

# AN INVESTIGATION ON THE INDONESIAN CULTURAL ASPECTS IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUBLISHED BY KEMENDIKBUD

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## Abstract

Cultural understanding is the core of language acquisition because language and culture can not be separated with language. This study employed a qualitative research design. The data are the cultural aspects and Indonesian cultural aspects in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum grade X, XI and XII. The textbook of these grades has not analyzed by the other researchers. The results show that English textbooks grade X, XI and XII contained 490 cultural aspects consisting of 232 products, 75 practices, 11 perspectives and 172 persons (Yuen:2001). While Indonesian cultural aspects contained 127 consisting of 64 cultural aspects on grade X, 34 on grade XI, and 29 on grade XII. From the results of the study, it shows that the presentation of cultural aspects and Indonesian cultural aspects are not balanced and does not provide student to have intercultural awareness. And third English textbooks are equality to use in terms of basic cultural awareness. Whereas, advanced cultural awareness and intercultural awareness level do not support students to have intercultural awareness. From the results above the authors of English textbooks should put the more cultural information explicitly Indonesian cultural aspects to enrich students' cultural information.

**Keywords:** *Indonesian Cultural Aspects, English Textbooks, Kemendikbud*

## I INTRODUCTION

Culture is very important to learn and spread either by television or performance. Learning and spreading culture reduce misunderstanding of culture because that causes a conflict among regions. An enormous amount of intercultural sensitivity has risen in recent years. As a result, the need for developing intercultural awareness has gained tremendous attention.

English also has introduced some cultures such as source culture, target culture or international target culture (Silvia: 2014). These cultures are naturally embedded in the form of habits, foods, norms, values, general beliefs, or life styles. These are often found when learners learn culture through some media, such as television, newspaper, novel, book, or textbook (Yuen: 2011).

The practice of English language teaching (ELT) around the globe acknowledges the role of textbooks as the essential source of learning as Richards (2001) argued that "much of the language teaching that occurs throughout the world today could not take place without the extensive use of commercial materials" (p. 251). Widodo (2016) maintains that a textbook is one of the curriculum materials with prescribed competencies and procedures, which mediates language learning.

Lately there has been a renewed interest on the topic of how culture is represented in textbooks (Weninger and Kiss: 2015), not only in EFL, but also regarding which culture should be included (Shin and Chen: 2011). As far as cultural EFL textbook analysis is concerned, Lee (2009) studied 11 secondary school conversation books, Wu (2010) revised a complete series of higher education EFL textbooks and Weninger and Kiss (2013) examined local Hungarian textbook.

In general, learning a foreign language involves learning different cultural aspects in which the language is used and sometimes also how other cultures are presented in that particular culture because language depicts culture of its own and other cultures too. In Cortazzi and Jin's classification (1999:240-5), EFL materials load source culture, target culture, or international target culture. These three categories of culture suggest that EFL materials that contain source culture mean that they present language learners' own culture, such as textbooks produced at national level. The presentations of these cultural materials to students enable them to talk their own culture by communicating directly to foreign visitors who will visit their own areas. The learners can be also asked to present their own culture with their friends who come from other areas. Nelson In Bark Al-Sofy (2018) argued that it is essential to recognize and reflect learners' local culture in language teaching. It means that source or local culture is extremely to present in English textbooks.

Besides containing information on source culture, target culture, and international target culture, EFL materials also contain four elements of culture (Yuen, 2011:462-4): products, persons, practices and perspectives.

Firstly products refers to entertainment appear most frequently. For example, Hollywood movies and television programmes (such as Spider-Man and Survivor). Other kinds of product include food (for example 'fish and chips' and 'tom yum soup'), merchandise (such as Barbie and 'sari'), print (for example Harry Potter and Time), and travel (places such as LotteWorld and Colosseum). In some cases, they appear mostly as a name mentioned in the text with some description, but in others, they are literary works such as poems and stories, songs, news, or fashion whose original content is featured. Some commonly known products of foreign cultures appear in both samples, for example, 'pasta', 'kimchi', Superman, and Universal Studios.

Second, Person refers to figures, publicists, and other famous people either real or fictitious which are included in the culture. It could be popular artists, movies actors, pop singers, characters in a movie, comedians, et cetera.

Third, practice refers to the real life activities which are inherited to a particular group of community and passed from generation to generation. It could be in the form of celebration or particular activities. It also refers to customs (such as Thanksgiving and Sapporo Snow Festival), daily life (for example 'America's national sport is baseball' and 'an Indian students plays street games'), and society (such as 'New Zealand . its recycling programmes). The last is perspective, perspective reflects the way a certain group of people see some aspects of life, like family relationship, friendship, concept about money, time, et cetera (Yuen:2001).

