CULTURAL CONTENTS IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) TEXTBOOK: A CASE OF INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research is aimed at investigating what cultures are dominantly presented in an English textbook used by Senior High School students grade X in Indonesia, entitled *Bahasa Inggris* and how they are presented. The data were collected from the analysis of the textbook, interview with one of the authors, and questionnaires distributed to four English teachers. The method used in this study is descriptive content analysis. Some underlying models proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Yuen (2011) were used as the main framework for analyzing the textbook. The investigation revealed two main facts. Firstly, source, target, and international cultures are presented in vivid imbalance proportion. Source culture, in the forms of tangible products such as naming, places, clothes, and famous people, is the most dominant cultural contents presented in the textbook. Secondly, most of those cultural contents are presented through pictures and monologues/reading texts. In accordance to the pedagogical implication, the findings of this study may encourage material developers to take into account cultural aspects which are beneficial for English learners in ELT materials for their future designs.

Keywords: *language and culture, cultural contents, English materials*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi budaya apa yang paling dominan pada sebuah buku teks Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa kelas X di Indonesia yang berjudul Bahasa Inggris dan bagaimana mereka dipresentasikan. Data penelitian diperoleh dari analisis buku, wawancara dengan penulis buku, dan angket yang diberikan pada empat guru Bahasa Inggris. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kajian isi. Model teori yang dikemukakan oleh Cortazzi dan Jin (1999) dan Yuen (2011) digunakan sebagai kerangka utama dalam proses menganalisa buku teks. Investigasi menunjukkan dua fakta utama. Yang pertama, budaya sumber, target, dan internasional terpreentasikan dalam proporsi yang jelas tidak seimbang. Budaya sumber, dalam bentuk benda nyata yang dapat dilihat seperti penamaan, tempat, pakaian, dan figur terkenal, adalah muatan budaya yang paling dominan dipresentasikan dalam buku teks. Yang kedua, hamper semua muatan budaya tersebut dipaparkan melalui gambar dan monolog/teks bacaan. Sehubungan dengan implikasi pendidikan, hasil penelitian ini dapat mendorong para penulis materi bahasa Inggris untuk memperhatikan unsur budaya yang bermanfaat untuk pembelajar bahasa Inggris dalam merancang materi untuk membantu membangun pemahaman antar budaya pada

Kata kunci: bahasa dan budaya, muatan budaya, buku teks Bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

The integration of culture in English language teaching and learning, especially ELT materials, becomes a new interest among linguists and scholars nowadays. This due to language and culture are intertwined. In ELT, textbooks which play as one of the main sources of input are expected to be the media of exposing culture. Because the contact with the target language is limited outside the classroom, the quality and quantity of the language input in the class, specifically in terms of the cultural input, is critical in acquiring the language.

Regarding the status of English as an international language recently, a main issue discussing whose culture should be integrated in English materials/textbooks appears. Some traditional scholars believed

that foreign language learners need to be exposed materials which focus on the native or origin of the language. It leads to a concept that culture of English speaking countries need to be the focus of integrating culture in English language teaching. However, McKay (2012) suggests that the cultural contents of English materials should not be limited to native English-speaking countries. Furthermore, textbooks used as the guidance in teaching-learning activities are suggested to include more non-native speaker characters and source culture issues in the reading passages (Matsuda, 2003; Xiao, 2010). These concepts bring about a belief that English materials, specifically when it plays as an international / a foreign language, should be ideally an appropriate blend of the local and the global cultures.

In Indonesian educational system, the gradually change of curriculum results at the existence of various new textbooks, including English textbooks. It raises scholars' awareness to analyze and evaluate the content of the textbooks. Many studies on evaluating textbooks in terms of their readability and suitability with the students' need have been conducted by using the criteria which have been constructed by BNSP. Furthermore, BNSP also developed some instruments of English textbook evaluation for every level of schools from primary to high schools. However, this instrument only touches some physical aspects of English textbooks without concerning the cultural appropriateness as one of the criteria of textbook evaluation. The components, which are assessed, consist of: 1) the language appropriateness; 2) presentation of the book; and 3) the completeness of presentation. Thus, studies which focus on cultural aspects and/or how culture is portrayed in English textbooks are still limited.

