

INTERCULTURAL APPROACHES TO THE CULTURAL CONTENT OF INDONESIA ELT TEXTBOOKS: A LIBRARY RESEARCH

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Received: 5th of March 2022, Accepted: 20th of June 2023, Published: 27th of June 2023

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the cultural content of some Indonesian ELT Textbooks based on the intercultural approaches. Intercultural approaches in English Language Teaching may increase the awareness on three things, they are native culture, target culture, and international culture. The data were collected based on three journals that have been written by some Indonesian researchers in the same field of research. They are: Muhammad Iwan Munandar and Imaratul Ulwiyah (2012), Gisela Elshadelin and Mateus Yumarnamto (2020), and Deswila, et al (2021). The method of this study is descriptive qualitative method by using systematic literature review. The journals were taken from *Research Gate* site and *Google Scholar* search engine. The findings are presented descriptively by discussing (1) the ELT textbooks that become the sample, (2) the aspects of culture content in each article that can be found in ELT Textbook, (3) and the implication of the cultural representation in each textbook. It is hoped that the discussion from the three journal articles will be helpful for the ELT teachers to get the knowledge about cultural content in each textbook and be more creative to enhance the students' intercultural competence while learning English as the second language.

Keywords: intercultural approach, culture content, ELT textbook.

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INTRODUCTION

Textbook plays an important role in the success of the teaching and learning process besides the learners and teachers themselves (AbdelWahab, 2013; Medina, 2016; Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012). Textbook will be helpful in delivering the materials, giving the task that is suitable with the learning objectives, and also giving the homework to the students that is still connected to the learning activity in the classroom. Textbook is also needed in order to support the students' intercultural competence of the target language. One of the way is by included the cultural content in the textbook. Elshadelin & Yumarnamto (2020) stated that portrayal of cultural contents the text books may bring different perspectives on how we see language teaching and how we see ourselves.

The students also may learn the similarities and differences among cultures and also build a deeper understanding of different way of life by learning the cultural materials that is included in the textbook. Moreover, various cultural content in the teaching materials can also build up students' cultural awareness (Siddiqie, 2011) in (Deswila et al., 2021). Regarding to those theories, it can be concluded that the inclusion of cultural content in the ELT textbook is

considered important to raise the students' intercultural competence during their ELT learning process.

However, the inclusion of the cultural content in ELT textbooks in Indonesia is presented differently (Putra et al., 2020). There is no fix commitment of the book publishers or the government of which cultural elements that want to be given to the students to form their intercultural competence. The government also give little attention in the intercultural field that can increase the students' intercultural awareness (Fantini, 1997; Lange & Paige, 2003) in (Putra et al., 2020). This unbalance cultural content may bring bad effect for the students' intercultural awareness. One thing that should be avoided if the students' intercultural competence is not formed well is the discrimination feeling that the students may have over a certain culture. Therefore, there must be an adequate and balance cultural content in the ELT textbook, so that the students will not only acquire the language but also the culture of the target language as well. As stated by Bennet et al in (Putra et al., 2020) that "the person who learns a language without learning culture risks becoming a fluent fool." Therefore, intercultural awareness and intercultural competence take an important role in language learning.

In order to investigate the cultural content in ELT Textbooks in Indonesia, some studies related to this concern have been done. They have the same purpose of study. However, the textbooks that are used as the samples are different. The textbooks samples range from the local textbook published by private publishers in Indonesia, local textbook published by the Indonesian government, and also global textbook published by publisher from abroad. Therefore, to describe the cultural content in ELT Textbook in Indonesia, this study will use a descriptive qualitative method. There are three articles related to the topic that are going to be discussed further in this study. The focus of discussion will be about (1) the intercultural approach in each article, (2) The kinds of ELT Textbook that are used as the samples, and (3) the cultural content inclusion that is described in each articles. From these articles, the conclusion will be about the description of cultural content included in each textbook that can support the students' intercultural awareness and competence.

METHOD

This study will use descriptive qualitative method. The purpose of using this method is to describe the cultural content in English teaching textbook based on three local journal articles. The discussion will be about (1) the ELT textbooks that become the sample, (2) the aspects of culture content in each article that can be found in ELT Textbook, (3) and the implication of the cultural representation in each textbook.

