

THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL CONTENT IN INDONESIAN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK “ENGLISH: WORK IN PROGRESS”

Amalia Permata Dewi¹, Rahmadi Nirwanto², Sri Normuliati³

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Palangka Raya^{1,2,3}

amaliapermata10@gmail.com¹

ABSTRACT

The role of English as an international language (EIL), emphasizes that English textbooks should include learners' culture (source culture), international culture (cultures of other countries around the world) in addition to the target culture. This study investigates the types of culture (e.g. source culture, target culture, international culture and neutral culture) and elements of culture (products, persons, practices and perspectives). Data were garnered from an English textbook nationally prescribed for Grade Ten senior high school students in Indonesia. The textbook analysis showed that (1) in terms of the categories of culture, it is indicated that international culture dominates the textbooks, followed by local culture, with neutral culture coming next and the target culture being the least represented and (2) in terms of the elements of culture, products appear to be the most prominent element of culture, followed by persons in second place, practice and perspectives are the least represented. The findings suggest that the textbook authors and the teachers should develop the materials to address the weaknesses in the materials related the categories and elements of culture in the textbook so that the textbook can act as source for both language and culture learning.

Keywords: Categories of Culture, Cultural Content, Elements of Culture

INTRODUCTION

Today, English is the main language for international communication. Many people from different countries and cultures use it in order to communicate to one another. In order to communicate effectively, those want learning English should

understand that learn English is not only about learning grammar and vocabulary; but it is also learning about the cultures where English is spoken. In this context, Xie (2018) claimed that language is not only for communication but also reflects the speaker's culture, values, and worldview. Based on this, learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially in countries like Indonesia, learn not only the language but also the cultural aspect behind it. In the context of teaching and learning, textbooks are the main tools for the students to learn both the language and culture.

Cultural content in EFL textbooks is important because it helps how students see the world. These books help students learn about global cultures while also maintaining their own culture. Kramsch (2018) says, "How culture is presented in language learning affects students' understanding of culture and their sense of self." In Indonesia, where cultural heritage is important, balancing local and global cultures in EFL textbooks is crucial. If textbooks focus too much on global or Western cultures, students might feel disconnected from their own culture. On the other hand, if they focus too much on local culture, students might not learn about global cultures.

In Indonesia, the cultural content in EFL textbooks has become more important because of the country's cultural diversity and national education policies that emphasize *Pancasila* values. *Pancasila*, as Indonesia's national philosophy, promotes unity in diversity and supports the national identity.

Fadillah (2018) says, "The way culture is shown in textbooks can either support or challenge national values." Since Indonesia wants to keep its cultural identity while being part of the global community, it's important for EFL textbooks to include a balance of both Indonesian and global cultures.

Discussing about culture, the ability to understand and communicate with people from different cultures, is a key skill in today's world. The ability to understand and communicate with people from different cultures, is intercultural communicative competence Teachers need to make sure that textbooks help students learn both English and the cultural knowledge. Students should learn not only to have language competence but also intercultural communicative competence. Baker (2018) maintained that student must develop intercultural communicative competence to succeed in a globalized world. For Indonesian students, the challenge is to develop this skill while still staying connected to their own culture. This is why it is important to study how categories and elements of cultures are represented in EFL textbooks.

In Indonesian context, numerous researchers conducted research studies on cultural representations in Indonesian EFL textbooks; from primary to high school levels. They are explained as follows. At the level of primary school, Butar-butar and Pasaribu (2021) compared two textbooks, "*Global English Key Stage 6*" and "*Grow*

with *English Book 6*." They found that the "*Global English Key Stage 6*" textbook had more cultural information than "*Grow with English Book 6*." the "*Global English Key Stage 6*" textbook contain a wider variety of cultural types and aspects, emphasizing how important culture is in preparing students for intercultural communication.

Similarly, Fathiyya et al. (2022) studied the Indonesian cultural content in the sixth-grade textbook "*Stairway: A Fun and Easy English Book*." Their research study focused on cultural products such as buildings, clothing (such as uniforms), food, and traditional martial arts, shown through images and texts. For the level of secondary schools, Jismulatif et al. (2022) looked at foreign and Indonesian cultural content in the textbooks "*Think Globally, Act Locally, English in Focus*," and "*Bright*," An English for junior high school students. They found that there was more focus on Indonesian culture, especially in terms of perspectives and practices, while foreign cultures were not represented as much. In another study, Sabillawati & Putra (2023) examined how multiculturalism was shown in the "*Global Language*" textbook used by Indonesian EFL learners. They found that multicultural values were not evenly distributed, with most of the focus being on cultures from English-speaking countries, even though the textbook is used in Indonesia (non-English-speaking country)

