
TEXTBOOKS ANALYSIS: ANALYZING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) TEXTBOOKS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDONESIAN CULTURE

Devy Angga Gunantar
Semarang University, Indonesia
E-mail: angga.gunantar@gmail.com

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Abstract

Textbooks are very important parts in teaching and learning process. Both teachers and students, mostly, use them as the basic foundations of courses in the classrooms. Textbooks may not be able to fulfill all the needs of the teaching and learning process but their existence as teaching sources is still paramount. They become one of effective sources of learning used in teaching and learning process and as reflection of values and ideas of a person or nation. The aspect of culture can be supported by systematic and comprehensive textbooks. This research paper analyzes some textbooks used in one of Junior High Schools in Indonesia. The way the writer analyzed the textbooks was based on cultural perspective. This is mainly because, in learning English, Indonesian students should focus more on talking and discussing Indonesian culture in English rather than the English speaking countries' culture. To analyze and examine the cultural contents in the English textbooks, the writer followed the standards set by Bryam. Byram's criterion is considered sufficient and comprehensive. This set of checklist is driven from the idea of cultural learning and teaching as an integral part of language education. The result shows that the textbooks being analyzed covered local or Indonesian culture. This findings accentuate the needs of revisiting English teaching materials to contribute to the improvement of English Textbooks in Indonesia.

Keywords: Textbooks, Analysis, Indonesian Culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are essential parts in learning for students and even teachers. In the teaching and learning process, textbooks are considered to be the basic foundations of courses. Textbooks may not contain all aspect needed in the teaching and learning process but their existence as teaching sources is still paramount. They acted as effective instruments used in teaching and learning process and as reflection of values and ideas of a person or nation (Hinkel, 2005). The

aspect of culture can be supported by systematic and comprehensive textbooks.

More specifically, Byram has formulated the checklist of the ideal cultural content in a textbook. This set of checklist is driven from the idea of cultural learning and teaching as an integral part of language education. Byram (1993) examined the cultural content in textbooks that should be included properly on eight areas as shown in the following list:

- 1) Social identity and social group (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities)
- 2) Social interaction (differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider)

- 3) Belief and behavior (moral, religious beliefs; daily routines)
 - 4) Social and political institutions (state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government)
 - 5) Socialization and the life cycle (families, schools, employment, rites of passage)
 - 6) National history (historical and contemporary events seen as markers of national identity)
 - 7) National geography (geographical factors seen as being significant by members)
 - 8) Stereotypes and national identity (what is “typical” symbol of national stereotypes)
- (Byram, 1993, p5-10)

The standard set by Bryam is considered to be more comprehensive and also practical. It accommodated most all elements of culture from the moral to material aspects. Therefore, the writer decided to select Byram checklist as the basic theory in collecting, analyzing and evaluating the data of the cultural content in the textbook.

Due to the goal to promote cultural value in EFL education, textbooks should be designed with a detailed explanation. The importance of textbooks is varied but generally it facilitates the process of teaching and learning in second language countries. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) in McKay (2002) stated that textbooks, as a part of teaching and learning “can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner and an ideology.” Therefore, it can act as major sources for both cultural knowledge and linguistic and thematic materials which portrays the existed ideology of ESL countries.

Textbooks in every part of the world possess various cultural orientations; whether it is based on cultural source, target culture, or international target. The source culture means

that the textbook is based on learner culture while the target culture textbook reflects the target language used as first language. The international target culture was driven from numerous cultures from English, or non-English-speaking countries which view English as an international language (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999 in McKay 2002).

Norrizan (1993 in McKay, 2002) studied the impact of various cultural elements in ESL texts introduced during ESL lessons in two different schools in Malaysia with two different student groups. By contrasting the schools based on the economic background, she selected the samples of a school in Community A with middle or upper middle class students and Community B which was an urban village with low income families. She applied the research with cultural uni matrix by including common topical items such as types of houses, overseas studies, satay, business loans, travels, air travels and local festivals among others. The selection of these items is based on a survey of six form four ESL textbooks used by the teachers of the school sample. Data collection such as interviews and classroom observations aimed to assess whether the student is familiar with the provided topical items.