The samples of this study are three articles written by Indonesian researchers which discuss the intercultural approach in cultural content of ELT textbooks. The articles that are being discussed are:

- “Cultural Contents in the ELT Textbook Prepared by The Indonesian Ministry of Education for Secondary Schools”, written by Nurhamsi Deswila, Martin Kustati, Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf, Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun, Besral & Rehani. *Journal of Nusantara Studies* 2021, Vol 6(1) 222-241. 2021.
- “Intercultural Approaches to the Cultural Content of Indonesia’s High School ELT Textbooks”, written by Muhammad Iwan Munandar and Imaratul Ulwiyah. *Cross-Cultural Communication* Vol. 8, No. 5, 2012, pp. 67-73. 2012.
- “Cultural Contents in Two English Textbooks in Indonesia: Representations and Sources of Culture” written by Gisela Elshadelin and Mateus Yumarnamto. *Journal on Applied Linguistics and Language Education*. 2020.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Intercultural Approaches in English Language Teaching

The main purpose of an intercultural approach to English language education is not on the ‘native speaker competence’ but more likely to the ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (e.g. Byram, 1997b; Guilherme, 2002) in (Corbett, 2022, p. 2). Intercultural communicative competence includes the ability to understand the language and behavior of the target community and explain it to members of the ‘home’ community and otherwise. There are some principles of intercultural approach.

First, the need to build a link between target culture and native culture and to reflect both on target and one’s own culture (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; McKay, 2000) in (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012). Through the intercultural approach, it is hoped that the students can understand and appreciate their own culture, others’ cultures, and study the language. The language itself will be helpful in order to share cultural beliefs of their own community and interact with other people who have different cultural values and beliefs (Corbett, 2010) in (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012).

Second, interculturalism rather than biculturalism should serve as the goal of learning in EIL classrooms (McKay, 2000; Byram, 2003) in (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012). Interculturalism is where the learner can get the knowledge or a competence about other cultures without need to find the acceptance of the value of other culture as in biculturalism. While in biculturalism, a person can be the members of many social groups because they are

looking for the acceptance of other culture. Becoming a member of a new social group also incorporate the culture (Byram, 2003, p. 51).

Third, intercultural approach in English language teaching means that the culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein & Colby, 2003) in (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012). The culture-specific approach includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the world view and specific behavior to a particular culture group. Meanwhile, culture-general learning relates to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to universal, generalizable cross-cultural phenomena.

Moreover, Liddicoat (2004) stated that an intercultural approach to language teaching and learning involves four main activities related to the culture, they are: acquisition about cultures, comparing cultures, exploring cultures, finding one's own 'third place' between cultures. To achieve this main activities, there is a set of intercultural approaches principles to develop the approach of teaching culture within language.

- Explicit teaching of culture is a central part of language teaching
The goal of language learning is when we can talk in another language well. Crozet (1996) in Liddicoat (2004) argue that to communicate not only just involve the language structure or vocabulary but also related to the culture.
- Culture is integrated into other language skills not a separate skill
Kramsch (1993) in Liddicoat (2004) explains that whenever we speak, means that we perform a cultural act and this is a beneficial way to consider the relationship between language and culture.
- Culture is taught from the beginning
The need to start teaching culture at the very beginning steps in language teaching is important to do. If teaching the culture is taught late, the learners will have created an understanding of context for the language they are learning. There will be a cultural space where the learners will have uninformed assumptions or understanding that is formed based on their own native culture is the cultural awareness is not taught from the beginning of language learning process.
- The bilingual speaker is the norm

In English language teaching, a bilingual norm would be more suitable instead of the native speaker norm. Bilingual norm may develop a speaker to be more comfortable and capable in an intercultural context.

- Language learning involves intercultural exploration.

Ideally, language learning need to give more opportunities for the learners to reflect their own language and culture. Because learning about other culture is basically comparing the cultures. Without knowing their own native culture better, it would be difficult for the learners to understand the other culture.

