
Cultural content in English textbook: Analyzing the representation of culture in the English textbook “English for change”

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ABSTRACT

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The present study examines the representation of cultural content in *cultural representation, English* the 11th-grade English textbook “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change.” This descriptive qualitative research employs document analysis as the data collection technique. The study investigates the cultural representation in this Senior High School English textbook using Cortazzi and Jin’s (1999) cultural dimensions and Yuen’s (2011) cultural elements as the analytical framework. The analysis reveals that Indonesian culture is predominantly featured across all textbook units, resulting in a limited representation of foreign cultural dimensions. Practice elements are the most prevalent, followed by product, person, and perspective elements in terms of cultural distribution. The findings indicate an imbalanced representation between Indonesian and foreign cultures, as well as an uneven distribution of the cultural aspects outlined by Yuen’s framework (2011). It is recommended that the textbook authors incorporate a more diverse range of cultures to enhance students’ intercultural knowledge.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching materials play a crucial role in the language teaching and learning process. They are primary sources of information and provide essential supporting linguistic skills like grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation and for both teachers and learners. According to Tomlinson (2006), teaching materials encompass many resources, including textbooks, audio recordings, videos, newspapers, pictures, and online content. In Indonesia, while teachers have the flexibility to use various teaching materials, textbooks remain the most common resource due to their alignment with core and basic competencies as mandated by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education number 8 of 2016.

Textbooks, as a key teaching resource, must incorporate cultural content to foster cross cultural understanding. According to Rohmana (2023), literary text containing cultural elements as a reading material also trains an understanding of culture. Thus, students will be more sensitive to cultural differences presented in various forms of story contexts. In addition, the National Education Standards Agency states that one criterion for developing English textbooks is the inclusion of content that promotes cultural understanding, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and fostering respect among learners (BSNP English textbook evaluation instruments, 2014). Through such content, students not only gain linguistic competence but also acquire cultural knowledge necessary for effective communication in diverse settings.

Cultural content analysis in English textbooks has gained significant attention in recent years, as it plays a crucial role in English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogy (Dewi, 2019; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2018). This study focuses on analyzing the cultural content of the English

textbook “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change” for 11th-grade senior high school students. This textbook is widely used by teachers in Indonesia as it provides comprehensive materials essential for students’ language learning.

To conduct the analysis, this study employs two theoretical frameworks: the cultural dimensions framework by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Yuen’s (2011) framework. The cultural dimensions framework is chosen because it is a well-cited and extensively applied theory in language teaching, offering a robust foundation for examining cultural aspects in educational contexts (Ariawan, 2020; Azkiyah & Setiono, 2017; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015; Sitoresmi, 2017). Additionally, Yuen’s framework, which categorizes culture into practice, product, perspective, and person, is utilized to provide a more detailed exploration of the cultural elements within the textbook. Together, these frameworks complement each other, enabling a comprehensive analysis that contributes to understanding the representation of cultural dimensions in English language teaching materials.

Previous studies have examined the cultural content in English textbooks across various educational levels and contexts. For instance, Arslan (2016) analyzed cultural content in English textbooks for Turkish primary school students, while Haryati (2017) and Anggia et al. (2018) focused on senior high school textbooks in Indonesia. Zahara (2022) and Zhang (2021) explained that further explored cultural dimensions in EFL textbooks. These studies highlight the importance of cultural content in language education and its impact on learners’ intercultural competence.

Despite the existing research, there is a need for more studies on the representation of local (Indonesian) and foreign cultures in English textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the cultural dimensions in the “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change” textbook. The study employs Cortazzi & Jin’s (1999) framework to categorize cultural dimensions into source, target, and international cultures, and Yuen’s (2011) model to examine cultural elements such as practice, product, perspective, and person. Taking the crucial role of textbooks in language and culture learning, the current study attempts to investigate the representation of cultural content in the English textbook. The researcher proposed two research questions, they are.

