

Exploring Culture in Indonesia English Textbook For Secondary Education

Laila Ulsi Qodriani¹, M.Yuseano Kardiansyah²

^{1,2} Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia
Email: ani@teknokrat.ac.id, yuseano@teknokrat.ac.id

Abstract

The curriculum in schools is always changing. There are new advancements that are being made and new components being incorporated into the curriculum. Culture and identity have become a rising issue in some schools nowadays and it has slowly begun to show its importance to the curriculum. Hence, it also has become a rich source of investigation which inseparable in the field of English Language Teaching. With this background, this study investigates the representation of culture-related contents embodied in Indonesian middle school English electronic textbook 2013 curriculum. The present study explores how culture is preserved and disseminated in the textbooks. It is descriptive qualitative in nature. The data were taken from Electronic English Textbook for VII grade entitled "When English Rings a Bell" (2014) by Kemdikbud RI, are in the form of written texts and illustrations that may accompany the reading passages. The five dimensions of culture were adopted in this study proposed by Moran (2001) which cover the products, practices, perspectives, persons and communities. The result shows that Indonesia cultural aspect chosen selectively to be included in this national textbook to enhance both teachers' and students' awareness for the interdependent relationship between language and culture.

Keywords: culture, English, textbook.

1. Introduction

Textbooks play an important role in today's school world since most of the teachers use them as the most important tool in teaching (Luukka et al. 2008: 94). Textbooks according to some experts are the medium of learning (instructional) is the dominant role in the classroom; medium to deliver curriculum materials; and central parts of the education system (Patrick, 1988; Lockeed and Verspoor, 1990; Altbach, et al., 1991; Buckingham in Harris, ed., 1980). More specifically, Chambliss and Calfee (1998) explained that the textbook is a tool for students to understand and learn from the things they read. Textbooks are sometimes even the targets of action instead of being just tools. It intended to serve several groups of users, which include teachers, students and parents. Furthermore, it is pointed out that school textbooks are also considered important instruments for transmitting values, skills and even attitudes to the younger generation (Kalmus 2004:1; Lähdesmäki 2004:271).

In July 2013 the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia has been implementing a new curriculum on education in Indonesia called Curriculum 2013. Curriculum development theme in 2013 was able to produce the Indonesian people are productive, creative, innovative, and through strengthening affective attitude (know why), skills (know how), and knowledge (know what) are integrated. Recognized in the development of life and science of the 21st century, now it has been a shift in both traits and learning model. This is anticipated in the curriculum in 2013. This curriculum is also design to create and maintain students' awareness toward their local and international culture.

The aim of language learning and teaching will become more important in the future since the present day the world is constantly becoming more globalized. Therefore it is also relevant to study the practices of teaching culture. By this, (Corbett, 2003) states that teaching of culture is considered to be an important part of modern foreign language learning and teaching since one major aim of language teaching is to

increase the understanding and tolerance between cultures. Along with this idea, Buttjes (1991) agrees that cultural knowledge is needed for international communication and contacts.

Culture is an important aspect of ELT textbooks. (Kramersch, 1993) argues that language and culture are inseparable. It is part of the communicative competence which includes cultural understanding, conversational routines, and the target society's norms and values. Research has shown that ELT textbooks contain representations of culture and society. Commonly, the students and teachers of English come from the same cultural background with the same language too. It enables them to communicate and develop their ideas about the local culture they are familiar with then talk about the target culture which is new for them. Although nowadays, many students love to watch films from English speaking country and some of them intend to study abroad, it will not make them easily exploring the target culture as easy as they explore their local culture (Mckay, 2003)

Along with this idea, (Cortezzi & Jin, 1999) explain that there are three categories of culture presented in textbook. Firstly, Target culture materials, this type of textbook usually focus on one or two target cultures, for example, instruction materials in the EFL context. Source/ Local culture materials refer to the textbooks which present language learners' own culture. Usually are the textbooks that are produced at a national level for a particular country. International target culture materials involve textbooks that include a wide variety of cultures set in English-speaking countries or in countries where English is not a first or a second language, but is used as an international language. All types of books have its purposes; it can be for intended promotional material, to encounter other culture influence until to enrich the knowledge for international level.

Connected to the situation in Indonesia, some studies have exposed that some local products of EFL textbooks reflect the source culture of the particular country rather than the international target cultures primarily. (Hermawan & Lia, 2012) analyzed English textbooks for primary school published by Erlangga "Grow with English 4, 5, and 6. The result was target culture was still more salient and disseminated in the textbooks compared with the local culture. The second is a study from (Sugirin, Sudartini, Suciati, & Nurhayati, 2011) also conducted a study. They investigated seven EFL textbooks of Junior High School used in Jogjakarta. The result was there were 409 western cultural elements and 739 Indonesian ones, but they were not followed by adequate explanations to anticipate confusion and misunderstanding. In line with this argument, this study explores which types of the local culture are presented in the Indonesia English electronic textbooks for secondary school students the culture-related contents which are represented in terms of the cultural dimensions, as what it states in the 2013 Curriculum.

