

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This research applied a descriptive qualitative approach in the context of Multimodal Discourse Analysis. Qualitative research was appropriate to use to explore phenomena that are not yet known in detail by researcher and require an exploration process (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018). In this research, data collection, data analysis, and conclusions are the main parts of the research process. The qualitative approach aims to produce descriptive data which is mostly obtained through written, spoken words and documents. Researcher utilized language to interpret meaning in data, provide in-depth understanding and detail findings. Unlike quantitative research which focuses on measurements and numbers, qualitative research is more oriented towards description and interpretation.

B. Research Object

The research object used in this study was a book series entitled *My Next Words Grade 3 – Student's Book for Elementary School*, which was designed in accordance with the *Merdeka* Curriculum and was intended for elementary schools in Indonesia in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). *My Next Words Grade 3* was chosen as the object of this study because it is relevant for examining cultural values in ELT textbooks at the elementary school level, especially within the *Merdeka* Curriculum, which aims to develop students' intercultural awareness from an early age. This textbook presents cultural content through simple texts and supportive visuals that are suitable for young learners. In addition, this choice is supported by Permendikbud Number 12 of 2024, which states that English is a compulsory subject starting from Grade 3 at the elementary level. While several previous studies have analyzed cultural representation in ELT textbooks under the *Merdeka* Curriculum, most of them focus on higher grades, leaving cultural value representation in Grade 3 textbooks relatively underexplored.

The book consists of ten chapters, covering a variety of themes and contextual situations designed to enrich language understanding as well as improve students' communication skills. While all chapters contain cultural elements—as evidenced by titles such as "Chapter 1: Hello, How Are You?" (greetings and social interaction), "Chapter 3: What Color is It?" (cultural objects and preferences), and "Chapter 4: Where is My Bag?" (daily activities and possessions)—this study focuses specifically on "Chapter 2: I Don't Like Rice" as the primary data source for in-depth analysis.

The selection of this single chapter is justified by several methodological and practical considerations:

First, Chapter 2: I Don't Like Rice provides the richest and most explicit representation of cultural diversity within the textbook. Unlike other chapters that primarily focus on linguistic functions (greetings, colors, locations), Chapter 2 directly addresses cultural identity through food preferences, a tangible cultural artifact that reflects deeper values about social organization, knowledge systems, and identity. The juxtaposition of Indonesian staple food (rice) with Italian food (pizza, spaghetti) creates an explicit cultural contrast that makes it ideal for demonstrating how multimodal elements represent cultural values.

Second, the scope of Multimodal Discourse Analysis requires in-depth, detailed examination of both visual and textual elements. As Jewitt et al. (2016) note, MDA involves systematic analysis of multiple semiotic systems simultaneously, which is time-intensive and requires careful attention to detail. Analyzing a single chapter in depth allows for thorough application of both Visual Grammar (representational, interactive, and compositional meanings) and Transitivity analysis (six process types with participants and circumstances), which would not be feasible across all ten chapters within the constraints of an undergraduate thesis.

Third, this research follows established practices in multimodal textbook analysis. Previous studies such as Prihatiningsih et al. (2021) and Hidayat et al. (2023) similarly focused on selected chapters or units rather than entire

textbooks, recognizing that depth of analysis is more valuable than breadth when applying complex analytical frameworks like MDA. The goal is not to quantify all cultural content in the textbook, but rather to demonstrate how cultural values are semiotically constructed through multimodal resources.

Fourth, Chapter 2's content directly addresses the research question about cultural value representation. The chapter features multiple characters from different cultural backgrounds (Made, Alfonso, Aisyah, Cici, Pak Johannes), various cultural foods (Indonesian regional dishes and international cuisine), and implicit religious markers (hijab), providing sufficient data to identify and analyze four of Koentjaraningrat's (2004) seven cultural elements: Social Organization System, Knowledge System, Language, and Religious System.

Finally, preliminary analysis during the proposal stage confirmed that Chapter 2 contained the most concentrated and diverse cultural representations suitable for demonstrating the relationship between multimodal elements and cultural values, making it the most appropriate chapter for achieving the research objectives within the scope of this study.

The selection of this chapter was considered significant in the research context because it illustrated the way cultural elements are represented through language content and images in textbooks, both in local and foreign contexts. Thus, this chapter offers a solid foundation for examining how cultural aspects are constructed and conveyed to students, as well as how they contribute to cross-national cultural understanding in English language education at the primary level.