- Learning to continue to learn

It is impossible for the teachers to teacher the students all about other cultures in the classroom. Since culture is a complex thing that may vary one to another. What we can do in the classroom is help learners develop ways of finding out more about the culture they are learning by analyzing their experiences and developing their awareness.

- Intercultural competence

There are some elements which clearly need to be included in the idea.

- Intercultural language users are aware that cultures are relative and that different
- People use language in different ways to achieve similar goals.
- Intercultural language users know some of the common cultural conventions in the language they are learning.
- Intercultural language users have strategies for learning more about culture as they interact.
- Intercultural language users have the capacity to reflect on their own linguistic behavior and that of their interlocutors.

The Discussions on the Cultural Content in ELT Textbook in Indonesia based on the Three Articles.

In order to get the pictures of how in the cultural content in ELT textbook in Indonesia, there are three articles that are discussed based on three criteria, they are: (1) the ELT textbooks that become the sample, (2) the aspects of culture content in each article that can be found in ELT Textbook, (3) and the implication of the cultural representation in each textbook.

- 1) Nurhamsi Deswila, Martin Kustati, Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf, Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun, Besral & Rehani. 2021.**

This study investigates the cultural content in the ELT Textbook that is provided by the government and to observe the dominant culture that is presented in the textbook. To answer the research questions, this study use the content analysis as the research methodology including text, images, printed, media or online content, and written or spoken language (Bryman, 2016; Jenner, Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke) in (Deswila et al., 2021). The document that is being analyzed is the textbook prepared by Indonesia's Ministry of Education for use by teachers of Year 11 (second-grade) classes in senior high schools published by The Centre for Curriculum and Book. It was written by Makhrukh Bashir, with the help from reviewers including Emi Emilia, Helena I.R. Agustien, and Lina Mulyanti. The first version of the book was published in 2014 and the revised version in 2017. The revised version was selected as the object of this study.

The data extracted from the textbook analysis can be divided into three categories: native culture, target culture and international culture. Each categories of cultural content is briefly discussed in terms of texts, dialogue, and images. The data is summarized as follows:

Table 1. The Result of a Textbook Analysis

Category	Native Culture	Target Culture	International Culture
Short functional text	4	1	0
Song lyrics and poem...	0	6	0
Reading text and play	3	4	3
Dialogs	0	5	1
Images	3	4	0

Based on the data, the overall percentage of texts, images and dialogues related to native culture is 30.3 %, while 57.6% refer to the target culture and only 12.1% is about international culture. It is clear that references to the target culture seem to dominate the textbook.

The findings in this study underlined the need of understanding the culture behind the target language while the presentation of native culture shows an awareness of the importance of students learning about their own

cultures from the target culture perspective. However, the limited amount of international cultural information should not be neglected as this is also important for Indonesian students to learn about the cultures of countries all over the world. The need for students to learn about other cultures is increasing as access to the worldwide is getting easier. Therefore, the researchers recommend the textbook to be revised in terms of the presentation of international culture.

2) **Muhammad Iwan Munandar and Imaratul Ulwiyah, 2012.**

The purpose of this study is to explore how the cultural content is combined into Indonesia's high school ELT textbooks from an intercultural perspective. The data is obtained from 2 series "Interlanguage" and "Developing English" that consist of six ELT Textbook for Indonesian Senior High School students' grade 10, 11 and 12. The authors of the textbooks are Indonesian and it is claimed to fulfill the 2006 Standard Contents of English by Indonesia's National Agency for Education Standards. Cultural contents were collected from every part of the series including readings, dialogues, special sections, and exercises. The elements comprised both texts and visuals. The data then classified based on the three different types of cultural materials proposed by Cortazzi and JIN, they are, source culture, target culture, and international target cultures.

As regards the cultural content to learn, this study uses the terms "Big C" and "little c" to explicate the various components of culture. Big C refers to visible aspects of cultural creations, people's lives, whereas little c refers to invisible cultural values. Big C signifies aspects of which are readily apparent and embodies general and tangible cultural products such as style of dress, cuisine, customs, festivals and traditions, institutionalized aspects of culture (social, political, economic, educational, religious, etc.), geographical monuments, historical events, sciences, and artistic products. The little c culture is psychological in nature and involves people's sociocultural norms, world-views, and cultural value systems.

