

THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL CONTENT IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at investigating what cultures are dominantly presented in English textbook used by Junior High School students grade VII in Banyuwangi, entitled "English for Nusantara for Grade VII" and how they are presented. The data were collected from the analysis of the textbook, interview, and questionnaires distributed to three English teachers. The method used in this study is document analysis. Some underlying models proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1990) and Yuen (2011) were used as the main framework for analyzing the textbook. The investigation revealed two main facts. Firstly, Source culture, Target Culture and International Culture are presented in imbalance proportion. Source culture, in the forms of tangible products such as naming, places, and food, are the most dominant cultural content. Secondly, most of the teachers agree that the practice of cultural aspect should appear the most instead of the product since the practice can include of the moral values of culture. The findings of this study may encourage material developers to take into account cultural aspect which are beneficial for English learners in ELT materials for their future design.

Keywords: Teachers' Perspective; Cultural Content; Textbook; Secondary School.

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INTRODUCTION

Richards (2015) confirms that textbooks are a key component in language programs that function as the source of most language information both for language learning and for practicing English in the classroom. Therefore textbooks generally provide a basis for: learning content, the balance of abilities taught and various kinds of English language practice activities carried out by students in the classroom. Functioning as an English language information provider for English language learners, textbooks are instruments that enable English learners to familiarize themselves not only with linguistic aspects but also the social and cultural aspects that are included or accompany in learning the language. As a

result, the significance of the textbook in English classroom has attracted educators and researchers to analyze it from several aspects (Ayu and Indrawati, 2018).

Learning English in Indonesia basically began to be given at the elementary school level, but since the 2013 Curriculum, English has been given as a local content subject where English lessons are not a compulsory subject for elementary school students. So that each school has the freedom to determine the learning model of its English subjects and has the freedom to use appropriate textbooks. With so many English textbooks, it is necessary for teachers to find out which textbooks are suitable for students.

The importance of evaluating textbooks or English textbooks expressed by (Demir & Ertas, 2014) there are two main reasons for evaluating a textbook. First, evaluation will help the teacher to make decisions in selecting the appropriate book. Second, evaluating the appropriateness or impropriety of a textbook will make the teacher more accustomed to the possible strengths and weaknesses of the textbook.

In Indonesia, there are bunches of research carried out by scholars and senior researchers. One of the experiment accomplished by Faris (2014) who investigated the cultural content of the English textbook for Senior High School in Cianjur. He only analysed content of reading passages in the textbook. The research was analysed by using two frameworks. The first framework from Cortazzi and Jin (1999), consist of three aspects: Source culture, Target culture and International culture, this was used to reveal what cultures were represented in the textbook. Meanwhile the second framework from Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi (1990), contains four aspects namely the aesthetic sense, the sociological sense, the semantic sense, or the pragmatic sense. It was used to reveal how cultures were represented. The result showed that the target culture was predominantly discussed in the textbook. On the other hand, regarding how cultures are represented, the culture aspects were generally represented by Aesthetic sense.

Bishara (2015) also revealed that the culture and traditions of Palestinian Arab minority in the English textbooks were marginalized. Different from other previous studies, Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), investigating cultural content in local English textbooks, reported that most of the cultural elements in the local textbooks were neutral (not clearly depicting any particular culture); only a few of them were based on the target language and other cultures.

Different from other previous studies, Gao, R., Cai, S., & Wen, Z. (2024) explores the evolving landscape of cultural representations within locally produced Italian as a foreign language (IFL) textbooks in the Chinese educational context. Findings reveal a notable transformation in emphasis, shifting from an initial spotlight on source culture towards an increasing prominence of target culture across successive textbooks.

Jang & Park (2023) investigated multicultural understandings, social values, and beliefs embedded in the reading passages of five Korean Grade 6 EFL textbooks. Findings revealed that the textbooks (re)produce national pride and otherness and promote the idea of English for a White global world.

Sihombing & Nguyen (2022) investigates the types of culture (e.g. source culture, target culture, and international culture) that are presented in a high school level English textbook in Indonesia. The textbook analysis showed that the textbook was dominated by source culture (Indonesian culture), followed by target culture (USA and UK), international culture (e.g. India, Singapore, Argentina, and Italy), and culture-neutral content.

Alizadeh & Adib (2024) analyses the content of primary school textbooks in Iran for their cultural values and characteristics, based on the individualism-collectivism dimension. Iranian textbooks behavior themes of individualism, such as self-direction, success, and happiness, and manifested individualistic cognitive tendencies, such as focusing on central objects, making dispositional attributions, and expressing positive emotions.