The increasing number of English textbooks published in Indonesia may attract researchers' attention concerning the content of the textbook, particularly the cultural aspects as integrating culture in ELT materials is crucial. Ideally, EFL learners should be exposed a proportional blend between local and international cultures. However, the presence of local and international cultures in English textbooks is still questionable, and even studies concerning the cultural aspects are still limited in Indonesia. Thus, English textbooks used by students in Indonesia need to be analyzed. This study is designed to investigate the cultural contents of the used textbook in terms of what cultures are contained and how they are presented. An English textbook for Senior High School was selected since this level is the final level of secondary education in which it is assumed that teaching materials are already comprehensive to cover aspects of English learning including the knowledge of culture. Besides, a study investigating the cultural contents of the textbook under examination has not been conducted yet.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture as a rule for routine lifestyle of people began to be stressed in the field of language education in 1950s until the present (Fu, 2001, in Xiao, 2010: 11). In the 1970s-1980s, many foreign language scholars proposed the inclusion of culture in foreign language teaching since cultural contents would help language learners in using the language for communication appropriately in a given context. It then raises communicative competence. The communicative competence requires language learners or speakers more than grammatical competence to communicate effectively in a target language. Furthermore, culture can impact language teaching linguistically and pedagogically (McKay, 2003, as cited in Dehbozorgi, et.al). Linguistically, culture influences the meaning, discourse and pragmatic. Pedagogically, it affects language material selection for its cultural content and cultural foundation of instruction method.

Based on the facts, in the first decade, culture starts playing its role in ELT for it is integrated in the process of teaching and learning. Then, with the move from linguistic competence such as grammatical competence, to communicative competence, culture play a more important role in which it helps both learners and English instructors in ELT processes. Culture helps students use the language appropriately and culture drives English instructors in selecting materials which are suitable for their learners.

Textbooks and instruction materials are often used by language instructors for they are considered as essential constituents in EFL classrooms. Brown (1995 as cited in Matsuda, 2012: 168) acknowledges the significance of textbooks by positioning it as one of the six components of a language curriculum, along with needs analysis, goals and objectives, teaching, and program evaluation. Additionally, because the process of designing a curriculum is sometimes not clear to English teachers and learners, Dubin and Olstain (1986 cited in Matsuda, 2012: 168) argue that 'the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many learners and teachers is the textbook.' Hence, textbooks play an important role in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language as a tangible object which helps both teachers and learners.

One obvious way the teaching materials contribute to foreign language teaching is as a source of input (Matsuda, 2012: 168). Because the contact with the target language is limited outside the classroom, the quality and quantity of the language input in class is critical in acquiring the language. Textbooks supplement the classroom input by providing language samples which are sometimes forgot and even neglected by English teachers. Consequently, students often have expectations about using a textbook and believe that published materials are more systematic and credible than teacher-planned materials.

The content of textbooks significantly affects learners. Thus, textbooks directly or indirectly transmit cultural values to a certain degree which is called 'hidden curriculum' (Cunningsworth, 1995: 8). In relation to the attempt to elaborate textbooks for cultural elements, Cortazzi and Jin (1999 as cited in Aliakbari, 2004: 3) note that ELT textbooks perform different function; as a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, and an ideology.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) differentiate between three types of ways in which culture can be presented in language textbooks and materials: source culture, target culture, and international target culture. EFL textbooks which contain source culture present the language learners' own referents or cultures. This type of materials is aimed at enabling learners to talk about their own culture to foreign visitors instead of preparing them encounter other culture. Then, EFL textbooks which contain the target culture present the culture of United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand in which English it is their native language. International target culture involves textbooks that include a wide variety of cultural set in English speaking countries or in countries where English is not as a first language, but it is used as an international language.