The finding of this study shows that from the source culture element, the textbooks may help the learners in extending knowledge of source culture and linking cultural materials to their cultural context. The topics related to the cultural materials appear in all sections of the textbook. The topics include the

reading passages, dialogues, tasks, and special features. The topics include family life, daily activity, famous place, public figure, social and political institution, rites of passage, and world view. This, then, draws attention to the issue of the cultural appropriation of language material. Moreover, although the textbook offer a sufficient representation of Big C and little c, the approach to cultural content is questionable given that overgeneralizations of target culture are common and explanations on speech acts are devoid of information on cultural conventions of the relevant community.

Lastly from the international target culture element, this book has obviously introduce learners to international target cultures. The themes of are mostly about famous place and city (Coliseum, the Borobudur temple, and Stonehenge), historical site (Niagara Falls, the Great Wall, the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids, the Great Zimbabwe, and the Easter Island), food (kebab (Turkey), pizza (Italy), hamburger (Germany), tempura (Japan), and nasi lemak (Malaysia), and folklore (from Britain, America, Indonesia, Greece, and India). In general, the themes imply visible and invisible components of culture. However, there is a cultural vacuum in language functions in this textbook. The absence of additional information on cultural associations of the speech acts in the textbooks may create false perceptions about the complex relationship between language and culture

3) **Gisela Elshadelin and Mateus Yumarnamto, 2020.**

The purpose of this study is to explore how cultural contents (global culture (L1 culture), the local culture (L2 culture) and the other cultures (L0 cultures) were represented in two English textbooks. The first English books is published by a national publisher representing a local textbook and the other one is by Cambridge, used in Indonesian context representing a global textbook. In this study there are at least three main goals of the inclusion of cultural contents in English language teaching (ELT) materials: introducing the source culture (L1 Culture), introducing the target culture (L2 Culture), and introducing other cultures that do not belong to L1 or L2 culture (LO Culture). The two textbook that are being analyzed in this study are two ELT textbooks used by students of Grade 12 in Indonesia.

The first textbook, Bahasa Inggris, is a domestic English textbook—a textbook published in Indonesia for Indonesian students and it is endorsed by

the Indonesian government. This textbook follows the national curriculum (The 2013 Curriculum). The second one, Think, is an international textbook published by Cambridge. It is widely used by private and public schools especially in urban areas in Indonesia. The Cambridge textbook follows the Cambridge curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Based on the findings in this study, the researchers found the difference on the emphasis of the two textbooks in representing the three cultural sources. Bahasa Inggris as written by Indonesian and are intended for Indonesian learners all over the country puts the emphasis on global and local culture. On the other hand, Think puts the emphasis on global and other cultures, with only one text containing the local culture of Indonesia. This different emphasis may be influenced by the intended target audience of the textbooks and the values that are intended to be communicated to the audience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions on the three articles. It can be concluded that there is still no balance proportions among the cultural content in the ELT Textbook that become the sample in each study. In the textbook that is provided by the government, the presentation of the target culture dominate the cultural content rather than the local culture and the international culture. Therefore, it is suggested that the government may revise the textbook by adding more cultural content related to the international culture. In the second study, the textbook introduces various elements of target culture and international target culture. This should increase the learners' awareness of the status of English as an international language and the uses of the language in intercultural communication. In such a way, the learners are given the plenty of opportunity to explore the universal cross-cultural phenomena, compare and contrast their cultural behavior with that of people from different cultures, and increase their critical cultural awareness. Hopefully, the learners may acquire the ability to challenge cultural stereotypes as well.

The third study compare the two books from local and international publishers. The finding shows that the textbook contain different focus on cultural value according to target learners. The textbook from the local publisher are intended for Indonesian learners all over the country puts the emphasis on global and local culture. Meanwhile, the textbook from international publisher puts the emphasis on global and other cultures, with only one text containing the local

culture of Indonesia. This can be conclude that the cultural content in a textbook is also influenced by the target learners.

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