- 1) How are Indonesian and foreign cultural contents (cultural dimensions) represented in the “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change” textbook for 11th-grade senior high school?
- 2) How are the cultural elements (perspective, product, practice, person) presented in the “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change” textbook for 11th-grade senior high school?

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

In this study, a qualitative approach was employed using a descriptive qualitative research method, specifically content analysis, to evaluate the textbook. Content analysis, a technique within descriptive qualitative research Ary et al., (2010), was utilized to uncover the cultural content represented in the English textbook “Bahasa Inggris: English for Change” for grade eleven students in Senior High School. According to Karasar (2006), content analysis involves developing qualification criteria in advance and examining materials such as texts, books, and documents based on specific expectations. For this research, the text and pictures in the EFL textbook were analyzed using criteria from Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Yuen (2011) :

1. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) state that three cultural dimensions are included in textbooks: source, target, and international culture. The three dimensions are as follows:

- a. Source culture. It refers to the culture of students. For Indonesian students, this category means the presentation of Indonesian culture. This type aims to provide cultural information on the presence of Indonesian culture.
- b. Target culture. It draws on the culture of countries that apply English as their first language, for instance, the culture of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. This category aims to inform students about the varieties of the culture of English-speaking countries.
- c. International target cultures. It refers to the culture of other countries. This dimension aims to provide different cultures from non-English-speaking countries.

2. Cultural Elements

Meanwhile, Yuen (2011) defined culture as products, practices, perspectives, and persons. The elements of culture are as follows:

- a. Products. This element includes four aspects namely artifacts (food, documents, language, money, tools), places (buildings, cities, houses), institutions (family, law, economy, religion, education, politics), art forms (music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture).
- b. Practices. Practices involve acts (ritualized communicative practices), scenarios (extended communicative practices), and lives (stories of the number of the future).
- c. Perspectives. This element represents the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie the products and guide people's behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but often implicit, outside conscious awareness.
- d. Persons. Person element refers to individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. Personal identity and life history play key roles in the development of a cultural person

This method was chosen to explore the cultural content represented in the English textbook.

2.2 Type of Data

The primary data source for this research was the first edition of "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" for grade eleven, authored by Astuti et al., and published by the Indonesian Ministry of National Education and Culture (MONEC) in 2022. The textbook, divided into five units, served as the basis for qualitative data analysis. Additionally, quantitative elements, such as numerical data and percentages presented in tables, were also employed. The primary data was collected directly by the researcher through document analysis, focusing on text and pictures presented in each chapter of the textbook.

2.3 Data Collection Technique

Document analysis was the primary data collection technique used in this study. Analyzing the textbook allowed the researcher to gather comprehensive data that might not have been obtained through other methods like interviews. According to Sugiyono (2010), data gained from document analysis is more reliable when supported by documents. The textbook contains five units, each with eight chapters, including Mind Mapping the Unit, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Viewing, Writing, Presenting, and End-of-Unit Reflection. These units were analyzed to represent the cultural content of the textbook. Data from the text and pictures were categorized based on Yuen's (2011) cultural elements (Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons) and Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural types (Source Culture, Target Culture, and International Culture).

2.4 Technique of Data Analysis

Data analysis involved sequencing the data, organizing them into categories, and drawing hypotheses using an interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014). This process included three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion.

1. **Data Condensation:** in this phase, data were selected, focused, simplified, abstracted, and transformed into written text (Sugiyono, 2010). According to Miles, Huberman selecting important parts and determining meaningful relationships were crucial. The researcher summarized key points and focused on data related to the research questions, converting relevant data into percentages.
2. **Data Display:** This phase involved displaying data in the form of short explanations, diagrams, and category relationships. Miles and Huberman (2014) noted that descriptive forms are the most frequent data display method in qualitative research. The researcher classified the data to explain phenomena and identify areas for followup to achieve research goals, using narrative text, tables, and charts.
3. **Conclusion:** The final step, according to Miles and Huberman's (2014) model, was drawing conclusions. Conclusions are expected to be new findings that describe the research object, either answering the problem statement or not, as the problem statement may evolve during field research. The researcher formulated results from the analyzed data and verified them against related theories.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The data was collected from five units of an EFL textbook titled "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" for the second grade in Senior High School. This section details the representation of cultural content in the textbook, addressing the research questions posed in Chapter I. The first research question investigates how Indonesian and foreign cultural contents (cultural dimensions) are represented in the "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" textbook for 11th-grade Senior High School. The second research question examines how different aspects of culture—perspective, product, practice, and person—are presented in the same textbook. The results provide insights into the cultural content and its portrayal, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of cultural representation in EFL educational materials.

