

BRINGING IMAGES AND CULTURAL CONTENTS INTO ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR INTERCULTURAL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

English is becoming a foreign language in Indonesia. There are several resources that can be used by the teacher and instructor to facilitate the teaching and learning process in gaining the four main English skills. A textbook is becoming one of the learning resources in formal and informal education. The learners are expected to master the source, target, and international culture during the learning process. This research aims to explain the key terms related to the topic being discussed and to identify the importance of bringing images and cultural contents into English textbooks for an intercultural classroom atmosphere. A descriptive qualitative study that utilizes the library research methodology is implemented to gather the data of this research. The findings show that images and cultural contents are the important keys as they can get the students' interest and attention during the class hour, images can also be the representation of how culture is done, and if the images and cultural contents are combined together it will help the students to get the deeper understanding of imagination about things that they cannot see directly at the classroom.

Keywords: English textbooks, images, cultural contents, intercultural classroom.

Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris merupakan bahasa asing di Indonesia. Ada beberapa sumber belajar yang dapat digunakan oleh guru dan pengajar dalam memfasilitasi proses belajar mengajar saat hendak mencapai empat keterampilan utama bahasa Inggris. Buku ajar menjadi salah satu sumber belajar dalam pendidikan formal dan non-formal. Pelajar diharapkan untuk dapat menguasai budaya asal, target, dan internasional selama proses pembelajaran ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan kata kunci terkait dengan topik yang dibahas dan untuk mengidentifikasi terkait pentingnya penggunaan gambar serta konten budaya ke dalam buku ajar bahasa Inggris di kelas dengan latar budaya siswa yang berbeda. Sebuah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif merujuk pada penelitian perpustakaan digunakan selama proses pengumpulan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gambar dan konten budaya menjadi peranan penting karena dapat menarik minat dan perhatian murid selama jam pelajaran, gambar juga dapat merepresentasikan bagaimana suatu budaya dilakukan, dan jika gambar serta konten budaya dipersatukan maka dapat membantu murid untuk memperdalam pemahaman dan imajinasi mereka tentang sesuatu hal yang tidak dapat mereka lihat secara nyata di dalam kelas.

Kata Kunci: Buku ajar bahasa Inggris, gambar, konten budaya, kelas antar-budaya.

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INTRODUCTION

English is becoming a foreign language in Indonesia. It is also being one of the subjects to be learnt for the learners from the lower to the higher level of formal education in this country. The learners usually use English only during the English classes, then they started to speak in their mother tongue or vernacular for daily communication purposes. English is also considered as a unique language for Indonesia's learners due to its differences in written and

spoken form. Since it is unique, there are several students that face difficulties while they started to speak or to learn English.

The second language learning purpose is to master the four main language skills that are listening, reading, writing and speaking. The goals of learning the second language are the learners can understand the texts and then they are able to read it loudly, then they are hopefully can create the other texts or speak in a situation by using the second language based on the context. Being able to master all of these skills, the supporting features are needed during the teaching and learning phases. One of the ways to learn English as the second language is from the formal school at the English lesson time and from the private courses that teach English for more daily purposes.

There are several sources that can be used for the teachers or instructors and the learners to facilitate the learning processes of the second language, both in formal and informal education. One of the sources is a textbook. The schools and private courses will always provide certain textbooks as the instructional materials to guide the process in order to achieve the learning goals. A textbook is usually printed with interesting cover, serves the table of contents, and contains the materials and tasks designed attractively based on the learners' needs and grades. The textbooks for elementary students will always have more pictures than the books prepared for the junior and senior high school students.

Indonesia's government have provided the textbooks and modules in printed and PDF versions. Both versions will always fulfill the learning needs such as texts, tasks, dialogs, pictures and practical activities which should be practiced by the learners in front of the classroom with a structural instruction written in English. Beside the materials content that relate to the education curriculum, the textbook is also completed with presenting the cultural elements that will enhance the students' intercultural competence especially while they are learning the second languages (Wang & Hemchua, 2022). The needs of knowing the other's languages and cultures are essential part in second language learning because it will increase the learners' cultural awareness in the classroom.

In Indonesia, the classroom usually consists of 34 students who have different background or cultures. It will force the teachers as the learning facilitators to create a meaningful learning without being unfair to several students that might cause the negative attitude during the processes of it in the intercultural classroom setting. The use of teaching materials such as textbook will also help the teachers to develop the suitable materials to be transferred during the language learning processes and its culture. Beside learning the

Indonesia's culture, the students are also needed to learn the target culture while they learn the foreign languages.

Based on the background above, this paper is intended to explain the definitions of each part related to the topic being discussed started from English textbooks, images, cultural contents and intercultural classroom as the keywords of the paper. Then, it also aims to identify the importance of bringing images and cultural contents into the English textbooks as one of the main sources for teaching and learning processes in the intercultural classroom.

