
The analysis of cultural contents in the ELT textbook for senior high school students

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Keywords:

content analysis, cultural categories, ELT textbook

ABSTRACT

Integrating cultural content into English language learning is crucial, especially in Indonesia where English is taught as a foreign language. Cultural elements can be introduced through various educational settings, particularly via ELT textbooks used in schools. While previous studies have examined culture in textbooks aligned with the 2013 Curriculum, this study investigates the cultural categories represented in the ELT textbook *Bahasa Inggris English for Change* for eleventh-grade students. Using a content analysis approach, the study analyzed both visual and textual artifacts based on Cortazzi and Jin's cultural categories: Source Culture, Target Culture, and International Culture. The results show that all three categories are present across 20 identified artifacts. Source Culture is the most frequently represented (11 artifacts), followed by International Culture (5 artifacts), while Target Culture appears the least (4 artifacts). The study recommends that teachers incorporate a more balanced range of cultural materials, that curriculum developers integrate source, target, and international cultural elements more systematically, and that policy support be strengthened to promote equitable cultural representation in national ELT materials.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language and culture have a close relationship, often intertwined. Language is the primary means of communication, representing an individual's personality and culture (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). So, the language used in daily communication is proven to reflect a culture. Learning a language requires not only proficiency in communication but also an understanding of the cultural norms and values that shape the language and keep it culturally relevant. Therefore, understanding the importance of the interrelationship between culture and language is essential to recognizing how closely the two are intertwined in everyday life. A person who learns a language without learning and understanding a culture is considered at risk of becoming a fluent fool (Kusiak-Pisowacka, 2018). This concept can also be applied to the field of education, for example, in language learning, including foreign languages such as English, since most people around the world communicate with others in English, either in spoken or written form. As a global language, English teaching also requires the incorporation of cultural aspects to prepare students for an international communication environment. In the Indonesian context, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL). Understanding the culture of the language being learned has been shown to play a crucial role in determining the success of conveying messages and the

fluidity of communication between speakers and interlocutors, which also decreases misunderstandings in communication.

There are numerous ways for students to gain an understanding of languages and their cultures, one of which is through language learning at school and other institutional settings. Teachers can incorporate cultural materials into the English learning process in the classroom by providing students with suitable and appropriate teaching materials. One of the most suitable teaching materials that teachers can provide to students during the learning process is a textbook which was reinforced by recent research showing how textbooks serve as a vehicle for embedding key competencies such as digital literacies (Rukmayadi et al., 2025). Richards (2015) argued that textbooks are a component of every language program. Textbooks are valuable in any language classroom and have several roles in the English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum, as well as supporting the language teaching and learning process. Cultural values contained in textbooks can build cultural awareness, knowledge, and perception in students (Derakhshan, 2024). A good textbook should contain three cultural categories: source, target, and international culture (Mutiar Ayu, 2020). With these three cultural categories in English textbooks, it is expected that students can improve their intercultural communicative competence skills. Additionally, Chusniawati et al. (2025) emphasize that well-designed English learning materials play a crucial role in supporting students' comprehension and engagement in ELT classrooms, further reinforcing the importance of appropriate cultural content in textbooks.

In previous years, research on culture-related content has been conducted by several researchers. Some examples of studies that discuss cultural content include Nurjanah and Umaemah (2019) who examined the content of cultural categories of ELT textbook, "Pathway to English". The results of the analysis showed that all three categories are represented in the textbook, with the following distribution: Target Culture at 74%, Local Culture at 19%, and International Culture at 7%. Riadini and Cahyono (2021) conducted research focusing on cultural categories in an ELT textbook, entitled "*Bahasa Inggris*" (Revised Edition), for the tenth-grade high school students. The results showed that all three cultural categories were represented in the textbook, with Source Culture at 58%, Target Culture at 35%, and International Culture at 7%. Reynaldi (2022) examined the content of cultural categories from a book entitled "When English Rings A Bell." The results showed that two of the three cultural categories were present in the textbook, with the distribution of Source Culture at 61.47% and Target Culture at 38.26%. Juluru (2022) examined an English textbook entitled "Our World through English IX" and focused on cultural categories. The research revealed that the textbook contained 16.66% Source culture-related topics, 20.83% Target culture-related topics, and 62.5% International Culture.