1. Cultural Dimensions

The data were analyzed based on Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) dimension of culture which is divided into three dimensions namely source culture (SC), target culture (TC), and international culture (IC). Table 1 presents the distribution of each dimension in each unit of the EFL Textbook entitled "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" for the 11th grade in Senior High School.

Table 1. The distribution and percentage of cultural dimensions in the EFL Textbook "English for Change"

UNITS	CULTURAL DIMENSIONS		
	SC	TC	IC
Units 1	17	3	1
Units 2	18	1	4
Units 3	9	2	11
Units 4	15	3	6
Units 5	30	10	8
Frequency	89	19	30
	138		
Percentage	64,49%	13,77%	21,74%

The table above indicates that cultural elements appear approximately 138 times. Source Culture (SC) is the most prevalent, recorded 89 times, accounting for 64.49% of the occurrences in the textbook. This dominance of Source Culture is evident from the analysis of cultural dimensions. Following this, International Culture (IC) appears 30 times, representing 21.74% of the occurrences. Target Culture (TC) is the least represented, with 19 occurrences, comprising 13.77% of the total.

2. Elements of Culture

The data were analyzed using Yuen's (2011) framework, which categorizes culture into four elements: products, practices, perspectives, and persons. Each of these cultural elements was identified in varying proportions within the textbook. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of these elements across different chapters of the EFL textbook "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" for the second grade in Senior High School.

Table 2. The distribution and percentage of elements of culture in EFL Textbook "English for Change"

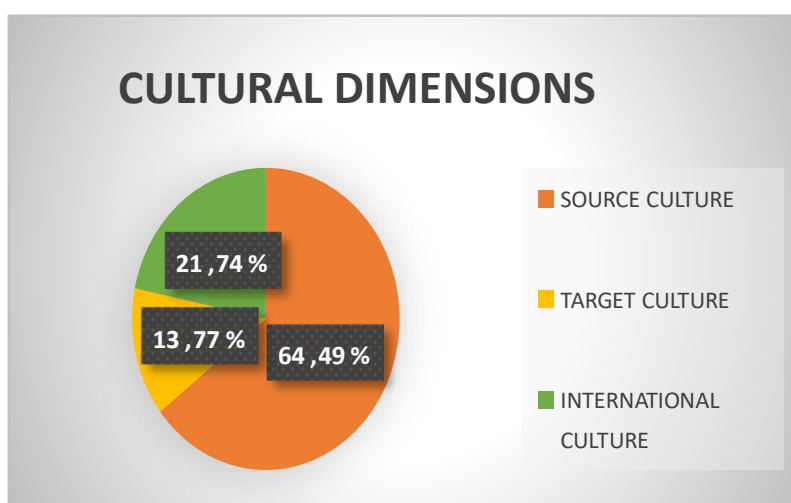
UNITS	Aspects of Culture			
	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Persons
Units 1	1	6	6	8
Units 2	9	10	3	1
Units 3	5	7	8	2
Units 4	1	4	4	15
Units 5	25	15	6	2
Frequency	41	42	27	28
		138		
Percentage	29,71%	30,43%	19,57%	20,29%

Based on the data presented in Table 2, cultural aspects are referenced approximately 138 times throughout the textbook. However, their distribution is unbalanced. Products are mentioned the most frequently, occurring 41 times (29.71%). This is closely followed by practices, with approximately 42 occurrences (30.43%). In contrast, references to perspectives significantly decrease, with only 27 instances (19.57%). Lastly, the aspect of persons is referenced approximately 28 times, nearly equivalent to perspectives.