Cultural understanding is the core of language acquisition. Therefore, the consideration of material is greatly important in teaching English as a foreign language. The materials are usually presented in textbooks or course books, videos and audio materials, computer softwares, and visual aids. Among these materials, textbooks become the favored use among the teachers in Indonesia.

Therefore, the process of textbook selection should be a careful and thorough process. English textbooks should not only be attractive in term of their visual presentation, but also should consider some other factors, such as their appropriateness to learners' socio-economic background and cultural background. Otherwise, English textbooks will not be the good cultural agents which support intercultural awareness. Thus, EFL textbooks are expected to provide rich cultural exposure involving not only source culture, but also target culture and international target culture.

## II MATERIALS AND METHOD

In this study, the writer used qualitative design, particularly content analysis of textbooks. This study aims to describe the cultural aspects in English textbooks of 2013 curriculum. In gaining the data of cultural aspects the writer identified the texts and pictures containing the cultural aspects. The cultural aspects were categorized based on product, practice, perspective and person as proposed by Yuen (2011).

## III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 CULTURAL ASPECTS

In this part, the researcher firstly identified the Indonesian cultural aspects in English Textbooks and categorized them into four parts namely products, persons, practices and perspectives. Secondly, the researcher calculated the percentage of those cultural aspects. The result shows that cultural Aspects in Three English Textbooks are presented by product, such as food (sate, rendang, fish, soup, and etc), literary works (emails, poems, and stories), electronics (laptop, guitar, sound system), buildings (house, mall, amusement park), travels (Bali Beach and Mahameru mountain), etc. Practice is presented by games (Chinese whisper and Pantomimi) and daily dialogue containing cultural elements. Perspective is mostly presented by folktale, fables, myth and drama. Person is mostly presented by the famous person (Sukarno, B.J. Habibie, Cut Nyak Dien, R.A Kartini, etc), artists (Avgan, Rossa and Evan Dimas), singers, poets and etc.

Then, the percentage of cultural aspects contained in three English textbooks is shown as follows:

Grade	Cultural Aspects				Total
	Prod	Pract	Persp	Persn	
X	101	44	3	30	178

XI	102	29	6	117	254
XII	29	2	2	25	58
Total	232	75	11	172	490
%	47.34%	15.30%	2.24%	35.10%	100%

**Table 1. Findings of Cultural Aspects in Three English Textbooks**

Related to cultural Aspects found in English textbooks as presented in table 1 above, it shows that there are 178 cultural aspects in English textbook grade X consisting of 101 product, 44 practice, 3 perspective, and 30 person. English textbook grade XI contained 254 cultural aspects consisting of 102 products, 29 practices, 6 perspective, and 117 persons. And the last is English Textbooks grade XII contained 58 cultural aspects consisting of 29 products, 2 practices, 2 perspectives, and 172 people.

Product is presented in terms of invitation card to visit the tourism in Bali, Sulawesi, Papua and Borneo. It is also presented in form of food such as rendang and rawon. These foods are the special food of Indonesia especially in Java. Rendang and rawon creativity of human being and they are categorized as Indonesia product. In other parts, product is presented in terms of beach, amusement park mall, backpack, flashlight, hat, suitcase, camera, sandal, Sameru Mountain. Although some of them are in other countries, they are categorized as Indonesian products.

Practice is mostly presented in form of visual illustrations of student who are talking about self to other students, football players like Evan Dimas, the people who are using laptop, giving announcement, students who are studying together, person who is paying the game of pantomime, etc. These visual illustrations show that the activities are conducted by the actors (students, football players, etc). Even though the practices are mostly presented in the form of picture, they are still categorized as practice because they involve an activity.

Person is presented in the form of Indonesian writers like Andrea Hirata and Ahmad Fuadi, Pop singer (Rossa and Afgan), the cooks (Samuel and Sholeh), and national actors (Bung Karno, B.J. Habibie, Alwi Abdul Jalil Habibie, R.A. Tuti Marini Puswardjo). And etc. the element of person is not only identified in terms of picture but also it is identified in reading text.

Perspective is presented in the form of falktale, fictitious character isumboshi, the legend of Malin Kundang, and tradition of Badui Dalam and Badui Luar.

### 3.2 INDONESIAN CULTURAL ASPECTS

In Indonesia, exposure to the English language is primarily mediated through the use of English textbooks. What cultural knowledge and whose culture are represented in these textbooks become a critical issue because culture interweaves both language and thought. Firman (2018) also conducted the study about the representation of Indonesian cultural diversity in middle school English textbooks of 2013 curriculum. He find that the 2013 English textbooks for Grades 7 and 8 permeate Indonesian cultural values and practices that do not provide a balanced and equal depiction of Indonesian cultural diversity. His research analyzed English textbooks for grade 7 and 8. Whereas, in this research analyzed the English textbook for grade 10, 11 and 12.