The result showed that student from middle or upper middle class families are familiar with most of topical items compared to the community B. She concluded that the textbooks were representative for both middle-class values and lifestyles. Thus, effective interactions were accomplished by students in Community A. In an opposite, in community B, the students are less interested and tend to neglect the lessons. She suggested the teachers to choose more appropriate topics which is in line with the culture of the students. The study concluded that familiar

items can support the learning and teaching of second language.

Regardless the unclear influence of western culture on English learning and teaching, Shimako (2000) in her view published in McKay (2002) argued that most of Japanese textbook contained Western value and character even though the local culture is more paramount. The way of foreign culture is expressed by setting story of a western tourist who is introduced to local culture. Mostly, western culture is portrayed in American context.

In Korea, the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) covered all aspects of social life; lifestyle, behavior, ideas, and the custom system of the target culture. The students are deliberately shaped to understand the element of culture but expected to master the linguistic aspects as well. It is concluded that in the secondary level, most selected topics are referred to local culture such as cuisine, vacations, gesture, weather, traditions and trip to English speaking countries. The main essence of culture is 'culture as the way of life' which covers sociological aspect of culture. Other aspects like the beauty of culture, culture as the way of thinking and behavior are less explored.

In Chile, the cultural contents focused on the concept of sense of belonging. The ministry of education has set a concept of textbooks for public school in Chile called 'Go for Chile' (Mugglestone, Elsworth, and Rose 1999, 2000 in McKay, 2002). This principle is made to reach the education purposes set by the government. The books itself, discuss about the places in Chile and numerous local cultures. The characters in the books are selected from many nationalities and backgrounds but the western value such

as career women is also depicted in the storyline.

Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) in McKay (2002) in their study about teaching material in Morocco mentioned that there is no tangible advantage gained by including Western culture in secondary schools. It is believed that by putting western value, the learners will more likely compare their local culture with western value which later may trigger dissatisfaction. Furthermore, teachers assumed that the motivation to learn English will be higher if the context used is student's daily life rather than based on the culture of English speaking countries. They also stated that cultural element in English teaching can increase the understanding of English as international language, appreciate the local culture, accommodate the learners to travel internationally and contact others as well as motivate the learners.

In short, the textbooks in the mentioned countries used western cultures to identify the difference between local and Western culture. The books also included some issues like gender roles and this have been agreed by the local Ministry of Education. Based on these studies, the writer intends to explore the cultural dimensions and portray the cultural value in English language textbooks in one of schools in Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

The type of research is descriptive-qualitative and simple quantitative. Rather than measuring the quantity of case, this study measures the quality aspect of a case. That is why it is called as a qualitative study. This point focuses on whether the culture being discussed in the textbooks are more local or Indonesian culture of western culture. This means that the current study focuses more on data explanation instead of presenting

statistical result. This study also used simple quantitative which means that this study concerns more on qualitative data but also analyze simple quantitative data and then explain the results. In terms of descriptive aspect, the study mainly described the phenomena based on the observation. The explanation dealt with social, cultural, and linguistic phenomena. It is called as an explanatory discussion, because the reasons within the discussion are well explained.

The data of this research were taken from some textbooks. The English textbooks were analyzed by the writer as the sources of data. The selected English textbooks were published by Department of National Education. They were as the following.

