbooks in the classroom and the adaptations teachers make to meet student needs.