McKay (2012) stated that the cultural contents of materials should not be limited to native English-speaking countries and should include local cultural contents. It is supported by Kumaravadivelu (as cited in McKay, 2012: 338) which suggested that 'an international community need not be grounded in Western, English-speaking countries, nor would it necessarily prioritize local cultures; rather, it should provide space for multiple converging and contested voices in English from around the world to interact.' Furthermore, textbooks used as the guidance in teaching-learning activities are suggested to include more non-native speaker characters and source culture issues in the reading passages (Matsuda, 2003; Xiao, 2010). This entails that English materials should be a proportional blend between the local and the global cultures.

Some notable studies investigating what cultures are portrayed in English textbooks had been conducted. Mulfiani (2012) and Silvia (2014) found that source culture was predominantly presented in the textbooks. In contrast, Matsuda (2002), Xiao (2011), Yuen (2011), and Martono (2014) found that target cultures were predominant in English textbooks. These facts may assume that although some recent theories suggest a proportional blend between the local and the global cultures, materials developers have their own perspectives on integrating cultural contents. Since cultural contents are crucial in ELT, the cultural contents included in English textbooks should be considered carefully.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focused on investigating what cultures are contained in a Senior High School textbook for grade X entitled *Bahasa Inggris* and how they are presented. To make the general research problems more specific and easily handled, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1) How are the cultural content presented in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook?
2) What cultural dimensions are exposed in the English textbooks entitled *Bahasa Inggris* used by students of grade X?
3) What categories of cultures are presented in the English textbook entitled *Bahasa Inggris* used by students of grade X?

Based on the research questions, this research was designed as a descriptive content analysis to reveal the cultural contents of an English textbook used by grade X of senior high schools. Wallen & Fraenkel (2001 as stated in Nomnian, 2013: 17) state that content analysis is an appropriate research tool that explores particular written words, texts or visual contents of selected documents. This study is qualitative in nature which tried to describe the cultural contents of the textbook. However, it also employed the element of quantitative in the form of the way the data were recorded into percentages. The percentage is compared and analyzed to investigate the most frequent occurrence, the less frequent occurrence, and the least frequent occurrence.

As stated previously, this study took an English textbook used by senior high school grade X students entitled *Bahasa Inggris* as the main data source. *Bahasa Inggris* in a whole year consists of two textbooks in which one textbook for a semester. The total number of units is eighteen units. This book was chosen since the textbook is widely used at present and it is based on the English 2013 Curriculum. This textbook is already distributed to schools which are applying curriculum 2013 now. In addition, the textbook is expected to be used by students and teachers in the teaching and learning process later on when 2013 curriculum is implemented simultaneously.

Another source of data in this study is human. The authors of the textbook investigated became the secondary source of data. The textbook is written by some authors. One of them became the informant. Additionally, some English teachers who use the chosen textbook were also involved as the secondary source of data.

Three kinds of data collecting instruments were used in the present study. They are checklists /models of cultural contents proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1990), Moran (2001), and Yuen (2011), questionnaires which were distributed to four English teachers using *Bahasa Inggris* textbook, and interview guideline for the author of the textbook.

In doing textbook analysis, there are four main stages which were conducted following the research questions. The first is the media of cultural presentation. In this stage, visual and textual media which contain cultural elements or contents were shorted or marked. The detailed media which were examined are reading texts, dialogues, contextualized writing tasks, contextualized speaking tasks, pictures/visual illustrations, and recordings.

In the second stage, the cultural contents presented in the media were analyzed whether they are in the form of products, practices, perspectives, or persons by using the 25 elements/themes representing the big C culture and the small c culture. The more detailed information about dimensions of culture suggested by Moran (2001) and Yuen (2011) is as the following.

Products   : the tangible culture objects
Practices   : a form of culture that refers to routines, constructed habits, jobs, which are done/doing

by certain communities

Perspectives   : a form of culture that represent the *perceptions, beliefs, values* and *attitudes* that underlie the products and guide people's behavior in the practice of culture

Persons   : famous individuals (fictitious or real), figures, characters, groups/teams, names characterizing certain country, typical physical appearances of etc.

