



REVISITING INCLUSIVITY AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY WITHIN EFL TEXTBOOK IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Addressing the issues and challenges of inclusivity and disability content in Indonesian EFL textbooks requires a collaborative effort and commitment among textbook authors, publishers, educators, policymakers, and disability advocates to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. The first step that can be taken to achieve those goals is evaluating the material of the EFL textbook related to inclusivity and disability as curriculum content in Indonesia. Therefore, this research aimed to identify and critically analyze disability as curriculum content in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbook used in Indonesia. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach that focuses on content analysis. The data sources in this research are three EFL textbooks entitled "English for Nusantara" published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia and intended for junior high school (VII, VIII, IX grade) students in Indonesia. The findings of this research show that inclusivity and disability-related content are included in the EFL textbook by being represented in images and text. The textbook represents disability in several categories: gender, age, participation, relations, physical activities, and type of disability. Even though the findings show that the textbook "English for Nusantara" has representation for disability, the amount of representation is limited. In conclusion, the research highlights the need for systemic changes in the way disability is represented in educational materials, which could have a profound impact on the inclusivity of educational environments and the broader social integration of people with disabilities.

Keywords: Disability, Inclusivity, EFL Textbook

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

The current issues on representation of inclusivity and disability in EFL textbooks are characterized by considering inclusivity and disability as optional extras rather than essential components, perpetuating a world where diversity is an afterthought, and the experiences of differently-abled individuals are left on the margins of language learning. Addressing the issues and challenges of inclusivity and disability content in Indonesian EFL textbooks requires a collaborative effort and commitment among textbook authors, publishers, educators, policymakers, and disability advocates to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. The first step that can be taken to achieve those goals is evaluating the material of the EFL textbook related to inclusivity and disability as curriculum content in Indonesia.

Social realities input into textbooks can help students become more engaged in learning regardless of their various social backgrounds (Herath, 2020; Marwa et al., 2021). In addition, in the learning process, textbooks play a role in determining how much perceptions of social reality

influence students' thinking patterns (Beckett et al., 2010; Amalia et al., 2023; Amalia et al., 2024). In this discussion, the representation of inclusivity and disability in textbooks can help students understand various disability-related problems in their social environment. This representation can help students understand that everyone has the same rights. So that everyone should have the power to open the doors to embracing attitudes and social skills that include, empower, celebrate, and connect children and adolescents with and without disabilities (Rieger & McGrail, 2015).

There are various questions regarding creating an inclusive and safe class for all students to develop their abilities and potential. In this case, the teacher plays an essential role in introducing language and content (Linia et al., 2025; Masitoh & Suryati., 2026). Not only that, teachers are also required to be able to provide instructions and establish good communication to make their classes inclusive for all learners (Gulya & Fehérvári, 2023; Sukanto et al., 2024). In addition, textbooks used as the primary media in the learning process must internalize inclusive values, whether explicit or implicit, by considering the representation of minority learners (Herath, 2020; Watiningrum et al., 2023). This is because textbooks can play an essential role in shaping the image of a particular social group using its textual and visual representation. A realistic and unprejudiced image of people with disabilities should be an essential part of the curriculum in public education institutions in order to help students understand the needs and reality of those living with a disability.

The results from the previous research denote that the representation of inclusivity and disability within English textbooks, whether in the form of texts or visual materials, was extremely limited. The results of research conducted by Hodkinson (2007) show that the representation of inclusivity and disability in textbooks was limited, so the textbooks should seek to support a culturally responsive pedagogy that observes disabled people being more prominently and positively located within the materials that support the teaching and learning process. In other research, it is stated that inclusivity and disability are often discussed using discriminatory disability language and negative stereotypes in a range of more contemporary textbooks (Beckett et al., 2010; Táboas & Rey, 2012). Furthermore, the research conducted by Hodkinson (2011) shows that inclusion became a 'guise of truth', which employed a cultural cloak of equality to create double binds where performativity was pitched against presence, standards against segregation and ablism against absence. This aligns with research conducted by Gulya and Fehérvári (2023), which shows a marked lack of representation of people with disabilities involved in everyday situations as individuals, integrated into society, and as part of a given sociocultural environment. Therefore, recommendations are presented for improving the integration of sensitivity construction and representation of disability inclusiveness into textbooks (Abu-Hamour et al., 2019; González & Rey, 2022; Andajani et al., 2024). Thus, to campaign inclusivity in the classroom, there needs to be more effort and good cooperation between teachers and school policies. Both can evaluate and provide criticism and then convey the results to publishers and textbook authors to present more inclusive material and find the right approach to solving this problem (Beckett, 2010; Andreani et al. 2021).