Lastly, Septiyana and others (2022) assessed at the cultural content in "*English on Sky*," a textbook for eighth graders. They found 72 instances of cultural content across 13 chapters. Most of this content came from Indonesian cultures (46 items), while there were fewer examples of target cultures (14 items) and international cultures (12 items). At the level of high schools, in Indonesia, several studies have been done on the cultural contents in English textbooks, revealing imbalances in cultural representation. Al-Faya et al. (2023) conducted a study on the cultural contents of the English textbook "*Work in Progress*" used by secondary school students in Indonesia. They focused on visual images with texts (e.g. pictures with monolog, dialogue & description). Their findings showed that the textbook's cultural elements were predominantly from target cultures, specifically the UK and the USA, followed by source cultures (local Indonesian culture) and international cultures. Ardnyananisari & Ratri (2024) explored cultural content in the "*Bahasa Inggris*" textbook for 12th-grade students. The study's findings demonstrated that the textbook primarily represented source and target cultures, without including global culture. Most of the cultural content was presented in dialogues, readings, and writing examples, with 55% representing source culture and 45% representing target culture.

The majority of research studies have been conducted on textbooks from elementary to high school levels, primarily based on the 2013 Curriculum. However, studies on textbooks based on "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" are still limited. So far, two

studies have been conducted: Al-Faya et al. (2023) and Sofiah et al. (2024). Al-Faya et al. (2023) focused on visual images integrated with monologues, dialogues, and descriptions, and while, Sofiah et al. (2024) examined the categories and elements of culture in the textbook “*Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK Kelas X*” (English for Senior High School Grade XII), with a specific focus on pictures. The current research focuses on reading texts. The research questions are formulated as follows; (1) which categories of culture (e.g., source, target, international culture and culture-neutral content) are represented in the textbook entitled: *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MA Work in Progress Kelas X* (English for Senior High School Grade X)?, (2) What elements (dimension) of culture (products, practices, perspectives, and persons) are represented in the textbook entitled: *Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA Kelas X* (English for Senior High School Grade X)?

RESEARCH METHOD

There were several steps that the researchers took in order to collect the data. First of all, the researcher downloaded the textbook from SIBI (Sistem Informasi Perbukuan Indonesia), an official book website run by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and an original e-book version of the textbook was downloaded. Afterward, the researcher reviewed each chapter of the book one by one, then focused on reading the texts for each chapter. To save time and effort, they created separate notes related to the titles of the reading texts and their pages. This way, when referring directly to the reading texts, they could easily be found.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative methods to investigate the cultural categories and elements in the EFL textbook (using two frameworks). Dealing with the categories of culture, the data were analyzed one by one and categorized by source culture, target culture, international culture and neutral culture. Any data that referred to Indonesian culture were categorized as source culture, then any data that referred to American/British culture were categorized as target culture, and any data that referred to any other country's culture besides the countries that already mentioned before were categorized as international culture. In addition, data that were not included in the three previous categories were classified as neutral culture. After done all, the researchers draw a conclusion to see which representation is dominating the whole materials in the textbook to determine whether the English textbook for the tenth grade of “*Kurikulum Merdeka*” presented sufficient cultural materials. In terms of cultural elements, the steps were almost the same. Data indicating products were categorized as products; data indicating practices were categorized as practices; data indicating perspectives were categorized as perspectives; and data indicating persons were

categorized as persons. After completing all steps, the researchers draw a conclusion to identify which representation dominates the materials in the textbook. This helped determine whether the English textbook for the tenth grade of “*Kurikulum Merdeka*” presented a sufficient range of cultural elements. By following both frameworks, the researcher already manifested a triangulated concept and avoided invalid data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed based on two research questions in the current study; (1) Which categories of culture (e.g., source, target, international and culture-neutral content are represented in the textbook entitled: *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/SMK/MA Work in Progress Kelas X* (English for Senior High School Grade X)? and (2) What elements of culture (products, practices, perspectives, and persons) are represented in the textbook entitled: *Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress untuk SMA/SMK/MA Kelas X* (English for Senior High School GradeX)?

The Categories of Cultures

The categories of culture include source culture (Indonesian culture), target culture, international culture, and culture-neutral content were represented in the textbook. They are explained as follows.

- **Source Culture**

The term "source culture" refers to the local or Indonesian culture. According to the analysis, local culture is covered in "the Enrichment Part of Sub-Chapter I, entitled "Paralympic Hero," in "My Daily Journal," in "Healthy Meal," in "The Enrichment Part of Sub-Chapter IV," in "Respond to Graffiti," and in "The Enrichment Part of Sub-Chapter V." Below is an explanation of each category.