The next stage was determining the categories of culture. Aspects of culture which had been classified into products, practices, perspectives, or persons were then categorized into which culture they are representing; source, target, international, or culture free, (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999 and Xiao, 2011). The detailed definition of the four categories of culture is as the following.

Source culture (SC)   : It refers to the native culture/ the culture of the learners.

Target culture (TC)   : It includes English-speaking countries' culture (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, and USA)

International target culture (ITC): It includes cultures of all countries in the world (European countries, countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia) except for Indonesia and English speaking cultures

Culture Free (CF)   : It includes general knowledge/content that is not specific to any particular culture or country (The content is mainly related to linguistic knowledge and practice without focusing on any particular culture).

Finally, the frequency of the data categorized is converted into percentages. The percentage is compared and analyzed to investigate the most frequent occurrence, the less frequent occurrence, and the least frequent occurrence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Both of audio-visual and textual media were used to present cultural values in the textbook. In regard to the two main forms of media, textual media appeared most frequently throughout the chapters of the textbook by 109 times (62.3%) identification. Meanwhile, audio-visual media were identified 66 times (37.7%) in the whole textbook which were dominantly in the form of pictures.

Among the audio-visual media, pictures dominated the exposure of audio-visual media. Based on the analysis, there are 65 (98.5%) pictures which exposed cultural values. Those pictures were mostly about physical characteristics representing Indonesian and/or some foreign people and touristic and/or historical places representing certain countries. Meanwhile, the audio media, which was in the form of lyric of a song, only appears once (1.5%). Among the four forms of textual media, reading/informative texts have the highest percentage. It appears 42 times or 38.5% in the textbook. Reading/informative texts are exposed in various forms such as long reading texts, short reading texts, notes, and quotations. Then, dialogues take the second place by being exposed 27 times (24.8%) which mostly consist of short dialogues which expose the appropriate use of certain expressions. Next, contextualized writing tasks appear 23 times (21.1%), mostly in the forms of gap filling tasks. Following this, contextualized speaking tasks appear 17 times (15.6%). The detailed distribution of audio-visual media and textual media in *Bahasa Inggris* for grade X students Semester I and Semester II in each chapter is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 The Presence of Audio-Visual and Textual Media in *Bahasa Inggris* for grade X

Chapter	A (audio-visual)		B (textual)			
	Picture	Lyric	Reading Texts	Dialogues	Contextualized Writing Tasks	Contextualized Speaking Tasks
Total	65 (37%)	1 (1%)	42 (24%)	27 (15%)	23 (13%)	17 (10%)
	66		109			

Based on the analysis, products have the highest frequency. They dominate the cultural dimensions in the textbook. Besides having the highest frequency and/or percentage, the distribution of this dimension is good. The exposure of products can be found in every chapter. Such themes as geography, education, history, architecture, foods, arts, dressing, transportation, and some others were identified representing this dimension.

The second dimension of culture which is presented in the textbook is persons. Persons which are exposed by audio-visual media is mostly in the forms of the illustration/photograph of public figures from some countries and the physical appearance which characterizes a certain country, especially Indonesia. Meanwhile, in textual media, this kind of aspect is mostly presented in the forms of names and biography of public figures and names which characterize specific countries. Public figures which dominate both visual and textual media are identified 45 times. Based on its frequency throughout the textbook, public figures even take the second place among the other themes which are exposed in the textbook. Meanwhile, names and physical appearance are exposed 16 times and 10 times.

The next dimension which has a high frequency of appearance is practices. Although practices are exposed in a high frequency, most of cultural loads which are presented in this form of aspect do not signify to any specific culture. This dimension is mostly presented lifestyles such as congratulating others, giving compliments, showing care/attention, daily activities, and so on. Moreover, its high appearance is mostly obtained from the repetition of the same practices. Take for example; showing care is presented 13 times in the whole textbook.