Thus, this research is presented as a material evaluation in EFL textbooks regarding the representation of inclusivity and disability. Therefore, this research was conducted to find out 1) to what extent inclusivity and disability-related content are included in EFL textbooks in Indonesia? 2) how do the texts and images deconstruct in order to explore ways in which they relate to broader social contexts? This research aimed to identify and critically analyze disability as curriculum content in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks used in Indonesia.

Research on inclusivity in EFL textbooks is beneficial to ensure that language learning materials are inclusive, effective and aligned with the principles of diversity, equity, and access in education. It helps us move toward a more inclusive and equitable educational system to benefit the students. In addition, research on inclusive education and disability representation is vital for assessing the current state of inclusive practices, advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities, and improving the equality of education and social inclusion for all. It provides the knowledge and evidence to create more equitable and inclusive societies.

METHOD

منهج

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach that focuses on content analysis. Content analysis was used in this research as a method to analyze representation of inclusivity and disability within the selected EFL textbooks. The researcher applied content analysis to textual and image content to elucidate what the textbooks mean to people, what they enable or prevent, and the effects of the information messages they convey. The content analysis carried out in this research was based on the theoretical framework provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of disability, which views disability as an umbrella term encompassing both the health status of a person with a disability and the interaction of personal and environmental factors.

The data sources in this research are three EFL textbooks entitled “English for Nusantara” published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia and intended for junior high school (VII, VIII, IX grade) students in Indonesia. The three textbooks were published in the same year; 2022. Each book has five discussion chapters containing material explanations, assessments and evaluations designed to improve four English language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. This data was chosen because those textbooks were designed according to Indonesian national curriculum standards, namely the independent curriculum. Apart from that, those textbooks are used massively in almost all junior high schools in Indonesia. By selecting this data, researchers hope the research results will be relevant, more global and comprehensive.

The data in this research is in the form of text and images related to inclusivity and disability. Researchers use tables and checklist instruments to collect the data. The data is that the texts that included characters with disabilities or other content related to disability were selected for textual analysis, while images were reviewed to select those with disability-related content for image analysis. The research data is then classified in tabular form and analyzed according to the code and theme. The theoretical basis for developing the coding system was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of disability, according to which disability is an umbrella term that encompasses the health status of a person with a disability and the interaction of personal and environmental factors. In addition, the code selection in this research was adopted from the framework proposed by Gulya and Fehérvári (2023). Thus, researchers chose to classify the representation of disability into six categories: gender, age, participation, relation, physical activities, and type of disability. The last step is to give the report, interpretation, and discussion.

RESULT

نتائج

Based on the analysis, researchers found that there was the representation of disability in

three textbooks entitled "English for Nusantara" which were used for English language learning for grades seven, eight and nine junior high schools in Indonesia. This representation is found in eleven images and one text. Researchers also found various forms of disability representation. These various representations are presented in various gender, age, participation, relations, physical activity, and type of disability. Researchers found two types of gender: male and female. The two genders are represented in one types of age: child. Moreover, in terms of participation, several representation of disability were seen participating alone and together with non-disabled people. The relationships represented are divided into two types: alone and close relationships, which in this case are relationships with family and friends. Moreover, the types of physical activity representations of disability are also different, including sport, education and daily routine. Meanwhile, for the type of disability, it was found that there was only one form of representation; physical disability. The data mapping is presented in the following table. Code and frequency (f) in this table refers to the framework adopted from the framework proposed by Gulya and Fehérvári (2023). Those are six categories: gender, age, participation, relations, physical activities, and type of disability.