3.1 Discussion

The analysis of cultural dimensions in the "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" textbook reveals a notable predominance of source culture. According to Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework, which categorizes cultural content into source culture, target culture, and international culture, the textbook heavily features source culture, accounting for 64.49% of the content (89 out of 138 references). This finding aligns with Ariawan's (2020) study, which also highlighted the dominance of native culture (Indonesia) in EFL textbooks. International culture appears second most frequently at 21.74% (30 references), while target culture is the least represented, constituting only 13.77% (19 references).

Figure 1. The cultural dimensions in English textbook "English for Change"

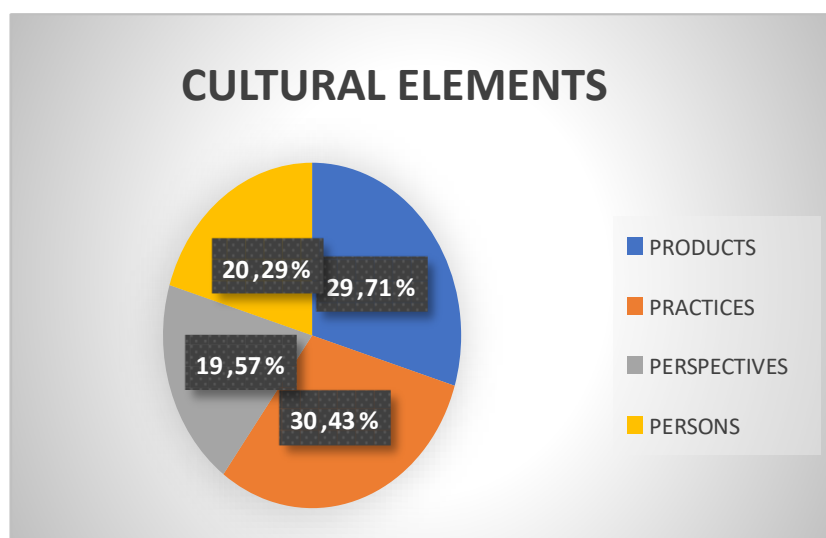


The presence of all three cultural dimensions in the textbook suggests a comprehensive approach to cultural representation, showcasing not only English-speaking cultures but also others. However, the imbalance in the distribution of these cultural dimensions raises concerns. As Chao (2011) argues, an equitable distribution of cultural content is essential in EFL textbooks to facilitate students' understanding of multiple cultures, enhancing their intercultural communication skills.

The significant emphasis on Indonesian culture within the textbook suggests a potential bias from the textbook developers. An imbalance in cultural representation within English textbooks can lead to several issues in language learning and teaching. Overemphasizing one culture, such as Indonesian culture, may hinder students' exposure to diverse global perspectives, which are crucial for developing intercultural competence. This imbalance may stem from the perspectives of the authors, political restrictions on publishers, or local content policies, as noted by Hamiloglu and Mendi (2010). Deswilla et al. (2021) emphasizes that EFL materials should incorporate local culture to enrich learners' knowledge and empower them to communicate effectively with diverse cultural groups. Additionally, Zhang and Su (2021) advocate for the inclusion of more non-native speaker characters and local cultural issues in EFL textbooks, supporting the principle of English as an international language.

Integrating local culture into English materials is beneficial, as it fosters a balanced view of both source and target cultures. Ideally, EFL materials should provide equal exposure to source culture and international culture, facilitating intercultural understanding and communication. This aligns with Chao's (2011) assertion that balanced cultural content in EFL textbooks is crucial for developing students' intercultural competence. By ensuring an equitable representation of diverse cultures, EFL textbooks can better prepare students for global communication and intercultural interactions.