In relation to the topic of "Paralympic Heroes," "The main person in the text is Leoni Oktilla Rani. The fact that shows she is a well-known badminton player who was involved in a motorcycle accident makes her story noteworthy. But the accident did not deter her from playing badminton, as she went on to win in Para badminton in Tokyo 2020. As a result of representing Indonesia with honor on the global scene, she is regarded as a hero by the event known as "The Paralympic Heroes," which is an international competition for athletes with disabilities. Leani Oktilla Ratri is shown in this summary is an Indonesian woman who has grown to be a source of pride for her country. The source or local culture is reflected in this story.

Concerning the topic “My Daily Journal,” the discussion to be raised is about the impact of students’ age on mental health and stress level during the outbreak of

COVID-19. The text opens with a discussion on the correlation between students' mental health and anxiety levels. Furthermore, in the conclusion part, it was mentioned that Indonesian students experienced a decline in mental health and detected an increase in anxiety levels. The word "Indonesia" indicates the location of the event.

In connection with the topic, "My Healthy Meal," it is obvious that this issue is quite general. However, after reading at glance in the beginning of the text, it is stated that Adolescents (10 – 19 years old) in Indonesia consume inadequate amounts of protein, fruits and vegetables, and excessive amounts of Na and western fast food." Again, the name Indonesia is mentioned as a marker of the location.

In terms of the topic, "Responding to Graffiti," the underlined words in the following text: "Some Indonesians, especially the elderly, still see graffiti as vandalism but the younger generation is slowly warming up to the idea of having art on the roadside. Indonesian netizens have lately rallied against removal of graffiti and arrest of artists. So much so even the police tried to win public support by holding a graffiti competition and reversing the arrests earlier this year. Indonesian is finally seeing graffiti as a rising contemporary art and Fivust is at the forefront." The underlined words indicate the country's name, Indonesia. Therefore, this text can represent local culture. If the underlined words such as "Some Indonesian...", "Indonesian netizens...", and "Indonesia is finally..." are carefully read, it can be concluded that this topic is related to Indonesia or Indonesian people. Therefore, this text displays local culture or source culture.

- **Target Culture**

Target culture refers the culture of countries where English is spoken as a native language, mostly British, USA and Australia. Based on the analysis, the target culture is seen in "Task 3: Let's Read Section of Sub-Chapter V, entitled "Graffiti is always Vandalism." The text does not discuss about graffiti as an art form, but rather as an act of vandalism because creating drawings on random surfaces and on others' property without the owner's permission. The clue is found in the statement: "Graffiti is always vandalism." By definition, it is committed without permission on another person's property, in an adolescent display of entitlement." Furthermore, the clue can be seen in the next statement such as; "No institution that has celebrated graffiti in recent years-like the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles or the Museum of the City of New York." The underlined city names such *Los Angeles* and *New York*, are emphasized here, and because these cities are located in the USA, it can be concluded that the text belongs to the target culture, that is, USA.

- **International Culture**

International Culture refers to various culture around the world apart from source and target culture. In this context, there are other cultures besides the source and target cultures." Based on the analysis, international culture can be seen in "Task 3: Let's Read Section "of Sub-Chapter I entitled "Cristiano Ronaldo, in "the Enrichment Section of Sub-Chapter I entitled "Paralympic Games," in "Task 3: Read and Answer (Part 1) Section " entitled "Little Red Riding Hood (Traditional Version)," and in "Read and Answer (Part 2) Section" entitled: "Riding Hood (A Fracture Fairy Tale)," entitled "Fracture Stories," and in "Enrichment Section of Sub-Chapter VI entitled "From Story to Movie" The explanation of each of topic is as follows.

In relation to the topic, "Cristiano Ronaldo," it is admitted that people from various countries, both from cities and villages, know Cristiano Ronaldo as a professional football player who has many advantages and is an idol to nearly everyone around the world. Ronaldo's fame is closely tied to the role of televised matches broadcast worldwide, showcasing his actions on the field. Everyone is amazed by his talent and skills. Football is indeed a global sport and does not belong to any particular country. The text describes how Ronaldo trains hard and intensively. He has extraordinary abilities in using both of his feet to score goals, including heading the ball. Additionally, he is a fast runner who can jump high. He has achieved many accomplishments as a football player. From the beginning to the end of the paragraph, the text does not discuss his culture or where he comes from. It is obvious that the text purely Ronaldo' activities related football game which is popular all over the world..