C. Data Collection

The use of documentation technique is a valuable method in data collection because it allows researcher to explore various sources of material to find hidden meanings and gain in-depth understanding of a particular topic. Bowen (2009) states that this technique is very useful in qualitative research because it is able to reveal hidden meanings and provide in-depth insights into complex phenomena. Through careful document analysis, researcher can identify patterns and themes contained in the data, which helps to understand how

various elements are used to construct and convey meaning. Through this technique, researchers can gain important knowledge that enriches the understanding of the research topic.

In this research, the documentation technique is complemented by library research approach. The combination of these two methods not only deepens the data obtained, but also provides additional sources and context that support the understanding of the phenomenon under study. By combining these two techniques, researchers have a more powerful tool to conduct in-depth analysis, so that the details of the research topic can be understood more clearly.

D. Data Analysis

Once the necessary data was collected, the visual and textual elements in the book *My Next Words Grade 3 – Student’s Book for Elementary School* were analyzed in depth. This analysis uses the Multimodal Discourse Analysis approach by applying Visual Grammar theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Transitivity theory by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Several steps adapted from Jewitt et al. (2016) for carrying out this research:

1. The researcher chose the Multimodal Discourse Analysis approach as the main method and set a focus on analyzing visual and textual elements in the textbook.
2. Research question was formulated to align the focus of analysis, as well as selecting appropriate empirical aspect focusing on visual and textual elements that show cultural values in the textbook.
3. Data is collected through documentation technique and library research, by systemically identifying and collecting visual and textual elements from *My Next Words Grade 3*.
4. Visual elements were analyzed using Visual Grammar theory by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020), while textual elements are analyzed using the transitivity theory of Halliday and Mathiessen (2014). This approach allowed researcher to explore in depth the cultural representation in textbook.

5. The results of the analysis are presented in a flexible and structured manner, by considering the researcher's subjective evaluation and perspective.

The analysis process followed these specific steps:

Step 1: Visual Grammar Analysis

The researcher examined each image through three metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional. For example, when analyzing the image of Made and Alfonso in front of the house (page 13), the researcher first identified the representational meaning by determining whether it showed a narrative process (action) or conceptual process (state of being). Since the characters were standing together without clear action vectors, this was coded as a conceptual process representing friendship and cultural harmony.

Next, the interactive meaning was analyzed by examining: (a) contact - whether characters made direct eye contact with viewers (demand) or looked elsewhere (offer); (b) attitude - the camera angle (frontal/oblique, eye-level/high/low); (c) distance - shot type (close/medium/long); and (d) modality - level of realism. For instance, Alfonso's direct gaze in one panel was noted as "demand," inviting viewer engagement, while his eye-level frontal angle was recorded as creating equality between viewer and participant.

Finally, the compositional meaning was examined through: (a) information value - placement of elements (left=given, right=new, center=most important); (b) salience - which elements attract attention through size, color, or placement; and (c) framing - whether elements are connected or separated. For example, Alfonso placed on the right side with pizza was interpreted as introducing new cultural knowledge.

Step 2: Transitivity Analysis

The researcher analyzed each clause in the textbook by identifying the process type and participants involved. For example, the sentence "He doesn't like rice" was broken down as follows:

- Process type: Mental process (affection) - "doesn't like" expresses feelings/preference

- Senser: "He" (Alfonso) - the person experiencing the feeling
- Phenomenon: "rice" - the thing being felt about

This analysis revealed that mental processes of affect were predominantly used to express cultural food preferences, while relational processes like "Alfonso is Made's friend" were used to establish cultural identity and social relationships.

Step 3: Cultural Value Identification

After completing both visual and textual analyses, the researcher mapped the findings to Koentjaraningrat's (2004) seven cultural elements. For instance, the representation of Made and Alfonso's friendship corresponded to the Social Organization System, while the depiction of various Indonesian and Italian foods aligned with the Knowledge System. Each cultural value was supported by evidence from both visual grammar and transitivity analyses.

Step 4: Synthesis and Interpretation

The researcher synthesized findings from visual and textual analyses to understand how multimodal elements work together to convey cultural values. For example, the combination of Alfonso's rejection gesture (visual) and the clause "He doesn't like rice" (textual) together emphasized cultural food differences more powerfully than either mode alone.

This approach helps uncover hidden meanings within visual and textual elements, providing a comprehensive understanding of how textbooks represent cultural values.