Table 1. The representation of disability in EFL textbook

No	Code	Sub	Frequency
1	Gender	Female	2
		Male	9
2	Age	Child	2
3	Participation	Alone	2
		Together with non-disabled people	9
4	Relation	Alone	1
		Close relations (family and friends)	10
5	Physical Activity	Education	8
		Active: sport	1
		Daily routine	2
6	Type of Disability	Physical disability	11

a. Gender

There are 11 data representing disability based on gender, with data classifications of two females and nine males. The three textbooks that have been analyzed have similarities in how they design the characteristics of each character. In each book there are 12 characters, including Galang, the Galang family (Pak Rahmansyah, Ibu Posma, Shinta, and Tamara), Galang's friends (Monita, Andre, Pipit, Leni, Made), the English teacher (Ibu Ida), the head school (Pak Edo), and also the science teacher (Pak Romy), all of whom come from various ethnic groups in Nusantara. The main character in each book is Galang. From several of these characterizations, the representation of disability is represented by Galang's friend, Made. Made is a boy who comes from Bali. He has a physical disability in the form of not being able to walk, so he has to use a wheelchair. Besides Made, the representation of disability is also represented in the form of a girl who has a disability so she cannot walk. The girl is Monita's younger sister. Thus, disability is represented in two gender categories: female and male. However, the frequency of appearance of the two figures is not equal. Made with a frequency of 9, not equal to the frequency of 2 of Monita's sister, who represents the female.



Figure 1. The representation of gender category

b. Age

The data that represents disability, as explained in the gender section, includes two characters, namely Made and Monita's younger sister. Based on the framework used in this research, there are two age classifications: adult and child. However, based on the analysis, the representation found in this research is only child. Even though the two characters are different in age, they are in the same category as child. Made is a teenage boy currently studying junior high school, while his sister Monika is a girl currently studying elementary school. It is still the same as discussing gender, that in this case, there is an imbalance in representation between the two. Made has more representation with the number is 9, while his sister Monika has a lower number of frequencies with the number is 2. The representation in the form of children's ages is very appropriate to the world of the target readers of the textbook, who, in this case, are junior high school students. By using this representation, students can easily understand and internalize the disability values that the author wants to convey.



Figure 2. Representation of disability in age category

c. Participation

The data found in this research shows that the representation of disability in this book is presented in two categories of participation, those are alone and together with disabilities. The representation of disability played by the character Made and Monita's younger sister is shown carrying out activities together with other non-disabled characters in various conditions and situations. Some examples include discussions, playing and eating together. Apart from that, the characters in this textbook are represented alone. This can be seen when Made is depicted

practicing basketball alone. This representation shows that even though they are alone, people with disabilities still have the opportunity to develop themselves. Even though the two categories have different frequency numbers: the alone category is 2 while the together with disabilities representation category is 9. Having representation of disability in the form of the participation category can help students understand how disabled characters play a role in their social life.

Listen to Audio 4.2 about Galang and his friends' project and then answer the questions. Number one has been done for you.

a. Read a text about Made, the Basketball Player.



Picture 4.3 Galang and His Friends' Project



Picture 1.4 Made

Made the Basketball Player

Made is Galang's friend. He is 14 years old. He is very friendly. He has

Figure 3. The representation of disability in participation category

d. Relation

Data found in textbooks shows that disabled people are represented as having good relationships with their social environment. Even though they have disability, in fact people with disabilities can socialize, mingle, and have good relationships in their social life. Data found in the textbook shows that Made has many friends and gets along well. Made's friends also treat Made well. They provide opportunities for made to take part in various opportunities, such as discussions, group work, presentations, games, and so on. This shows that besides from being able to socialize and build relationships well, his social environment also supports and accepts him well. With this representation, students can understand that people with disabilities can also show their existence by establishing good relationships with the people around them.



Picture 1.3 Galang and Friends.

Figure 4. The representation of disability in relation category

e. Physical Activity

Data found in textbooks shows the representation of disabilities in various activities, such as sports, education, and daily routines. Representation of disabilities in educational activities

dominates the frequency. In the textbook, there are many descriptions of how Made can take part in learning activities with his friends. Starting from making presentations, doing group assignments, providing ideas and suggestions during group discussions, and also doing project assignments well. In addition, the representation of activity was also shown by Monita's younger sister. This can be seen when Monita's family is eating together. This representation shows that a disabled person like Monita's younger sister also has the opportunity to carry out activities like normal people do. By having disability represented in various activities carried out together, students can understand that disabled people also have the same opportunities and rights to carry out the same kinds of activities as non-disabled people.