Based on previous studies, the researchers found differences in the presentation of cultural categories in the textbooks. In previous studies, particularly those conducted in Indonesia, most researchers analyzed ELT textbooks based on the 2013 Curriculum. Meanwhile, since 2022, the curriculum in Indonesia has been updated to use the latest curriculum, namely the Emancipated Curriculum. Therefore, to fill the gap, the researchers utilized a different research object from previous studies, specifically a textbook entitled "*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*" for the eleventh-grade senior high school students. The textbook has used the most current curriculum, as mentioned earlier, the Emancipated Curriculum. The reason for choosing this textbook is that it certainly contains a lot of cultural content that represents the dimensions of global diversity, which is an important part to introduce to students as part of *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)*. Furthermore, by utilizing this latest textbook, this study has a great opportunity to obtain findings that are not only new but also diverse from previous studies, thus increasing

students' understanding of cultural content. In this research, the researchers aimed to analyze the cultural categories in the visual and textual artifacts of the “*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*” textbook. Considering that this textbook was published in 2022 and utilizes the most up-to-date curriculum, further in-depth research is needed on this book to be used as evaluation material for future authors.

2. METHOD

This research aims to examine the cultural content presented in the ELT textbook “*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*,” which is used for the eleventh-grade senior high school students, based on Cortazzi and Jin(1999) cultural categories. The appropriate research design, following the objective, is a qualitative research approach known as content analysis. This method was chosen because the data underwent descriptive analysis, and the findings were presented in a written explanation supported by the information in the table. Content analysis is a research approach that identifies specific characteristics of written or visual material (Ary et al., 2010)., The researchers used textual and visual artifacts in the textbook based on three categories related to cultural content proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). Textual artifacts include conversations, short texts, and writing tasks, while visual artifacts are gathered from illustrations, pictures, material images, and figures.

The method utilized in this research to collect data is document analysis. Bowen (2009) suggested that documentary analysis, also known as document analysis, is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents. The type of documents used in this research is ELT textbooks. In analyzing the data, the researchers used the content analysis method adapted from Denscombe (2010). Data analysis in this research is divided into six steps of content analysis:

1. Selecting the text sample. The researchers attentively read every page in the textbook and noted every page that contained artifacts that were indicated to be used as source material for analysis. This reading and note-taking were done repeatedly.
2. Breaking down the text. The researchers systematically broke down each piece of data obtained on each page to determine whether the artifacts belonged to textual or visual artifacts. This was done carefully to get accurate results.
3. Categorizing the data. The researchers conducted a more in-depth analysis by setting up categories to determine which cultural category the collected artifacts should be classified into. Data was collected through analysis, classification, and organization into three types of cultural categories as outlined in Cortazzi and Jin (1999) theory. These types consist of Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), and International Culture (IC).
4. Coding the data. In conducting the categorization, it is necessary to have a code for it. Several notes on coding in this research are listed below.

Table 1. The List of Coding Categories

No	The Term	Coding Categories
1	VA	Visual Artifacts
2	TA	Textual Artifacts
3	SC	Source Culture
4	TC	Target Culture
5	IC	International Culture

An example of its use is VA-SC: Textbook cover, which means a textbook cover containing Visual Artifacts that represent the Source Culture category.