The topic, 'Paralympic Games,' involves athletes with disabilities from all over the world. The discussion focuses on the games themselves rather than on individual athletes. Therefore, it can be said that the topic falls under the category of international culture.

Topic "Little Red Riding Hood (Traditional Version)," does not specify the story's origin. However, the story exists in several European countries as well in the USA. Therefore, the text can be considered as part of international culture.

The topic "Little Red Riding Hood (A Fracture Fairy Tale) does not specify the story's origin. However, the versions of the story can be found in several European countries and in the United States." Therefore, it can be concluded that the topic falls under international culture."

The topic "From Story to Movie" contains two key phrases to consider: "...the most popular recent productions of modern" and "a movie..." This means that there is

recent film adapted from traditional fairy tales, but the story elements have been changed. This reflects international culture.

- **Neutral Culture**

Neutral culture refers to materials that are not tied to any specific local, international, or target culture. According to Tajeddin & Teimournezhad (2014), culture-neutral or culture-free refers to universal content/knowledge that is not specific to any particular culture or country (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014).

Based on the analysis, neutral culture can be found in “Task 3: Let’s Read Section,” of Sub-Chapter IV entitled “Simple Tips for Healthy Eating” and in Task 3: Let’s Read Section,” of Sub-Chapter V entitled “Why should Graffiti be considered Art?”

The issue of "Why Should Graffiti Be Considered Art?" is highlighted in the textbook. This discussion focuses on two main points: explaining why graffiti is considered art and exploring its cultural background. When discussing Graffiti, the text addresses it in a general sense. Therefore, graffiti is not specific to any particular or country. The following is the general description of categories of culture.

Table 1
The General Description of Categories of Culture.

Theme	Chapter	Title of Chapter	Sub-Chapter	Topic of Discussion	Categories of Culture	Page	Text no
Sport	I	Great Athlete	Task 3: B. Let’s Read	Cristiano Ronaldo	International	11	Text 1
			Enrichment	The Paralympic Heroes	Local/Source Culture	27	Text 2
	II	Sport Events	Enrichment	The Paralympic Games	International Culture	50	Text 3
	III	Sports and Health	Enrichment	My Daily Journal	Local/Source Culture	77	Text 4
	IV	Healthy Foods	Task 3: Let’s Read	Simple Tips for Healthy Eating	Neutral Culture	84	Text 5

Theme	Chapter	Title of Chapter	Sub-Chapter	Topic of Discussion	Categories of Culture	Page	Text no
			Enrichment	My Healthy Meal	Local/Source Culture	96	Text 6
	V	Graffiti	Task 3: Let's Read	Why Should Graffiti be Considered Art?	Neutral Culture	109	Text 7
			Task 3: Let's Read	Graffiti is Always Vandalism	Target Culture	110	Text 8
			Enrichment	Responding to Graffiti	Local/Source Culture	126	Text 9
	VI	Fractured Stories	Task 3: Read and Answer (part 1)	Little Red Riding Hood	International Culture	135	Text 10
			Task 3: Read and Answer (part 2)	Little Red Riding Hood (A Fractured Fairy Tale)	International Culture	137	Text 11
			Enrichment	From the Story to Movie	International Culture	153	Text 12

- **The Elements of Culture**

The elements of culture consist of Product, Persons, Practice and Perspective. They are explained as follows.

- **Product**

Products refer to both tangible and intangible creations of a particular culture. After reviewing all the texts, the topics classified as products include texts 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. These are explained in detail below.

Text 3, “*The Paralympic Games*,” can be considered a product of culture because the Paralympics, as a regularly held and well-structured event, is a concrete product that people around the world can witness, engage with, and celebrate.

Text 4, “*My Daily Journal*,” can be considered a product of culture because it records personal growth, challenges, experience and memorable events.

Text 6, “*My Healthy Meals*” can be considered a product of culture because food choices, preparation methods, and consumption are shaped by people’s knowledge, traditions, beliefs, and values. The last part of the text 6 highlights that adolescents’ nutritional status significantly impacts the health of future generations, especially for girls. Thus, adolescence is a critical period to instill positive dietary and health behaviors. From this, it can be inferred that girls should have healthy meals to ensure adequate nutrition.

Regarding text 7, “*Graffiti*,” it seems clear that graffiti is the product of the cultures, because it is not only about the drawing, but also is the expression of the people’s ideas, identities and beliefs in response to the social, economic and political situations they face. Graffiti is a common phenomenon that exists everywhere.