- 1) Wardiman. A. et al. (2008). *English in Focus (for grade VII Junior High School SMP/MTs)*. Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- 2) Priyana. J. et al. (2008). *Scaffolding (English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII)*. Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- 3) Susilohadi. G. et al. (2008). *Contextual Teaching and Learning Bahasa Inggris, SMP/MTS Kelas IX Edisi 4*. Jakarta: Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data from textbooks materials were compiled by analyzing the selected three English textbooks for Junior High School in published by *Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Tahun 2008*. To analyze and examine the cultural contents in English textbooks, the writer followed the standard set by Bryam. Byram's criterion is considered sufficient and comprehensive. Byram (1993) stated that cultural contents should covers

eight main areas as shown in the following list:

“Criteria for English textbooks evaluation (focus on cultural content) are as follows”:

- 1) Social identity and social group (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities);
- 2) Social interaction (differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider);
- 3) Belief and behavior (moral, religious beliefs, daily routines);
- 4) Social and political institutions (state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government);
- 5) Socialization and the life cycle (families, schools, employment, rites of passages);
- 6) National history (historical and contemporary events seen as markers of national identity);
- 7) National geography (geographical factors seen as being significant by members);
- 8) Stereotypes and national identity (what is ‘typical’ symbol of national stereotypes) (Byram, 1993, p5-10).

In the present study, the discussion concerns around the issue of cultural contents in the English text books used by one of Indonesian Junior High Schools. The analysis of cultural contents of English textbooks conducted by screening the English module used in English teaching i.e. English textbooks for Junior High School which is published by Department of National Education.

The principle used to collect, analyze and examine the cultural contents in English textbooks is based on Byram's checklist criterion. This standard is considered more comprehensive and efficient. Moreover, all elements of culture like spiritual and material aspects are well accommodated in Byram's

criteria. The following list shows the criteria of textbooks specified on cultural contents.

Table 1
The Analysis of English text book (English in Focus for grade VII Junior High School)

| No | Byram's Criteria | Details | Position | Number | Percentage |
|----|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | Social identity and social group | What is your name? What should I buy? What do you do? My hobby | Page 1 Page 57 Page 101 Page 139 | 4 | 33,33% |
| 2. | Social interaction | Greeting and introducing Asking and giving information Describing people Asking and responding clarification expression | Page 8 Page 27 Page 107 Page 143 | 4 | 33,33% |
| 3. | Belief and behavior | Work out | Page 123 | 1 | 7,69% |
| 4. | Social and political institutions | | | | |
| 5. | Socialization and life phrase | Let's go to school Family life | Page 39 Page 83 | 2 | 16,67% |
| 6. | National history | | | | |
| 7. | National geography | Things around us | Page 19 | 1 | 7,69% |
| 8. | Stereo types and national identity | | | | |
| | Total | | | 12 | 100% |

The criteria of English books set by Byram and named *English in focus for grade VII Junior High School* also explain about the Indonesian cultures in several pages included page 1, 57, 101, and 139. The main focus of the discussion is the personal identification which takes about 33.33% of overall discussion.

Other aspects such as social life, belief and behavior are also discussed. The social life which achieve 33,33 % is presented through greeting, introducing, asking and giving information and describing people.

While the point of belief and behavior are only explained in 7,69% of total discussion.

The writer found no issue about social and politic within the discussion. However, the textbooks include social interaction and moment in life or life phase such as family, going to school or school life. This kind of themes spent around 16,67% of discussion.

Even though national history topic, national identity and social stereotype are not covered in the textbooks, the issue of national geography is discussed in 7.69%. Such topic mostly describe about things around daily life.

Table 2
The Analysis of English Text Book (Scaffolding, English for Junior High School Students Grade VIII)

| No | Byram's Criteria | Details | Position | Number | Percentage |
|----|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | Social identity and social group | Describing things and animals My gorgeous idol My unforgettable holiday My first experience Once upon a time A friend in need is a friend indeed | Page 1 Page 21 Page 61 Page 79 Page 141 Page 161 | 6 | 46,15% |
| 2. | Social interaction | Asking for, giving and refusing goods and services Agreeing and disagreeing something Asking for and giving opinions Starting, extending and ending a conversation on the telephone | Page 1-20 Page 41-60 Page 62-79 Page 103 | 4 | 30,77% |
| 3. | Belief and behavior | Life performances | Page 103 | 1 | 7,69% |
| 4. | Social and political institutions | Celebration around the world | Page 123 | 1 | 7,69% |
| 5. | Socialization and life phrase | | | | |
| 6. | National history | | | | |
| 7. | National geography | Wonderful places | Page 41 | 1 | 7,69% |
| 8. | Stereo types and national identity | | | | |
| | Total | | | 13 | 100% |