The presentation of cultural types in English textbook grade X consists of travels, famous writers, singers, famous people, rendang, rawon, bunaken national Marine Park, etc. Then, the presentation of Indonesian culture in English textbook grade XI consists of postcard of Indonesian market, famous people, food, etc. And the last is cultural Aspects in English textbook grade XII. The presentation of Indonesian culture in English textbook grade XII consists of Lake Toba, gadang terminal, Jawa pos, traditional Baduy houses, Antasari toll, etc.

Grade	Indonesian Cultural Aspects
X	64
XI	34
XII	29

Total	127
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**Table 2. Indonesian Culture Aspects**

Table 2 above, it shows that there are 127 Indonesian culture in English textbook grade X consisting of 64 aspects. Then, in English textbook grade XI contains 34 aspects of Indoensia culture. And the last is English textbook grade XII contains 29 aspects of Indoensian culture.

From the number above, it shows that the presentation of Indonesia cultural aspects is very little in the product, practice, perspective or person. It means that English textbooks describedr the foreign culture much more.

### 3.3 LEVEL OF THE QUALITY OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS OF 2013 CURRICULUM IN TERMS OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

To describe whether the English textbooks of 2013 curriculum are best to use or not and whether the English textbooks of 2013 curriculum raise students' intercultural awareness, the researcher used Byram (in Silvia 2014)'s criterion on evaluating English textbooks in terms of cultural content. These criterions are used to know whether the English textbooks raise students' intercultural awareness or not. Byram (in Silvia 2014) developed the intercultural awareness criterion through some stages namely: basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness and intercultural awareness. Here are the intercultural awareness level mentioned in English textbooks grade X, XI and XII.

Criteria of basic cultural awareness (level 1)	Status of the Textbooks under study	Note
1 Culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;	Mentioned	This is mentioned in the form of students activities (introduction activities)
2 The role of culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;	Mentioned	There is infomation about aspect of life in source culture which is different from target culture or international target culture.
3 Our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;	Mentioned	This is mentioned in the form of contextualized writing (writing a lette, email, invitation to other people)
4 Others' culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induces behaviour, values, and beliefs	Mentioned	This is mentioned in form of postages for comparison and contrast among cultures.

**Table 3. Level 1 of Intercultural Awareness of the Textbooks**

From table above shows that English textbooks grade 10, 11, and 12 support students to have intercultural awareness or in level 1. However, they only involve some cultural value, whereas in Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups, and each has its own unique cultural artifacts. We found that there are at least four ethnic groups explicitly presented in the eighth grade textbook. The four ethnic groups represented are from Bali Island, Padang (West Sumatera), Papua, and Java.

According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2010), a multilingual and multicultural country is a country with hundreds of ethnic groups and cultures. The Bureau, however, regroup these numbers and squeeze them into 32 tribal groups including Jawa (40.22 %), Sunda (15.5%), Batak (3.58%), Sulawesi (3. 22%), and Madura (3.03). Hence, the decisions of using Balinese, Papuan, Javanese, and Minagkabau artifacts are not based on the quantity of the tribal groups. We argue that the inclusion and exclusion of the four artifacts and many others are sociopolitical decisions since only four dominant groups are represented.

Criteria of advanced cultural awareness (level 2)	Status of the Textbooks under
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	study
1 The relative nature of cultural norms;	Not Mentioned
2 The role of culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;	Not Mentioned
3 Multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;	Not Mentioned
4 Individual as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;	Not Mentioned
5 A common ground between specific culture as well as awareness to the possibility of mismatch and miscommunication.	Not Mentioned

**Table 4. Level 2 of Intercultural Awareness of the Textbooks**

Intable of level 2 and 3, they present the criteria of advance cultural awareness. However, from 3 English textbooks, all have not mentioned one of the criteria of advance cultural awareness. It means that these English textbooks have not support students to have intercultural awareness. Therefore, the author of textbooks should consider the involvement of intercultural value so that students who use the textbooks understand the other cultural values.

Criteria of intercultural awareness (level 3)	Status of the Textbooks under study
1 Culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in interultural communication;	Not Mentioned
2 Initial interaction in intercultural cimmunication as possibly based on cultural streotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these.	Not Mentioned
3 A capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socio-culturally grounded communication modes and frmases of reference based on the above undstanding of culture in intercultural communication.	Not Mentioned

**Table 5. Level 3 of Intercultural Awareness of the Textbooks**

The table 3 above is the intercultural awareness level presented in English Textbook grade X, XI and XII. In this table, the only basic cultural awareness (the lowest basic) is contained in three English textbooks of 2013 curriculum. They are an awareness of (1) culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;(2)the role of culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;(3) our own culturally induced behaviours, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this; and (4) ability to compare other cultures with our cultures. Meanwhile the advanced cultural awareness (level two) and intercultural awareness (level three) are not mentioned in those textbooks.