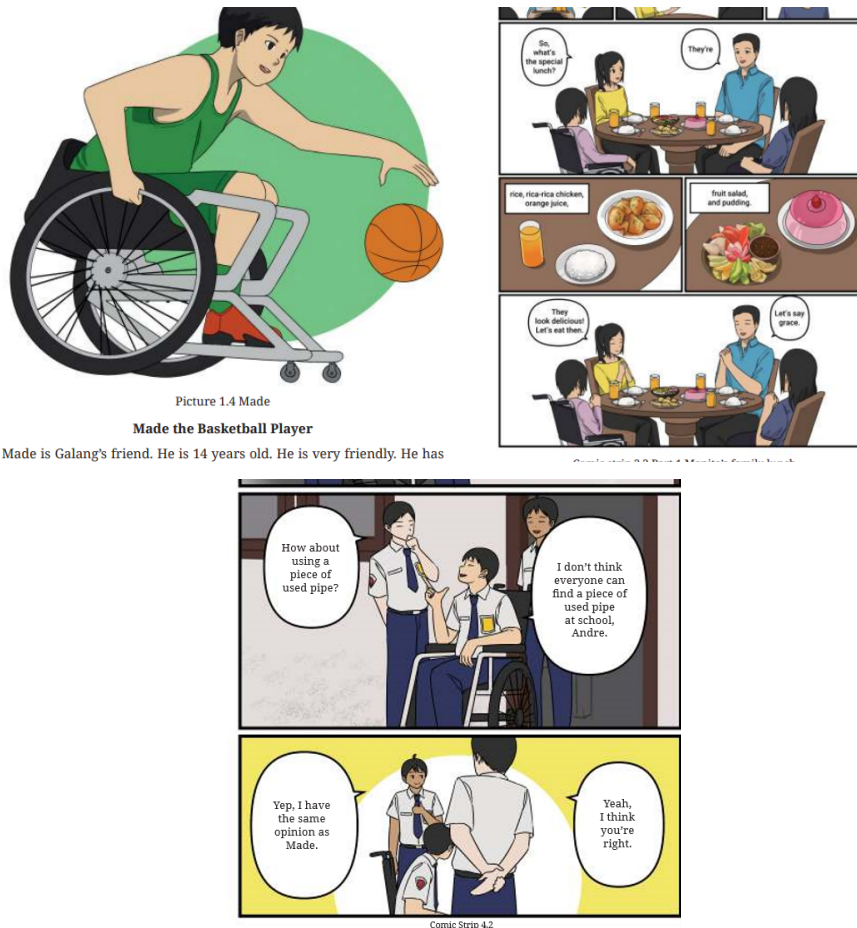


Figure 5. Representation of disability in physical activity

f. Type of Disability

The data found in this research shows that the representation of disability is only in the form of physical disability. As depicted in the characters Made and Monita's younger sister, both of them are people with disabilities who cannot walk, so they have to use wheelchairs. This representation is good enough to introduce students that there are people who are different from normal people in general, namely people with disabilities. However, this representation is also a weakness because the textbook only represents one type of disability. The lack of various forms of representation of types of disabilities means that students do not understand what kinds of disabilities exist around them.

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

Based on the findings, inclusivity, and disability-related content is included in the EFL textbook by being represented in images and text. The present research shows that the textbook represents disability in several categories: gender, age, participation, relations, physical activities, and type of disability. Even though the findings show that the textbook "English for Nusantara" has representation for disability, the amount of representation is limited. The representation is limited and focuses on distinctive aspects of disability. The portrayal of individuals with disabilities often adheres to narrow and stereotypical images. There is a lack of representation of the everyday lives of people with disabilities. The present research identified the types of disability-related content. It examined the gender and age representation of people with disabilities and the level of physical activity depicted in the images. The wheelchair is the most frequently depicted form of disability, suggesting a narrow and stereotypical representation of the disabled community. People with disabilities are less often shown in natural environments and participating in a variety of activities compared to their non-disabled peers.