In this study, the researcher used the same frameworks with the study conducted by Isman (2014). The frameworks are from Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Ka Ming Yuen (2011). According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the culture contained in English textbooks is divided into 3 types, the types of culture are discussed in the following section:

a. Source Culture

Source culture material refers to material that presents aspects of language and culture that are part of the learner's own culture, which in this context refers to the diversity of Indonesian cultures such as Javanese, Balinese, Sundanese, Aceh, Minangkabau, and others. Cultural materials may take the form of Indonesian legends or visual representations of Indonesian culture that are presented in English language textbooks. Cortazzi and Jin argue that there is a need for learners to talk about their culture with visitors. Moreover, a deeper reason is that such materials are usually designed to help students become aware of their cultural identity.

b. Target Culture

Target culture materials refer to learning materials that introduce cultural aspects from countries where English is a native language. Kachru (1996) identifies this target culture as the inner circle which includes the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Canada.

c. International Culture

International culture encompasses a wide range of cultures beyond the cultures of origin and destination. It encompasses a diverse spectrum of cultures present in English-speaking nations or in regions where English is not a primary or secondary language, but functions as a global language. As English continues to spread globally, the inclusion of international culture in educational material has become increasingly important. The purpose is to familiarize students with real-life scenarios that they're likely to encounter in the real world.

This study aims to investigate how the teacher perspective about the cultures that represented in the secondary school English textbook. The research questions are two folds:

What is the most dominant culture between the source culture, target culture, and international target culture in the "English For Nusantara Grade VII" textbook? How is the teacher perspective on cultural content in the "English For Nusantara Grade VII" textbook?

METHOD

Research Design

This research used qualitative research method to analyse cultural content in English textbook at some schools in Banyuwangi. Qualitative research means that the research data is explained with non-numeric language. In addition, the characteristics of this research use descriptive research. Descriptive in qualitative research means data is taken in the form of documents, audio recordings, videos, pictures, transcripts, or words. Based on the explanation above, the researcher conducted the descriptive qualitative research to find out how the teachers' perspective about the cultural content in the English textbook.

Data

Primary data is main data, it is the data that is produced by someone who had experience or data. Primary data means data that is directly related to the research conducted by the researcher. The primary source in this research are written text in the English textbook entitled "English for Nusantara Grade VII" and the teachers interview.

The "English for Nusantara Grade VII" is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. There were 253 pages that consist of 5 chapters, the chapters can be seen below :

Chapter 1 : Exploring Fauna of Indonesia

Chapter2 :Taking Trips
Chapter 3 : Journey to The Fantasy World
Chapter 4 : Upcycling Used Materials
Chapter 5 : Digital Life

To obtain data from teacher, the researcher will ask some questions about the cultural content based on the English textbook by interview. There will be 3 English teachers from different junior high school in Banyuwangi. The interview conducted with short questions and will be held on zoom meeting for the effective and efficient reason.

Data Collection Method

In collecting data, researcher uses the documentation and interview method to obtain data on cultural content contained in English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara Grade VII”. The data are collected through several stages such as:

- 1) Visit the school and ask about the English textbook which used to teach the seventh grade in one of Junior High School in Banyuwangi
- 2) Borrow “English for Nusantara Grade VII” textbook at the school library.
- 3) Read and search for cultural content in the textbook.
- 4) Sort texts that contain cultural content to analyze.
- 5) Coded the selected texts to be included in the research.

A qualitative interview occurs when the researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers (Creswell, 2012). To obtain the data of teachers’ perspectives on the use of English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara Grade VII”, the researcher interviewed 3 English teachers from different junior high schools in Banyuwangi. The interview will be held on zoom meeting for the effective and efficient reason.

Data Analysis Method

According to Creswell (2003), the process of data analysis involves preparing the data for analysis, reading through all the data, applying the coding process, description, representation, and interpretation. Based on that, researcher used these six steps to analyze the data that had been obtained. The steps are:

- 1) Preparing the data for analysis. The researcher prepared the data to be studied in the form of English textbook. The researcher then organized the data needed for the researcher that came from the textbook.
- 2) Reading through all the data. Researcher read the entire data which aims to obtain data which will help then go through the data coding process.
 - a. Applying the coding process. After reading the entire data, the researcher sorted the data into some categories. In addition, the researcher also created codes consisting of numbers, symbols, and word forms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Content in The Textbook

The findings related to cultural contents analysis of the English textbook are summarized and presented into two categories: what cultures are represented in the textbook based on the categorization proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and how the cultures are represented in the textbook based on the four aspect of culture framework proposed by Yuen (2011).