The previous data indicated that the presentation of Indonesian cultural aspects was not found the points of advanced cultural awareness and intercultural awareness in three English textbooks to make the learners communicate intercultural.

The presentation of various Indonesian cultural aspects in those textbooks should develop learners' intercultural awareness as intercultural speakers or mediatorswho are able to engage withcomplexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping whichaccompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based onperceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity. Intercultural awareness is awareness on the basis of respect for individuals' andequality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction.

Yuen (2011) mentions that language can be considered an 'artifact' or a system of code (products) used, to signify thoughts (perspectives), for communication (practices), by different people (persons). From four cultural aspects (product, practice, perspective and person), those English textbooks show that

products dominate other cultural aspects and followed by persons. Practices and perspectives also appear but in very small number.

This dominant presence of product element is not only in English textbooks published by the Minister of Education, it is also in line with Kramersch (1993)'s Survey showing that in many language classes, culture was frequently reduced to "the four Fs", which means "food, fairs, folklores and statistic facts". Similarly, it also support Yuen (2011)'s and Silvia (2014)'s study that products relating to entertainment appear most frequently, followed by practice (celebration like Halloween, Thanksgiving, Sapporo festival), perspectives (presented in Myths, stories, folklores), and lastly persons (Au Sung Kyii and Stephen Hawking). This mean that the authors of textbooks are more attention on product instead of person, practice and perspective.

The presentation of product only describes some cultural values of Indonesia. Whereas Indonesia has 300 ethnic groups and each has its own unique cultural product. The involvement of some products from a small group of ethnic triggers other people coming from other culture to conflict. it also make other people interpret that the publish of the textbook contains political issue.

Practice and perspective elements should be presented more attention to show how other groups of ethnic in Indonesia do their custom so that the students know and understand the other customs instead of present foreign culture much more. The presentation of balanced cultural aspect gives impact on having intercultural awareness.

As an effective media, the government should publish the textbooks containing the rich information of cultural value. This step is very effective to make students understand each other in terms of culture and of course it will be effect of decline conflict rates.

Textbooks, eventually, have a big role in facilitating the intercultural awareness of the learners. According to Byram (2001) the three components of intercultural awareness are knowledge, skills and attitudes. Having an intercultural attitude means being curious and open towards foreign cultures and being able to understand one's own attitudes. Secondly, having intercultural knowledge includes knowing about how social groups and identities of the foreign culture (and one's own culture) function. Thirdly, there are intercultural skills that should be taught to learners. These skills are e.g. comparing, interpreting and relating one's own culture as well as the foreign cultures. Since the examined English textbooks do not contain description on the attitudes of foreign culture or international target culture explicitly, these textbooks cannot be categorized as the agent to promote successfully the learners' intercultural awareness.

By looking at the table 3 of level of intercultural awareness are presented in those English textbooks, it can be concluded that the English textbooks support basic cultural awareness (the lowest level). Though the writer decides that the basic cultural awareness (level one), the real presentation on cultural elements and cultural types do not comply the entire criterion mentioned by Byram's criterion.

Achieving all level of intercultural awareness seems too high standard for Indonesian context. Besides the fact that English is taught as a foreign language, the available English textbooks in local market have not approved or examined for their intercultural aspects. Therefore, basic cultural awareness is enough for analyzing English textbooks of 2013 curriculum published by the Minister of Education and Culture.

#### IV CONCLUSION

Culture in English textbook for senior high school of 2013 curriculum is mostly introduced by products, such as visual illustration, virtual pictures, songs, poems, letters, foods, congratulation cards, sympathy cards, emails, stories, buildings, and so on; then followed by practices, such as Shadow puppetry and games. The next one is perspectives, such as folklore and legends. And the last is persons, such as famous singers, heroes, poets, writers, famous opinion columnists, presidents, etc.

English textbooks of 2013 curriculum Grade X, XI and XII have 490 cultural aspects consisting of 232 products (47.34%), 75 practices (15.30%), 11 perspectives (2.24%) and 172 persons (3.46%) as presented in table 1 above.

Related to Byram (in Silvia 2014)'s criterion in evaluating intercultural awareness of English textbooks, it can be concluded that the presence of various products in the textbooks is surely a good initiative for intercultural information. To this level, the textbooks support the learners to be aware of different cultures around them and in the wholeworld. However, there is no explicit information regarding the behaviour, beliefs and values (practice and perspective elements); shared beliefs or values that certain culture hold, and how to articulate source culture values in the target language.

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