5. Counting data frequencies. The data in this research are counted to examine the cultural content presented in the textbooks by Cortazzi & Jin (1999). Additionally, this helps researchers and readers determine which cultural categories are presented in the textbook with the highest and lowest frequencies.
6. Analyzing the findings. The researchers carefully examined the data, checked the frequencies, and related them to relevant theories and previous studies to explore possible explanations for the observed results. This process required double-checking the artifacts and codes assigned to confirm whether any modifications to the results were needed. Ultimately, the researchers summarized the results of data analysis based on the coding sheet to answer the research questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The research findings present an analysis of cultural categories in the ELT textbook “*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*” for the eleventh-grade senior high school students, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The research data were collected by analyzing the visual and textual artifacts in the textbook using cultural categories. This research identified 20 instances of cultural categories within the textbook. More details can be found in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Presentation of Cortazzi and Jin’s (1999) Cultural Categories in the ELT Textbook “*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*” for the Eleventh Grade of Senior High School Students

No	Cultural Categories	Chapter						Frequency
		Cover	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Source Culture	1	2	3	3	1	1	11
2	Target Culture	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	1	2	4
3	International Culture	N/A	1	1	1	1	1	5
Total		1	4	4	4	3	4	20

N/A/: Not Available

The table displays all three categories from the textbook, comprising a total of 20 artifacts. However, the proportion of each category’s appearance was unequal. The first category most commonly found in textbooks is Source Culture (SC). A total of 11 artifacts represent this category and are scattered throughout the book, from the cover to Chapter 5. The cultural material in this category is characterized by the presence of notable figures from Indonesia, popular tourist destinations, and traditional practices. This further establishes SC as the category with the highest frequency among the others. Secondly, following International Culture (IC), this category was found to have only five artifacts, making it the second most frequently appearing category, after SC. This category appears in Chapters 1 to 5 of the textbook, with only one artifact each. The cultural content in this category of the textbook features several figures, an institution, food, a practice, a tourist destination, and a tool. The last one is Target Culture (TC), the frequency of

which is not comparable to the previous two categories, as only four artifacts were identified, making this category the one found least in the textbook. This category only shows up in Chapters 1, 3, and 5 of the textbooks. The cultural material contained in the artifacts is evident in the presence of numerous English-related materials and some individuals.

The following section is an analysis of the presentation's cultural categories. However, this article only explains one representative of each cultural category. Since this research employed content analysis, the artifact analysis was organized according to the order of the most prevalent categories identified in the textbook.

3.1.1 Source Culture

The first to be discussed is Source Culture (SC), which was identified in eleven artifacts in the textbook, making it the most commonly found category. The presentation of the SC category is explained below.

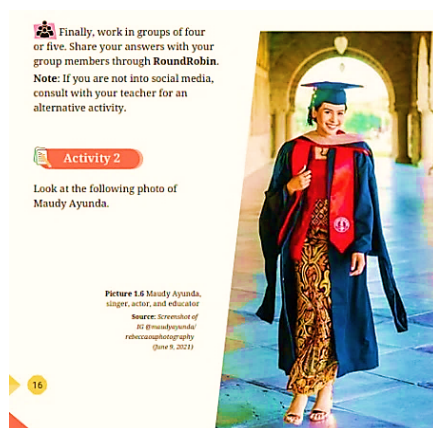


Figure 1. VA-SC Maudy Ayunda

Based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural categories, the visual artifact above is considered a Source Culture (SC). The artifact featured an Indonesian public figure dressed in Indonesian traditional attire. The public figure's name is Maudy Ayunda. She is seen celebrating her graduation from university, as evidenced by her wearing a graduation costume and toga, as well as a red *Kebaya* combined with *Batik* as her skirt. *Kebaya* and *Batik* are elements that strongly characterize the identity of the Indonesian culture. Garlufi and Nursasari (2019) explained that a *Kebaya* is a type of clothing that is open in the front, worn by women, and its length ranges from the top of the hip to the knee. *Kebaya* was originally a traditional dress from a developing area and has since been recognized as a national dress, becoming a cultural symbol of the Indonesian nation. *Kebaya* has long been recognized by the Indonesian people not only as a national dress but also as a garment worn in various events, such as graduations, weddings, parties, and official state occasions. As for *Batik*, by definition, it is a method (originally used in Java) of producing colored designs on textiles by dyeing them after first applying wax to the part to be dyed. UNESCO recognized *Batik* as an Intangible Cultural Heritage on October 2nd, 2009. From that, *Batik* was positioned as a political identity brand for Indonesia (Hakim, 2018). Indonesians wear *Batik* as both casual and formal clothing, suitable for various events, including ceremonies, celebratory traditions, school uniforms, and everyday use. This demonstrates that Indonesia has a rich cultural heritage that has been recognized worldwide; therefore, it is our duty as good Indonesian citizens to preserve and sustain these existing cultures.