Cultural types consist of Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), and International Culture (IC). This information is to find out where the cultural comes from. Meanwhile the cultural aspect such as Products (PRO), Practice (PRA), Person (PER) and Perspective (PET)

shows what are the various things that can be used for cultural object. The categorization of cultural content data found in English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara Grade VII” is shown on the table below based on the table framework by Yuen (2011):

Table 1. The Cultural Content in “English for Nusantara Grade VII”

| ASPECT OF CULTRUE | TYPE OF CULTURE | | | TOTAL |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------|---------------|-------|
| | Source | Target | International | |
| Product | 28 | 6 | 11 | 45 |
| Practice | 2 | 8 | 8 | 18 |
| Person | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Perspective | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 31 | 15 | 21 | 67 |

According to the data presented in the table above, researcher identified 67 cultural content data in English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara Grade VII”. The types of cultural content commonly found 31 data of Source Culture (SC), 15 data of Target Culture (TC), and 21 data of International Culture (IC). Also the data analysis for the cultural content aspect which outlines 45 data of product (PRO), 18 data of practice (PRA), and 4 data of person (PER).

The highest data appears of Source Culture through the product of Indonesian traditional food (Soto, Satay, Bakso, Banana fritter, Rendang, etc.), traditional house (Bolon, Gadang, Bale Sakenem, Joglo), island (Kalimantan, Sumatra, Jawa), book (LaskarPelangi), etc.

There are same data comes up for practice aspect in Target and International Culture. The practice in Target Culture shows a lot about sports (badminton, soccer, jogging, basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc.), activity (tea time, shoes inside house, scout). Meanwhile the International Culture for practice aspect can be found in sports (parkour, archery, and cycling), activity (welcome tea, no shoes inside house, say basmallah before eat).

Person is the most under represented which only 1 data for each Source and Target Culture. These person aspect stands for athlete (Jonathan Christie, Indonesian badminton player) and celebrity (Justin Bieber, Hyun Bin, BTS). Meanwhile the Perspective aspect does not mention in “English for Nusantara”.

From the three units in the textbook in Chapter 1, all the materials have directed students to recognize cultural aspects such as introducing themselves, describing hobbies, and describing personal characteristics and daily activities. The three units in the textbook in Chapter 2, all materials have directed students to recognize cultural aspects such as describing favourite foods and snacks and explaining how to make dishes. In chapter 3, all the materials have directed students to recognize cultural aspects such as describing the house, the rooms in the house, and the tasks of the house. In chapter 4, all the materials lead students to recognize cultural aspects such as describing subjects and learning activities in the classroom, discussing online learning activities, and discussing study habits. Finally, from Chapter 5, all the materials lead students to recognize cultural aspects, such as describing school buildings, extracurricular activities, and school festivals. Although the themes in the textbook are related to cultural aspects, they only illustrate the students’ Indonesian culture. Thus, there are no activities can make students do intercultural understanding and cross-cultural communication. However, the practices only focused on the students’ culture.

The researcher collected information from 3 respondents to find out the teachers’ perspective on the use of English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara Grade VII”. Based on the experience by using the textbook, the teacher thinksthis book is helped them to teach

the cultural content easier since the textbook uses easy to-understand language. This textbook is also designed to equip learners with English language skills that can be used to communicate effectively in various situations since there are a lot of picture and dialogue.

Another response comes to answer how the textbook in helping students understand the existence of cultural diversity. One of the teacher thinks that this textbook has good content that represents the other countries' culture so, it can make the students understand about the diversity of culture. But another teachers declare that this textbook is still lack in depict the other countries' culture that impact the students do not have ability to perceive and recognize cultural differences.

According to the data, the source culture and the product aspect is highly dominated in the textbook. All of the teachers agree that source culture must be shown the most in the textbook to help students more aware and understand about their own culture since it is relevant to the lives of students. But the teachers show similar responses in which they do not agree that the cultural aspect of product appeared a lot in the text book, the practice aspect should be provided more in the textbook. They believe that among these aspects, practice is the aspect that implicitly influenced the students' behavior since this aspect includes customs and habits that are implemented in society.