(Hinkel, 1999) describes culture as areas of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors and activities. According to Brown, it referred to 'the ideas, customs, skills, and arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period time' (2000, p. 177). Moran (2001, p 24) defines culture as "the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts". This study revealed culture as the interplay of products, practices, perspectives, communities and persons (Moran, 2001) The five dimensions were adopted in this study to analyze how cultural elements were reflected in each chapter of English electronic textbooks for secondary schools in Indonesia. Table 1 is a summary of the five dimensions of culture proposed by (Moran, 2001)

Table 1. Five Dimensions of Culture Proposed by Moran (2001)

No	Dimensions	Explanation
1	Products are defined as a system of code that measures a cultural dimension in four broad aspects.	<i>Artefacts:</i> food, documents, language, money, tools <i>Places:</i> buildings, cities, houses <i>Institutions:</i> family, law, economy, religion, education, politics <i>Art forms:</i> music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture
2	Practices characterize another cultural dimension that measures various aspects of cultural practices.	<i>Operations:</i> manipulation of cultural products <i>Acts:</i> ritualized communicative practices <i>Scenarios:</i> extended communicative practices <i>Lives:</i> stories of members of the future
3	Perspectives include cultural materials that convey particular perceptions.	They represent beliefs, values and attitudes that underlie the products and guide people's behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but often they are implicit, outside conscious awareness.
4	Communities describe the specific social contexts, circumstances and groups through which members engage in cultural practices.	They include the specific social contexts (e.g. national cultures), circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and groups (e.g. different social clubs) in which members carry out cultural practices.
5	Persons refer to the individual members who represent particular cultures and communities.	They refer to individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. Personal identity and life history play key roles in the development of a cultural person.

2. Methods

The nature of this study is descriptive qualitative. It employs a systematic technique for analyzing message content and message handling. The data for this study taken from Electronic English Textbook for VII grade entitled "When English Rings a Bell" revised edition (2014) by Kemdikbud RI. The data were chosen for study to examine whether the cultural aspects of the textbook represents the culture-related contents embodied in Indonesian middle school English electronic textbook. The data for the study are in the form of written texts and illustrations which accompany the reading passages. Thus, this study used content analysis method for two purposes (Carney in Mulyana, 2005: 83), such as the purpose of descriptive (describing the structure and content of discourse) and inferential purposes (create an intent and effect conclusions wearing a discourse).

As the researchers, both authors participated in the entire analytic procedures, such as developing coding schemes, coding cultural contents, and then analyzing the result. First, to see the presence of cultural content is employed, reading passages were analyzed in term of content. Content reading passages are classified in terms of Local Culture, which refers to Indonesian culture and Non-local culture which refers to the foreign culture. Culture in this context is perceived in terms of Products, Practices, Perspectives, Communities and Person (Moran, 2001) Second, after classifying and coding the findings of cultural content are then presented in the form of tables.



3. Result and Discussion

In this section, the results from a content analysis Indonesia English electronic textbooks "When English Rings a Bell" for grade VII students are presented. Specifically, using five dimensions of culture proposed by (Moran, 2001) as a unit of analysis, the patterns of representing culture-related contents were examined. Based on the findings most of the data for the study are in the form of illustration regarding to the limitation of written texts that accompany the reading passages.

3.1 Products

In this study, there are several Indonesian cultural products which will be discussed as the following Table 2.


Table 2. Findings on Culture Products

Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
1 (Pg. 4)		<p>This picture shows the representation of the cultural product of Indonesian majority religion, which is Moslem that represents by the character of Siti. Siti is wearing the school uniform of Indonesian secondary school, white and blue. She wears a white veil, long shirt and skirt which symbolizes her belief. In Indonesia, We can easily found this Moslem woman style in Indonesia in all places, ages and situation.</p>
2 (Pg. 28)		<p>Indonesian cultures which vary of its unique tribes also become the point of discussion in exploring its character. One of them is by showing the illustration of the representation of each traditional house. In sample 2 we can see 'Rumah Gadang' as the background illustration on the character of Siti. Besides, there are some traditional houses and landmark also shown in this textbook, such as Borobudur, Honai, and Balinese Traditional House.</p>

3.2 Practices

Handshaking, praying (before eating), and being generous are familiar practices in Indonesia. How and the extent to which each activity is practiced will be discussed in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Findings on Culture Pratices

Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
3 (Pg. 5)		<p>The culture of Indonesia to have "salim" (handshaking by kissing the older hand) is applied in any religion or tribes. This activity shows the respect and politeness of the younger to the older. The act shows in this textbook in several times, it reflects that "salim" is the typical culture of Indonesia.</p>

4 (Pg. 126)



The sample of these activities shows that Indonesia is religious country. This book tries to explain that Indonesia people obey the rule which is given by each religion, one of them is praying activity before having a meal.