Pertaining to text 8, “*Graffiti is Always Vandalism*,” graffiti, despite sometimes being considered an art form, graffiti is portrayed as an act of vandalism. It highlights how creating unauthorized markings in random places or on others’ property is viewed as unlawful.

In connection with texts 10 and 11, “*Little Red Riding Hood (Traditional Version)*” and “*Little Red Riding Hood (A Fractured Fairy Tale)*,” both can be inferred as products of culture, as they blend human creativity with the environment in which they were created. Additionally, the traditional version reflects older societal values and moral lessons, while the fractured version offers more modern perspectives and critiques of traditional norms.

Text 12, “*From Story to Movie*,” can be classified as product of culture because it reflects the aesthetics, values, mood or artistic expressions of a society.

- **Persons**

Persons, also referred to as *celebrity culture*, refer to prominent figures who are widely recognized within a particular community. The text discusses two individuals: Cristiano Ronaldo (a football player) in the “Task 3:Let’s Read” section of Sub-Chapter I, and Leani Oktilla Ratri (a para-badminton player) in the “Enrichment” section of Sub-Chapter I.

Ronaldo is a world-famous football player. He trains hard and intensively. He has an exceptional ability to use both of his feet to score goals, including his headers. Additionally, he is a fast runner who can jump high. He has achieved many accomplishments as a football player."

The story of Leani Oktilla Ratri is highlighted because she is a famous badminton player who once experienced a motorcycle accident. However, the accident did not break her spirit to continue pursuing badminton, and she eventually achieved success in para badminton at Tokyo 2020. The title 'The Paralympic Heroes' (an international sports event for athletes with disabilities) shows that she is regarded as a hero for bringing honor to Indonesia on the international stage."

- **Practices**

The topic "Healthy Eating Meals" is categorized as practice because it reflects the activities that must be done to live a healthy life include following certain rules in selecting food, nutrition, and health elements.

- **Perspectives**

Perspectives can be defined as the ideas, opinions, beliefs and values underlying the cultural practices and products of a society. In this regard, the perspective can be found in "Enrichment Section" of chapter V entitled; "Respond to Grafitti."

The topic;" *Respond to Grafitti*," contains two perspectives toward *Grafitti*; the perspectives of the elder people and young generations toward *Grafitti*. Elder people perceives *Grafitti* an act of vandalism and younger generations see *Grafitti* as a form of artistic expression that allows them to deliver messages, emotions and so forth. The following is the description of categories of culture.

Table 2
The General Description of Elements of culture.

Theme	Chapter	Title of Chapter	Sub-Chapter	Topic of Discussion	Categories of Culture	Page	Text no
Sport	I	Great Athlete	Task 3: B. Let's Read	Cristiano Ronaldo	Person	11	Text 1
			Enrichment	The Paralympic Heroes	Person	27	Text 2

Theme	Chapter	Title of Chapter	Sub-Chapter	Topic of Discussion	Categories of Culture	Page	Text no
	II	Sport Events	Enrichment	The Paralympic Games	Product	50	Text 3
	III	Sports and Health	Enrichment	My Daily Journal	Product	77	Text 4
	IV	Healthy Foods	Task 3: A. Let's Read	Simple Tips for Healthy Eating	Practice	84	Text 5
			Enrichment	My Healthy Meal	Product	96	Text 6
	V	Graffiti	Task 3: A. Let's Read	Why Should Graffiti be Considered Art?	Product	109	Text 7
			Task 3: Let's Read	Graffiti is Always Vandalism	Product	110	Text 8
			Enrichment	Responding to Graffiti	Perspective	126	Text 9
	VI	Fractured Stories	Task 3: A. Read and Answer (part 1)	Little Red Riding Hood	Product	135	Text 10
			Task 3: B. Read and Answer (part 2)	Little Red Riding Hood (A Fractured Fairy Tale)	Product	137	Text 11

Theme	Chapter	Title of Chapter	Sub-Chapter	Topic of Discussion	Categories of Culture	Page	Text no
			Enrichment	From the Story to Movie	Product	153	Text 12

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous findings, there are several conclusions that can be drawn. First, in terms of the categories of culture, it is indicated that international culture dominates the textbooks, followed by local culture, with neutral culture coming next and the target culture being the least represented. It can be concluded that the distribution of the different categories of culture is imbalanced. Ideally, these categories should be evenly distributed and balanced.

Second, in terms of the elements of culture, products appear to be the most prominent element of culture, followed by persons in second place. Practice and perspectives are the least represented. It can be concluded that the distribution of the different elements of culture is imbalanced. Ideally, these categories should be distributed more evenly.

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