Findings from Interview

This section is the main point of the research as it examines and discusses the research findings while attempting to address the research question. Within this section, the discussion focuses on the most represent cultural content in the textbook and the teachers' perspective towards the cultural content in the textbook.

Analysis of Cultural Content Representation in Textbook

This research found that the content of the textbook "English for Nusantara Grade VII" was dominated by the Source Culture, that is evidenced by findings showing that 31 data of Source Culture, 15 data of Target Culture, and 21 data of International Culture. This finding was in line with the previous research conducted by Syahri and Susanti (2016), the percentage of source culture was the most dominant, outranking other types of cultures. This finding also in line with research conducted by Handayani (2023) that analysed cultural content in "English for Nusantara Grade VII" textbook.

All the chapters in the "English for Nusantara" mainly shows the content on source culture (Indonesian culture). For example, the learning materials in Chapter 3 of this English textbook only focus on the students' culture. All the materials and illustrations provided in the textbook only focus on discussing the characteristics of the rooms in a typical Indonesian house, the types of items in each room that also highlight the habits of Indonesian people, and the types of house chores that Indonesian teenagers usually do. None of the learning materials illustrate how the characteristics of the house and the types of homework reflect the native culture of native English speakers. There is not even a single cultural note insert that describes the culture of native English speakers. Because no material discusses the culture of native English speakers and no learning activities that require students to know comparisons between cultures, the thematic material presented in.

Regarding the representation of the international culture, the textbook investigated is insufficient to treat English as an international language. As McKay (2012) stated, English has become an international language, the ownership of English has become denationalized and English learners do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of English. The less representation of the international culture in the textbook investigated is insufficient to portray how English can also be used to communicate with non-native speakers of English. Kusumaningrum et al (2023) who found similar findings in her textbook

investigation suggested that the characters of people in other countries should be included in the textbook in order to promote English as an international language. Cortazzi & Jin (1999) who seem to support more inclusion of the international culture in textbooks also agree that both inter- and intra-cultural variations need to be represented in the textbook in order to show that English world does not belong to a monolithic culture.

It shows that “English for Nusantara Grade VII” textbook emphasizes the functional aspects of the student’s own culture (Indonesian Culture). The dominance culture suggests that the textbook enabling them to use English effectively in real-world contexts. The finding that the source culture is predominant in the textbook is in line with Dat (2008), stating that the source culture usually are predominant in textbooks produced locally. Dat (2008) stated that the representation of the source culture content in local textbooks is one of the strengths of local textbooks due to the practicality and familiarity for the learners. Thus, the textbook investigated in this research can be considered strengthening as local textbook due to the more representation of the source culture. But it 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. The cultural contents of English materials should not be limited to native English-speaking countries and should include local cultural contents (Rambe, 2021). The weakness is the textbook does not provide a rich exposure of culture which can develop students’ intercultural understanding in which they have to understand other culture, compare, interpret, and synthesize the cultural differences.

The finding also reveals that there are imbalanced representations of cultural aspect in all chapters, the portion of each aspect is unequal, the most frequent representation belongs to products. The unbalanced representation of cultural aspects is also found in the studies of Yuen (2011) who reported that the most dominance culture which represented in the textbook is product aspect. The dominant representation that points out products and persons may not facilitate enough the students with cultural knowledge. Leading the students to comprehend practices and perspectives which may be more valuable because these contain habits, customs, and beliefs related to the culture.

Analysis of Teachers Perspective

The study investigates teachers’ responses to cultural representation in the textbook. The findings data shows that the representation of culture in the textbook mostly referred to Indonesian culture with product as the dominant cultural aspect that appears.

Question 1 : “What is your teaching experience in using the English for Nusantara Grade VII textbook to teach the cultural content to students?”

All of the teachers’ answer shows that “English for Nusantara” textbook are helped them to teach the cultural content easier since the textbook uses easy to-understand language, presents various examples of the use of English in diverse contexts. For example in Chapter 2, learners learn how to express opinions. This textbook is also designed to equip learners with English language skills that can be used to communicate effectively in various situations since there are a lot of picture and dialogue based on the students topic in school. Also this book contain cultural elements, namely introduction, hobbies, daily activities, food, recipes, rooms in a house, house chores, class activity, study habit, school building, extracurricular activities, and school festival. So, the students can promote their own cultural competence, encouraging critical thinking, and enhancing their cultural literacy.

In teaching and learning practices, as stated by Gao (2006), the interdependence between language learning and cultural learning is so real that it can be concluded that language learning is cultural learning and consequently, language teaching is cultural learning. Gao further stated that foreign language teachers should be aware of the place of

cultural studies in foreign language classrooms and strive to raise students' cultural awareness and improve their communication competences.