METHOD

This research employed descriptive qualitative that utilized library research methodology. The final result information in this paper remarks or examines descriptively into text. The data of bringing images and cultural contents into English textbook for intercultural classroom are explained briefly from several research sources. The information gathered is descriptive, reviewed, and represent comprehensively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Bringing Images and Cultural Contents into the English Textbook for Intercultural Class *English Textbooks*

English is part of the second language or foreign language in Indonesia. At the formal schools, it has been taught from the primary level to university level of education. To facilitate the teachers while teaching English for the students, there are several instructional materials that can enrich the source of teaching and learning activities during the English time as follows: textbook, module, video, Internet sources, and so on (Ayu & Indrawati, 2019). All the materials can be in a printed and soft file version.

Textbook is an important tool in facilitating the teaching and learning process. It also can be seen as the same as an electronic book (*e-book*) which is being the learning media for the teachers and students. The importance of the textbook is also mentioned by Tomlinson (1998) that it serves the learning guidance for the teacher and students so that they can understand what theme they are going to learn and what things they have learnt in the past. When a teacher teaches by using no instructional materials, it will give the difficult time for the learners. The learners will have no idea about what they will learn, how it will be learnt, and why it is learnt so. When the students are learning English as the second language, it is not only presenting the written text in English but also bringing the cultural content from the origin language (UK and US countries and other countries where English is becoming their first or national language).

Facing the digital age where all the things are done in online, it also causes the changing of how the generation nowadays is more familiar with the soft files rather than the printed one.

The students are also more interested in searching for a new knowledge by using the Internet machines such as *Google*, *Youtube*, and so on. That is why the Indonesia's government also served and spread the English electronic book (*e-book*) online and can be downloaded freely in a PDF form, so hopefully the teacher and the students can learn using it anytime and anywhere. The form of *e-book* also brings the interesting face because it can be seen in colorful pictures and can be zoomed in or zoomed out. Implementing this into an *e-book* as part of textbook is also considered the proper materials for the learners to achieve the learning goals even though they have done all the classes and do the examinations online.

Images

Images refers to a visual representation of something in 2D, 3D, or even 4D. In 2D version, the image is presenting by the lines that gather to create an imagery of one thing. The visual image is not a new thing in human environment, long time ago the people used drawing image manually in a paper to send a message or to tell a story and nowadays the visual images are more colorful and made by a computer (Elmiana, 2019). Images is easily to find in a printed document and a digital media which can be accessed from private devices connected to the Internet.

The vary of visual images can help the people to understand and create the imagery in their brain because it will give a stimulus to think creatively and critically about what are drawn in front of their eyes (Wang & Hemchua, 2022). There are several functions of images while it is implemented into a textbook such as: 1) to develop the students' knowledge about the real world that cannot be served inside the classroom at the lesson time, 2) to deliver a message from textual content, 3) to build the students' attention and activate their interest in certain materials, and 4) to enable the students to relate their learning in meaningful ways (Elmiana, 2019).

Cultural Contents

Teaching English as the second language will always include teaching its culture as well. The cultural contents in textbooks are divided into two parts which consist of the cultural categories and cultural elements. According to Cortazzi and Jin in Ayu (2019) the cultural categories include the source culture, target culture and international target culture. Source culture is defined as the learners' own culture, Indonesia's culture is becoming the source of the textbooks which is published for the Indonesia's learners. The target culture is described as the target language's culture that must be learnt by the learners while using the book. The United Kingdom, United States, and other countries which English is becoming their first language cultures are included into this target culture. The last category was the international

target culture which defined as none of including into the source and target culture. It might be from other countries' cultures such as South Korea, Jordania, Thailand and others that English is not their first language.

According to Yuen (2011), the cultural content is also divided into four elements. It is also known as 4Ps including products, person, practices and perspectives. The first cultural element which can be evaluated is the product. Product includes the physical form of a certain culture. It can be a song, historical site, folklores, foods, drinks and other man-made products. The second cultural element is person which refers to the figures or famous people that are being representative of any culture in the world. The person can be a singer, heroes, poets, authors, national athletes and artists. Then, the third cultural element is the practice that occurs in the form of ritual activities, ceremonies, past traditional, or even the holiday celebration that represent a certain culture. The last cultural element is the perspective which refers to the difference of certain groups seeing something such as myths or beliefs compared to other groups of people with different cultures.

Cakir in Wahyuni (2019) stated that textbooks' language should also provide the cultural elements that the foreign learners can reach the idea of a certain situation or topic appropriately by using the target language communication compared to their source culture. In reality, the Western culture as the target culture for Indonesia's learners is quite different from their own culture (Eastern culture) (Tseng & Chao, 2012). In Indonesia, the people usually eat porridge, *lontong*, yellow rice or even *soto* for their breakfast time. But, in the Western countries, they may have sandwiches or smoothies for breakfast. From these eating habits, the different cultures have shown differently.