3.3 Perspectives

Table 4. Findings on Culture Perspectives

Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
5 (Pg. 78)		<p>The present data shows the characteristics of Indonesia people to live in mutual cooperation. As the smallest group of society, family, in Indonesia likes to do everything all together. Besides having a good relation between the family members, it also can create and maintain the love and sense of belonging between them.</p>
6a (Pg. 157)		<p>Sample 7a has an implicit mission to defense negative culture from western that mostly accepted by the society without any filter. As we study English as a western influence, we cannot deny that another 'culture' from the west also widely spread all over the places where the language is learned. In accordance to filter it, this book tries to explicitly explain it. One of the examples is to explain that the fast-food as the product of its western culture is not good for health, hence, it shows to the reader that actually Indonesia also have its delicious and healthy food as the typical culinary in Indonesia (7b).</p>
6b (Pg. 160)		<p>The characters employed in this textbook try to explain the diversity of Indonesia society. It becomes one of the ways to introduce the variety of religious, tribes and ethnicity in Indonesia. It presents the unity in diversity within the society.</p>
7 (Pg. 11)		<p>The characters employed in this textbook try to explain the diversity of Indonesia society. It becomes one of the ways to introduce the variety of religious, tribes and ethnicity in Indonesia. It presents the unity in diversity within the society.</p>

3.4 Communities

Tabel 5. Communities

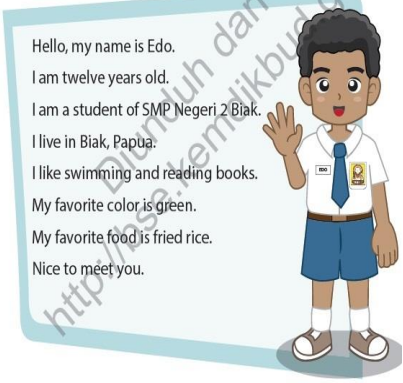
Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
8 (Pg. 10)		The situation of communities in this textbook mostly shows the Moslem society as the major society in Indonesia.

3.5 Persons

R.A. Kartini, Bung Karno, and Bung Tomo are the examples of persons shown in this textbook as a cultural dimension.

Table 6. Findings on Culture Persons

Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
9 (Page 60)	<p>R.A. Kartini</p>	As one of the national heroin of Indonesia, R.A. Kartini becomes The cultural representative in this textbook. It teaches the reader to always struggle, independent and never give up to reach their dream. Thus, it also introduces the famous person within the country.
10 (Page 61)	<p>Proklamasi Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia Source: 30 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka</p>	Ir. Soekarno is the first president of Indonesia and also the 'founding father'. As its most important moment in Indonesia independency, Proklamasi Kemerdekaan RI and Bung Karno shown in this textbook.
11 (Page 61)	<p>Burung Garuda Source: 30 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka</p> <p>Bung Tomo Source: 30 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka</p>	Another national hero also represents the person in its cultural dimension show in this textbook. Bung Tomo is National Hero from Surabaya that became the leader of Battle in Surabaya.

Sample	Illustration/Text	Explanation
12 (Pg. 25)	 <p>Hello, my name is Edo. I am twelve years old. I am a student of SMP Negeri 2 Biak. I live in Biak, Papua. I like swimming and reading books. My favorite color is green. My favorite food is fried rice. Nice to meet you.</p>	<p>Besides the representatives of religion, traditional houses, the textbook also tries to explore the whole ethnicity of Indonesia. One of them is by the character of Edo. He comes from Papua, the Eastern part of Indonesia. He visualizes by having different color of skin which become the character of the society of Papua. So, the choices of characters, include its name, are trying to represent the religion and also ethnicity that exist in Indonesia from the Western side to the Eastern side of Indonesia.</p>

4. Conclusion

By this study, now we can easily see Indonesia cultural aspect chosen selectively to be included in this national textbook for some reasons. First, by implementing the local culture idea the students are aware of the nature of Indonesian people that diverse in some cultures. It also can show them the differences among the nations positively. Next, Culture-based English language textbook is also worthwhile for the writers, teachers and scholars to create English textbooks which including the local and regional cultures throughout the country. It potentially enhances both teachers' and students' awareness of the interdependent relationship between language and culture. Last, it also can have an impact on the teachers' teaching methodology, selecting material and developing the content to meet the goal for English language education in this global environment.

Additionally, this study has significant implications to uphold students' cultural identities and values to respect the diversity of cultures. Students can get along the knowledge and information from both inside and outside of the English language textbook. The culture which represented in the textbooks will prepare the students to transform into regional and global citizens. Therefore, the teacher should raise the students' awareness of different culture to create their own beliefs and attitudes. This way is one of the strategies to hold the domination of foreign, especially western cultures which usually represented in commercial textbooks. Hence, a further step of the implementation of culture-based English language textbook in Indonesia will enable the students' to present about their own culture to outsiders using their English ability. It absolutely can help the government to globalized Indonesian cultures. At last, this analysis will give some cross-cultural elements in the development of English language textbooks that can potentially offer a cultural space where teachers and learners at a secondary school level can share and learn from one another for a better understanding of our multicultural society.

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