The last dimension which is analyzed in this study is perspectives. In the whole textbook, perspectives are only identified 21 times. Moreover, based on the investigation, perspectives are only exposed in textual media. That is to say that the exposure of this aspect is very limited. They are presented in the forms of quotations, beliefs, and social norms. Quotations are taken into account as one of the themes in perspectives since the researcher viewed a quotation as a perspective from its speaker. Among those three themes, quotations dominate the exposures of perspectives. The numerical data of aspects of culture in the textbook were presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The Numerical Data of Dimensions of Culture in *Bahasa Inggris* for grade X

	Products		Practices		Perspectives		Persons	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Total per Aspect	50	59	12	36	0	21	27	46
TOTAL A+B	109 (44%)		48 (19%)		21 (8%)		73 (29%)	

Source culture or Indonesian culture possesses the highest frequency in the textbook. Source culture is presented for 114 times (45%). Cultural loads which are categorized as source culture appear in various

presentations such as education, history, geographical or touristic places, architecture, customs, foods, social norms/beliefs, economy, dressing system, public figures, names and pysical appearances.

The next category, target culture, is identified 57 times (23%).Just the same as source culture and even worse, cultural references presenting target culture are extremely basic. Although the numerical number of this category is big enough, most of them are actually repetition, meaTarget culture is mostly identifed through presentation of public figures and specific names, geographycal and/or touristic places, and thoughts of some infuential figures from English speaking countries which are presented in the form of quotations.

Then, culture free is exposed 49 times (20%). This category covers some themes which can be classified into lifestyle, education, social norms, custom, hobbies, gestures, music, and also dressing system or fashion. Lifestyle and education are dominantly presented. The former is mostly about routines and interpersonal interactions which are common such as keeping diary, giving compliment, showing care/sympathy, and congratulating others. The latter is mostly about activities which are mostly done in the classroom such as playing educational games, making discussions, doing interviews, and so on.

The last, international target culture which has the lowest frequency is found 31 times (12%) in the whole textbook. Pictures of a specific food, a traditional costume, and a big event are exposed. Public figures from and geaographical places in some international target countries are also presented in textual media. Nevertheless, those contents are just too weak to provide new information or broaden the students' cultural understanding. The only content which describes a certain group/country in a sufficient way is the exposure of a legend entitled Issumbosshi which is originated from Japan.The numerical data of categories of culture in the textbook were presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The numerical data of categories of culture in *Bahasa Inggris* for grade X

		S C		TC		ITC		CF	
		A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Total per category		51	63	16	41	11	20	11	38
TOTAL A+B		114 (45%)		57 (23%)		31 (12%)		49 (20%)	

Discussions

The total occurrence in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook indicates that there is an imbalance ration between one cultural medium to the others in terms of presenting culture. Pictures which are classified as one of the two audio-visual media show the highest frequency of appearance in the whole textbook in comparison to the other mediums. This fact suggests that culture is mostly presented through tangible objects. Then, reading texts which are categorized as one of the four textual media take the second place in presenting culture based on its appearance in the textbook. This fact also suggests that reading texts/texts are applicable to present cultural loads. This finding is in line with the opinion proposed by Alptekin (1993) that reading passages would be more applicable to be the media in representing cultural loads.

Based on the facts, it can be concluded that cultural contents in *Bahasa Inggris* are mostly presented through pictures and reading texts.Pictures and reading texts can be assumed as the ideal media for exposing cultural contents in ELT materials. This is supported by the statement proposed by Adaskou, Britten, & Fahzi (1990), Sugirin et.al (2010), Maslak (2008), Yuen (2011) Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh, and Kafipour (2014) in their study that visual and textual media can become the representative of cultural aspects / contents in teaching materials.   *commit to user*

Having the fact that the dominant dimension of culture is products through the exposures of visible cultural elements; cultural contents which are presented in *Bahasa Inggris* textbook can be categorized as basic cultural loads. This is based on Schein's statement (1988 as cited in Pashmforoosh and Babaii, 2016: 222) that discrete-point components of culture representing visible aspects of culture such as behavior patterns, dressing, physical appearances, facilities, naming systems are categorized as knowledge-oriented level of content or basic cultural contents. Thus, it can lead to apperception that culture is visible and tangible objects.