These findings highlight how the textbook provides an uneven distribution of cultural exposure, which may require teachers to supplement the missing cultural components during instruction. In this regard, the flexibility of instructional models can be useful.

3.1.2 International Culture

The second category to be discussed is International Culture (IC), which was identified in five artifacts in the textbook, making it the second most frequently occurring category. The presentation of the IC category is explained below.

Teuku : Yes, that's right. I eat healthy food, too. What is your favorite food, Sindi?
Sindi : I love the combination of salmon and broccoli. And drink orange juice. What about you?
Teuku : Do you use brown rice?
Sindi : No. I don't use brown rice. It doesn't taste good. I don't like having brown rice in my meals.
Teuku : Do you know that brown rice is a source of complex carbohydrates and it's good for your body?
Sindi : 1) But I don't like it. I'd better have more vegetables. What about your healthy eating?
Teuku : 2) _____, with fried chicken, spinach and broccoli. And I like to drink yogurt.
Sindi : 3) _____ you eat fried chicken, it is not healthy.
Teuku : Yes, 4) _____. I eat a lot of vegetables to make them healthier.
Sindi : 5) _____. Because many other substances can harm your health.
Teuku : Okay, but I like it. But I'll think about your opinion.

Figure 2. TA-IC: Discussion Mentioning Brown Rice

Based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural categories, the textual artifact above can be classified into the category of International Culture (IC) because it mentions a product that originates from outside the English-speaking countries, as well as Indonesia, which includes Vietnam, Thailand, and India. The artifact above displays a conversation between two people, and one of them mentions brown rice. According to Bottaro (2023) brown rice is composed of three distinct parts: the germ, bran, and endosperm. It is less processed than white rice and gets its color from the remaining layers of bran and germ. Brown rice is considered healthier than white rice due to its higher nutritional content, which includes dietary fiber and a range of vitamins and minerals. This type of rice is typically marketed in Southeast Asia, with the largest distribution markets for brown rice primarily in Vietnam, Thailand, and India. Consuming this rice daily offers several benefits for the heart (Nguyen, 2022). It is expected that the materials contained in the artifact above will broaden students' knowledge of the health benefits of brown rice, and it is also hoped that students will gain an understanding of the global distribution of brown rice sales.

3.1.3 Target Culture

The third category to be discussed is Target Culture (TC), which was identified in a total of four artifacts in the textbook, making it the least frequently found category. The presentation of the TC category is explained below.

Look at the following Instagram photo and caption by an American artist named Paola (Paolita) Merrill:



Picture 1.11 Paola (Paolita) Merrill, artist

Source: Screenshot of IG @the_cottage_fairy (December 18, 2021)

Is there snow where you live? I definitely love spring most, but winter does feel quite magical. I always think about stepping into Narnia when the snow is freshly fallen. I decided to read my first ever scary story, Coraline, and follow it up with a collection of ghostly tales for adults that was recommended to me. I have never successfully gotten through a spooky book, maybe this will be the first! I'm a big chicken, anything scares me. That's why I'm starting with a children's book haha! Do you like scary stories, or have any recommendations?