The findings of this research on the representation of disability in EFL textbooks in Indonesian junior high schools align with the results of previous research conducted in other countries. It indicates a broader trend of limited and stereotypical representation of people with disabilities in educational materials (Hodkinson 2007; Cahyono, 2018; Abu-Hamour et al., 2019). The findings of the research on the representation of disabilities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Indonesian junior high schools show that people with disabilities are rarely represented. It is in line with the research conducted in Spanish physical education textbooks, which also showed that people with disabilities are underrepresented and depicted in non-inclusive situations, primarily participating in elite sports (Táboas & Rey, 2012). The Indonesian EFL textbooks depicted people with disabilities in a limited range of segregated, competitive, and sports activities. It is similar to the findings in Spain, where there were no references to a variety of activities that are included in the physical education curriculum (González & Rey, 2022). The limited representation of disability in the textbooks reflects the social marginalization of people with disabilities, a conclusion that is supported by studies analyzing the visibility of disability in Iranian and Swedish educational texts (Cheng & Beigi, 2011; Spiik & Rönni, 2022). In summary, the research on Indonesian EFL textbooks aligns with international studies, indicating a global need for a more inclusive and diverse representation of people with disabilities in educational materials to promote positive attitudes and a more accurate understanding of the lives of people with disabilities.

Based on the findings, the present research suggests a need for a more inclusive and diverse representation of people with disabilities in educational materials. It is essential to promote positive attitudes, awareness, and a more accurate understanding of the lives of people with disabilities. The present study emphasizes the importance of inclusive curriculum and the role of textbooks in shaping societal attitudes and values towards individuals with disabilities. It aligns with research results suggesting designing textbooks by adding disability representation as a learning curriculum (Beckett, 2010; Kasimi & Ulum, 2022). It suggests that improving disability representation in textbooks could contribute to a more inclusive society. The research suggests that publishers should include more diverse representations of people with disabilities in physical education textbooks. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to promote more inclusive activities for students with disabilities, moving beyond the limited and often segregated depictions of individuals with disabilities. The present research emphasizes the importance of portraying people with disabilities in a variety of activities, including non-competitive and non-sporting activities, to foster a more inclusive and less disabling society.

CONCLUSSION

خاتمة

Based on the present research findings, it can be concluded that the EFL textbook used for junior high school students in Indonesia represents inclusivity and disability. Even though these textbooks represent inclusivity and disability, their frequency is limited. Compared with the representation of non-disabled people, the frequency will be much different. The findings indicate a need for curriculum developers to incorporate a more inclusive and diverse representation of people with disabilities in EFL textbooks. It would involve moving beyond stereotypical portrayals to include a variety of narratives that reflect the everyday lives and experiences of individuals with disabilities. Teachers need to be aware of the content they are delivering and be equipped with the skills to address the lack of representation or challenge stereotypes when they appear in textbooks. The research suggests that educational policies also should be reviewed and revised to ensure that they promote the inclusion of disability issues in educational materials. By improving the representation of disability in textbooks, there is the potential to influence societal attitudes towards people with disabilities positively. Textbooks play a crucial role in shaping the values and perceptions of young learners, and more accurate and inclusive content can contribute to reducing stigma and discrimination. The research underscores the importance of disability awareness programs within schools. Such programs can complement the content of textbooks and provide students with a deeper understanding of disability, fostering empathy and social inclusion. In conclusion, the research highlights the need for systemic changes in the way disability is represented in educational materials, which could have a profound impact on the inclusivity of educational environments and the broader social integration of people with disabilities.

The recommendation for further research is that the results of this research can be used as a reference for research on the same topic. In addition, further research are needed to examine the inclusivity and representation of cultural, sexual, and disability diversity in ELT textbooks and other educational materials. It includes analyzing the portrayal of diverse groups and proposing ways to improve representation to foster a more inclusive learning environment. There is a need for more research on the portrayal of disability in educational materials, particularly in terms of positive representation and the inclusion of people with disabilities in a variety of activities beyond elite sports. Research should continue to analyze curricula and textbooks to ensure they reflect society's diversity and promote equity and inclusion values. It examines how different cultural contents are presented in international versus local textbooks. Further research is also encouraged in disability studies, particularly concerning educational sciences, to improve the current status of inclusion and representation of people with disabilities in the educational curriculum.

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