Question 2 : “What is your view on the English for Nusantara Grade VII textbook in helping students understand the cultural diversity that exist?”

Rambe (2021) stated that cultural awareness is based on other people's knowledge as well as one's own culture. However, this should not only be seen as “replacing a one-way view with a two-way view” because the concept is much larger. It includes awareness of the behaviours induced by one's own culture, awareness of behaviours induced by other people's cultures and finally, the ability to explain the point of view of one's own culture. Byram (1997) explains more thoroughly what abilities are involved in cultural awareness. According to him, this can be seen as the ability to reflect on one's cultural identity, question values and beliefs that are taken for granted and compare one's culture with the culture of one's interlocutors.

Question 3 : “What are your thoughts regarding the Source culture content that appears the most in the English for Nusantara Grade VII textbook?”

According to teachers' opinion, they all agreed that source culture must be shown the most in the “English for Nusantara” textbook to help students more aware and understand about their own culture since it is relevant to the lives of students. The teachers stated that to achieve the goal for equipping students with English language skills that can be used in everyday life, the content of the textbook must be focus on source cultural content that can use English in a real context and is relevant to the lives of students. Then, since the local culture is slowly fade away, the dominance of source culture in the textbook is able to help students more aware and understand about their own culture. Moreover, Indonesia has a lot of culture from different province and island. So, the dominance of source culture in this textbook help introducing those culture to student. This answer is supported by Rambe (2021) in her previous research stated that the most Indonesian culture (source culture) that appears in the textbook helps the students to activated their own cultures knowledge, and also it can make the students raise their own cultural awareness while learning foreign language. The presentation of source culture also help students more interesting, familiar and more understand by topic in their learning process.

However, the importance of learning the Target and International cannot also be denied. Mirizon (2019) explained on his research that there are some purposes of familiarizing the learners with the others language culture such as enhancing students' knowledge of the world and of foreign communities, familiarizing them with the most salient behavioral patterns of the target societies, promoting attitudes of respect and tolerance, fostering reflection upon one's own culture, and emphasizing the relative role of one's cultural assumptions or developing real intercultural communication in an intercultural world. Since the students learn English, it is a must for them to learn the culture of that target language.

Question 4 : “What are your thoughts regarding the Product aspect on culture content that appears the most in the English for Nusantara Grade VII” textbook?

The teachers show similar responses in which they agree that the cultural aspect of practices should be provided more in the textbook. They believe that among these aspects, practice is the aspect that implicitly influenced the students' behavior since this aspect includes customs and habits that are implemented in society.

The teachers' opinion also in line with Yuen (2011) who said that aspect of practice in cultural content can take a variety of forms. Like the language we choose to use when speaking to people, or how people choose to behave or dress, and so on. It help us understand how the things get done. What we should do and how we should react in any given situation.

It defines what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected. Therefore, culture is not who you are, it's what you do.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion results, this study is predominantly characterized by the Source culture and Product aspect. This is evidenced by the findings which show the distribution of cultural content within the textbook as follows: the types of cultural content by Cortazzi and Jin (1990) shows 31 data of Source culture, 15 data of Target culture, and 21 data of International culture. Meanwhile, the aspect of cultural content by Yuen (2011) comes up with 45 data of Product aspect, 18 data of Practice aspect, 4 data of Person aspect, and no data for Perspective aspect.

Although the textbook was written by local authors and produced by local publisher, the source culture representation is predominant in the textbook. More than a half of the reading passages contain the source culture contents. It can be concluded that the “English for Nusantara Grade VII” is aimed to focusing more on source culture while introducing the students to the target culture and international culture. It has beneficial to raises the Source culture (Indonesian Culture) awareness while learning target and international culture. Learning target and international culture also needed to comparison and information to students for avoided misunderstanding in communication. From explanation above also we can know that function of English textbooks is not only as an exercise and instruction to the students but also as a medium to introduce the cultures content diversity to the students.

As regards the teachers’ perspectives on cultural content in the textbook, findings show that the teachers have different views. Although the teachers show different responses, they see the materials in the textbook as cultural material which is useful for improving their cultural awareness and providing them the opportunities to explore a source culture, target culture, and international culture. However, even though there are different views among teachers, the role of teachers in the classroom is needed because, it is important to incorporate the culture and role of English teachers for students to communicate effectively in the target language..

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