Figure 3. VA-TA: TC: Instagram Post by Paola Merrill

Based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) cultural categories, the artifact above is classified into the Target Culture (TC) category because it discusses someone from an English-speaking country, specifically the United States, who mentions a well-known British novel and provides English-related material, such as slang. The figure above shows a visualization of Paola (Paolita) Merrill, an American artist, specifically a YouTuber and writer. Merrill has over a million subscribers on her YouTube channel, "The Cottage Fairy." Below the picture, there is a text caption written by Merrill herself on her Instagram page, in which she mentions a scary story she once read entitled 'Coraline.' According to Barrett (2007), Coraline was a British dark fantasy horror children's novella published in 2002 and was Neil Gaiman's first novel for children. Since its publication, Coraline has become an international bestseller and is also widely popular. It became an international bestseller in New York and has won at least four literary awards in the United States. In addition, in the caption text above, Merrill also wrote the phrase 'I am a big chicken.' According to Collins Dictionary(2024), 'I am a big chicken' is a slang term used to express a lack of courage or a sense of fear. It is a way of admitting that you are indecisive or afraid to do something

3.2 Discussion

Based on research findings, it was discovered that the three cultural categories identified by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) are represented in the ELT textbook, comprising a total of 20 artifacts. The first cultural category is Source Culture (SC), or the culture of the learner itself, which is Indonesia. Eleven artifacts were found in the textbook that belonged to this category, scattered throughout the cover of Chapter 5. Since this ELT textbook is written, published, and utilized in Indonesia, it is not surprising that the researchers discovered Source Culture to be the most superior category among others. It seemed that the author of this textbook wanted to expose more related to the learners' original culture, which is Indonesian culture. It can be seen from some materials in the textbook that contain cultural contents such as mentioning and showing several places (*Labuan Bajo, Manado, Kuta Beach*), products (*Local Fruits, Local Names, traditional*

costume; *King Bibinge*, *Batik*, *Kebaya*, and musical instrument; *Sape*, white and grey uniforms, temples, Indonesian flag, etc), practice (Waste Bank), and also figures who are related to Indonesia (Maudy Ayunda, Greysia Polii, Laetania, etc).

This implies that every ELT textbook written and produced by local people carries a government mission or agenda, which in this case is that students should be familiar with their own culture rather than other cultures. This is also in line with the statement of Cortazzi and Jin (1999), who stated that the reason why indigenously designed EFL textbooks contain most of the learners' source culture. He also note that there are several reasons why the source culture is prominently featured in the textbook. Firstly, students need to train and encourage themselves to talk about their own culture to others. Thus, they will be able to share their own culture with others, especially with people who are culturally different from themselves. Secondly, for more profound reasons, source culture materials can help students become more aware of their own cultural identity. This can be one of the good implications of exposing and promoting learners' source culture in their English textbooks.

In the end, after studying through this ELT textbook, students are expected to recognize their country and culture better, as well as students can be more aware, and embrace their own culture as their identity, meaning that students are expected to be more knowledgeable about what activities or products are included in local culture or culture that presents Indonesian identity, once they have known deeper about the 'culture' itself. Surely, the students would feel a sense of willingness to participate in preserving and promoting Indonesia's local culture, as well as take pride in it, which has become an integral part of their national identity. Thus, providing and presenting source culture material in English textbooks used by students is a step in the right direction. In the current era, a vigorous process of international integration is occurring due to the exchange of worldviews, products, ideas, and cultural aspects. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen students' awareness of local culture so that they still recognize their cultural identity as well.

The second is International Culture (IC), which is the second most frequently appearing category in the textbook. The frequency is not comparable to the previous category. It was found that as many as five artifacts were spread across Chapters 1-5, mentioning and featuring several products and individuals from outside Indonesia and English-speaking countries. Some of these are Brown Rice (mainly found in Southeast Asia, specifically in Vietnam, Thailand, and India), Greta Thunberg, an activist (Sweden), Nelson Mandela, a former president (South Africa), Zero Waste (Japan), and the Nile River (Egypt). Exposure to such international figures and cultural concepts enables learners to engage in authentic English communication about global themes, such as environmental issues, leadership, and cultural diversity, which are increasingly relevant in intercultural contexts. Although the frequency of appearance of this category is rare in textbooks, it is important to include this category in textbooks for EFL learners. In a globalized world, students are likely to interact with a broader scope of people, including native and non-native speakers of English, in a diverse and globalized society. Therefore, incorporating international culture into textbooks is essential for developing strong intercultural communicative competence. In line with this perspective, the presentation of international culture in this textbook is arguably better than that of the target culture. Incorporating international cultural content into English textbooks can help students enhance their intercultural communicative competence, encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Furthermore, intercultural communicative skills can be defined as the ability to interact with people from other countries, nations, and cultures in a foreign language (Cong-Lem, 2025). Students must be able to communicate with people from