Intercultural Classroom

Intercultural or cross-cultural refers to one or several differences between person to another in terms of language, nationality, race, religion, ethnic, beliefs and others (Novinger, 2001). In the second language learning, the goal is more on the learners' understanding of how communication can work properly across cultures or it can be said that how they follow the 'norms' of communication between people who have different languages and cultures (Ho, 2009). The intercultural classroom then become a medium for the learners to learn and get the deeper understanding of certain cultures which are different with their own culture.

Intercultural learning is the main thing to be completed into a classroom (Romjue & MacDonald, 2018). It is necessary for the learners to recognize and have an adaptation with the way some cultures see one situation. They are not only learning the others' languages but they also have to know on what situation or to whom they allow to speak using certain sentences in

the target culture context. In Indonesia, there are several challenges occur during the implementation of cross-cultural in the classroom as follow: the limitation of lesson time (English), the need of curriculum to be implemented from the government, the limited cultural content served in the textbooks and the cultural knowledge from the teachers as the facilitator in the classroom (Sugianto & Wirza, 2021).

Learning cultures and bringing them into a classroom are not an easy thing to be implemented, it will take time and faces its own challenges and opportunities at the same time. Byram in Romjue (2018) proposed three steps to implement the intercultural learning in the intercultural classroom setting as follow: identify the differences, ask questions about others' culture, and ask questions to oneself. By implementing these steps, it is hopefully fulfilled the learners' needs in order to understand the intercultural concept in their classroom atmosphere.

The Importance of Images and Cultural Contents in English Textbooks

Bringing images and cultural contents into the English textbooks is an important thing to be implemented for serving good tasks for second language learners. As what have mentioned before, the images can get the students' attention and interest while it compares to only serve a text during the teaching and learning processes. An image can represent how a culture can be done for example when a textbook wants to tell a history of Prambanan Temple which is located on Central Java. The students who never go to that temple will have no idea how it looks like, but when the textbook brings the image of Prambanan Temple even in a black-white coloring, the students are easier to put an imagery of that historical place into their brain.

The other reasons why it is needed to complete the text with images in a textbook is the images can represent what is relevant and not relevant with the learners' culture. As the example, the students will recognize the picture of local fairy tales whom the actors are drawn in traditional clothes of certain area in Indonesia between the picture of the international fairy tales such as Cinderella where the actors are drawn in a beautiful gown with the western characteristics for the female version and the male with a tidy suit. This situation is not only put a comparison for the students but also as a medium for introduce the other's culture.

Visual images serve in a textbook can help the students to know the simple things such as how the other outside their culture prepare the cultural elements for examples the practices and the products. The practices can be drawn while there is a wedding invitation. In Indonesia's culture, it is acceptable for the guests to come or not come without having confirmation first. But, in the other's culture, they put the contact number to confirm whether the guest can attend the party or not. The textbook can present the differences of these things in an example of

wedding party invitation card. Then, the products can be drawn for example while there is a dialog between a waiter and a customer in a western restaurant. The textbook can put the images of the restaurant menu completed with its foods and beverages drawing because there probably difficult for the students to imaging how a sandwich looks like, what smoothies look like and so on.

CONCLUSION

The textbooks as the sources for teachers and learners in conducting a learning process specifically in the second language are always completed with a form of written and visual designs. The written form can be a text, dialogs, and tasks, while the visual form can be an image of certain things which has a correlation with the written form. The images will be more attractive and interesting rather than the writings in a textbook while presenting the learning materials. For the elementary schools' textbook, the images will be easier to find if it is compared to the high schools' one.

There are several functions of images in a textbook to complete the goals of intercultural classroom in second language learning as follows: 1) to develop the students' knowledge about the real world that cannot be served inside the classroom at the lesson time, 2) to deliver a message from textual content, 3) to build the students' attention and activate their interest in certain materials, and 4) to enable the students to relate their learning in meaningful ways (Elmiana, 2019). While the images are represented together with the cultural contents (including the cultural categories and cultural elements), it will help the students to get the deeper understanding of imagination about things that they cannot seen directly at the classroom.

Since the images and cultural contents are important to be implemented in the intercultural classroom setting, there are several suggestions from the writer to the publishers or textbooks' authors. The first thing is visual images should be completed into the high schools' textbooks as many as it occurs in the elementary's textbooks. The second is the availability of *e-book* will really help the students to get more colorful images while drawing certain texts inside it, hopefully by the more spreading of *e-book* can make the publishers put the colorful images because it will cost less money while it comes to the printed version. Then, the last suggestion is the teacher as the learning facilitator could also prepare the other images that represent the cultural contents outside the textbooks because nowadays it is easier to find visual images on the Internet and presenting it by using an attractive media during the classroom activities.

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