Figure 2. The cultural elements in the English textbook "English for Change"



As presented in the Picture 2 the analysis of cultural content in the "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" textbook reveals an uneven distribution of cultural aspects. Practices dominate the content, representing 30.43% with 42 out of 138 items. This is followed closely by products, which account for 29.71% with 41 items. The aspect of persons appears 20.29% of the time (28 items), while perspectives are the least represented at 19.57% (27 items). This imbalance in the distribution of cultural aspects is significant.

These findings align with previous studies by Liu (2013), Rajabi and Ketabi (2012), and Zu and Kong (2009), which also observed that practices, or small "c" themes of culture, dominate EFL textbooks. Despite this, products also show a high frequency in the textbook, nearly equal to practices. According to Liddicoat (2013), textbook authors often present culture from a tourist's viewpoint, emphasizing tangible cultural symbols like food, objects, and ethnic entertainment. Conversely, perspectives and persons are less frequently represented, which suggests an incomplete portrayal of cultural content.

The evaluation of this textbook is complicated by this imbalance in cultural aspects. Although the textbook must adhere to the syllabi set by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture, it does cover all cultural aspects outlined by Yuen (2011): artifacts (names, foods, documents, money, tools), places (buildings, houses), institutions (schools, media, entertainment, clothes, architecture), acts (eating habits, behaviors, celebrations), scenarios (communicative and speaking practices), intellectual values (habits, opinions, statements, perceptions, beliefs, traditional values, attitudes, ethics, ideas), major values (history, geography), and specific social contexts (national culture, personal identity).

Despite the imbalance, the textbook's cultural content is comprehensive and well-explored. Notably, the aspect of perspectives is well-presented, comprising 29.57% of the content. This aligns with Indonesia's educational focus on character building. As Castro et al. (2004) emphasize, values in English textbooks are crucial for promoting respect, tolerance, and diversity. This textbook successfully fosters these values, offering students opportunities to develop cultural understanding and appropriate behavior, as advocated by Moran (2001). Thus, while the distribution of cultural aspects may be imbalanced, the textbook effectively addresses and explores a wide range of cultural elements, promoting intercultural competence among students.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the cultural content in the English textbook "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" for second-grade Senior High School students, focusing on the cultural dimensions identified by Cortazzi & Jin (1999) and the cultural types outlined by Yuen (2011). The analysis revealed several key points. Firstly, the textbook effectively presents all cultural dimensions in each unit, encompassing source culture (Indonesian culture), target culture (native speakers' countries), and international culture (other countries). Among these, source culture is the most frequently represented, appearing 64.49% of the time (89 instances). International culture follows with 21.74% (30 instances), and target culture is the least represented at 13.77% (19 instances). This emphasis on source culture aims to enhance students' understanding of their own language and culture, empowering them to engage with diverse cultures. However, this focus results in an imbalanced distribution of cultural dimensions.

Secondly, the textbook covers all cultural types, with practices being the most frequently presented at 30.43% (42 instances). Products follow closely at 29.71% (41 instances), while persons and perspectives appear less frequently at 20.29% (28 instances) and 19.57% (27 instances), respectively. This uneven representation indicates an imbalance in the cultural aspects covered by the textbook. Therefore, it is suggested that the Ministry of Education and Culture encourage the publication of textbooks that balance cultural representation, including source culture (Indonesian culture), target culture (native speakers' countries), and international culture. This balanced representation would better support students' intercultural competence and aid English teachers, especially those with less experience related to target and international cultures, in providing comprehensive cultural topics not adequately covered in the current textbook. Through this study, it is hoped that teachers and users will gain a better understanding of how to apply cultural content in English textbooks, ultimately enriching the intercultural learning experience for students.

In summary, while the "Bahasa Inggris: English for Change" textbook comprehensively includes various cultural dimensions and types, there is a notable imbalance in their representation, with a predominant focus on Indonesian culture and practices. This finding underscores the need for a more balanced inclusion of different cultural dimensions and aspects to provide a more holistic cultural education.

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