different cultural backgrounds because English speakers do not only come from native-speaking countries. Therefore, students need to be aware of the diverse cultures of various countries. The main point to emphasize is that the representation of multiple cultures should not only focus on quantity but also on quality. Teachers should go beyond textbooks to encourage meaningful cross-cultural learning.

The third is Target Culture (TC), which is the category with the least occurrence in the textbook. It was found that as many as four artifacts were scattered in Chapters 1, 4, and 5 only. The presentation in the textbook is enhanced by the presence of several figures, a product, and places related to English-speaking countries. Some of them are Xiye Bastida, an activist (USA), Paola Merrill, an Artist (USA), and Piggy Bank (USA). Additionally, the English-speaking countries themselves are also mentioned, which are Australia and the USA. To provide insight into cultural diversity and broaden students' understanding of culture, as suggested and Cortazzi and Jin (1999), it is undeniable that integrating material from the target culture is essential in English textbooks. The purpose of introducing the target culture to students is to make them more familiar with the target culture and to teach them how to interact and behave with the people of the target country (Afriani et al., 2019). Students need to be aware of the culture of the target country, as they are part of a globalized society where English plays a significant role. Students are expected to understand the social norms, values, and communicative behaviors of native speakers; however, it is essential to note that English is not exclusive to native-speaking countries. English belongs to the global community as a *lingua franca*.

International Target Culture is mentioned in the context of intercultural awareness. According to Alptekin (2005) international target culture materials should be included because they highlight diversity around the world and help learners develop intercultural communicative competence, such as showing a positive attitude towards other cultures. Additionally, learners can expand their understanding of global cultures in various countries, as well as the cultural material described above. It is expected that this could foster behaviors in line with the identity of the Indonesian nation and create learners who are adaptable to foreign cultures without compromising the wisdom of the nation's cultural heritage (Dewi & Putri, 2022). The research findings show that all three cultural categories are represented in the textbook, with a total of 20 artifacts. Source Culture occurs most often with 11 artifacts, followed by International Culture with 5 artifacts. In contrast, Target Culture has the lowest proportion, with only 4 artifacts. The results of the three analyses also revealed that the three cultural categories were present in the textbook, with Source Culture (SC) being the most frequently occurring category.

4. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to identify the cultural categories proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) in the ELT textbook "*Bahasa Inggris English for Change*" for the eleventh-grade senior high school students. The researchers analyzed the content of textual and visual artifacts containing cultural content. It was found that all three categories were present in the analysis, and Source Culture was the most prominent category, with a total of 11 artifacts appearing in the textbook, compared to the other two cultural categories. The reason why the SC presentation is superior to the other two categories is that the authors of this ELT textbook are Indonesian, so they incorporated more Indonesian cultural content into the textbook materials. Additionally, this textbook is widely distributed and used by high school students in Indonesia. Fortunately, the International Culture and Target Culture are still found in the textbooks. However, the frequency is not comparable to the SC, which is IC with five artifacts, and the last

is TC, with a total of four artifacts found in the textbook. Although all three categories of culture are found in the textbook, the scale of the portion of IC and TC compared to SC is certainly very unbalanced. It is also essential to introduce students to aspects of global culture. With this lack of understanding of international target cultures, it is concerning that students may not be fully aware of the global environment and the diverse cultural contexts that exist worldwide.

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