Because of presenting more local culture than the other categories of culture, *Bahasa Inggris* textbook has strength and weakness at the same time. The strength is that it helps learners understand the materials easier since they are familiar with the content and the students' feel of ownership and confidence of their culture are developed. This fact is supported by the 2003 Act of the Republic of Indonesia on the National Education System which stated that teachers in Indonesia have to maintain the development of students' understanding of their own culture. Moreover, in relation to the spread use of English as an international language, the cultural contents of English materials should not be limited to native English-speaking countries and should include local cultural contents (McKay, 2012). Additionally, some scholars (Matsuda, 2003; Xiao, 2010) agreed that textbooks used as the guidance in teaching-learning activities are suggested to include more non-native speaker characters and source culture issues in the reading passages. In this sense, integrating local culture or source culture in English materials is beneficial and it is suitable with the principle of English as an international language.

Nevertheless, based on the result of the analysis, the exposures of international target culture is at the lowest percentage. A vivid imbalance between the exposure of local and international culture is exposed. A balanced portion of the exposures of source culture and international target culture is the ideal condition of an English material (Alptekin, 2002; Matsuda, 2003; McKay, 2012). Having the fact that the exposures of international target culture and target cultures are extremely low, it can be assumed that *Bahasa Inggris* does not provide a rich exposure of culture which can develop students' intercultural understanding in which they have to understand their own and other culture, compare, interpret, and synthesize the cultural differences in order to establish a bridge between the gap to achieve better understanding of the culture and communicative goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis by the researcher, and the response of the English teachers, there are two conclusions that can be drawn from this research. First, source, target, and international cultures are presented in vivid imbalance proportion. Source culture, in the forms of tangible products such as naming, places, clothes, and famous people, is the most dominant cultural contents presented in the textbook Based on this fact, it can be assumed that, the textbook writers do not view that target cultures should be the main focus in ELT as what traditional views believed. However, since a vivid imbalance between the exposures of local and global cultures was found, students may lack of knowledge of other cultures.

Second, cultural contents are presented in the forms of tangible and visible objects or the aspect of products through pictures and reading monologues. The product aspects which were found are included as surface culture. This kind of presentation implies that culture is mostly taught as products. This drives to a "tourist view" of the learners which only focus on basic or surface culture instead of deep culture. It means that a general assumption that cultural understanding is simply when someone has visited a country, eaten the food, known the traditional clothes, read the legends/stories, visited some landmarks of the country, and/or brought the souvenirs, is leaded from this kind of presentation.

Theoretically, the result of the study brings a perspective that from a very small scale investigation, material developers in Indonesia do not view English speaking countries' culture as the most beneficial

culture to be taught. Practically and pedagogically, since studies concerning the cultural aspects in English textbooks in Indonesia are still limited, the results of this study may complete the result of studies which examined the same textbook but without taking into account the cultural aspects. The combination of those studies may provide more fruitful information about the textbook. Furthermore, English teachers who use the examined textbook can get information about the cultural contents contained in the textbook, so they can add some additional information which has not been covered. Moreover, the results of this study can alert textbooks writers that cultural aspects need to be considered in designing more suitable English textbooks.

The suggestions are mainly intended for the users of the examined textbook as well as for English textbooks/materials' designers, and further research. First, the balanced presentation among source culture, target culture, and international target culture should be maintained. If, in some cases, material developers want to emphasize the source culture, it would be better to expose local culture values more than merely the cultural objects. Local wisdom, traditions, and values that can serve as general cultural knowledge in the source culture can be presented. Then, since the current textbook is lack of the exposures of international target culture and target culture, English teachers need to add that information in the process of teaching and learning to broaden students' worldview. Then for the next English material developers, regarding the status of English as an international language, principles of integrating cultural points in English materials should be noticed. The exposures of international target cultures or cultural points from English speaking countries and some countries in Asia and Africa need to be added. Finally, since the main weaknesses of this study were taking a very small scale, investigating one textbook only, and students' opinions were not involved, it is suggested for further research to take a larger scale by investigating more than one level of education and involve students in the research in order to bridge their intention and their needs in relation to cultural exposures in ELT.

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