The Byram's criterion/standard in other book called *Scaffolding English for Junior High School Students grade VIII*, also discussed Indonesian culture in the pages of 1, 21, 61, 79, 141, and 161. The discussion mostly explore about description of stuff, this topic is explained in 46.15 % of total discussion. The topic about social interaction is also included, it can be seen in several conversations such as asking for something,

asking and giving opinions, offering and refusing goods and services, agreeing and disagreeing, etc. These kinds of discussion are allocated in 30.77%. The other theme like belief and behavior is presented in around 7.69% in the textbook. With the same percentage as belief and behavior, the social and political issue took 7.69% of overall discussion. The example of this issue is celebration in many parts of the world. In

other hand, the issue of socialization or social life and moments of life are not included in this textbook.

National historical issue are still not discussed yet in the textbook, but for about

6.69% of total discussion talks about national geographical theme. Mainly, that topic is presented through discussing wonderful places. Meanwhile, stereotypical issue and national identity are not discussed.

Table 3.

The Analysis of English text book (Contextual Teaching and Learning, Bahasa Inggris, Junior High School Grade IX)

| No | Byram's Criteria | Details | Position | Number | Percentage |
|----|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | Social identity and social group | Are you sure? How do you do it? What a pity? What are they? Really? What is it like? Could you? Long long time ago, there was | Page 1 Page 24 Page 41 Page 55 Page 71 Page 90 Page 107 Page 121 | 8 | 72.73% |
| 2. | Social interaction | Expressing and responding to doubt, asking for repetition, showing concern, showing surprise or wonder. Expressing and responding to bad news. Responding to good news and expressing opinions | Page 2 Page 42 Page 72 | 3 | 27.27% |
| 3. | Belief and behavior | | | | |
| 4. | Social and political institutions | | | | |
| 5. | Socialization and life phrase | | | | |
| 6. | National history | | | | |
| 7. | National geography | | | | |
| 8. | Stereo types and national identity | | | | |
| | Total | | | 11 | 100% |

Other textbook entitled *Contextual Teaching and Learning Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Pertama Kelas IX* explained the Byram criteria about Indonesian culture in the pages of 1, 24, 41, 55, 71, 90, 107, and 121. The discussion still emphasize personal identification which its percentage is about 72.73%. Social interaction followed by

27.27% of total portion by including some materials like expressing and responding to doubt, asking for repetition, showing concern, showing surprise or wonder, expressing and responding to bad news, responding to good news and expressing opinions, etc.

There also several common topics which are not discussed in the textbook. The issues

such as belief and behavior, social and politic, national historical issues, national geography, socialization and moments of life do not appear in the textbook.

The writer believed that English textbooks in Indonesia, have been adjusted toward the global trend. It is reflected in the design and the method of the textbooks presenting the reading texts and vocabulary. Some texts tell about Indonesian culture, such as Borobudur, Batik, etc and the vocabularies are also related to the topic and content.

This indicates that English learning focus in Indonesia has been set to encourage the students to share their ideas about local culture in English as the medium. This model is unlike the previous syllabus which only suggested learners to copy the way of communication of English native speakers. It is also obvious that the ability to communicate is more paramount than performing native style of communication. Even so, the syllabus still includes linguistic aspect such as pronunciation but also encourage students to more communicative using English.

As it is mentioned that cultural content should be inserted in English textbooks, the material used in the textbooks are mostly about social life and local culture. This cultural content is expected to promote sense of belonging toward the youth, penetrate the local value to the students, and show the original culture to international community. Although it is important to include local culture in English teaching and learning process, the use of proper Basic English rule such as British and American English should remain significant to be conducted without discouraging learners' efforts. Then consequently as long as learners are able to deliver messages through a communication, teachers should not tell the learners that their

English is bad just because their accents and intonation do not reflect the native style.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, the writer believed that the material content in the English textbooks has included the topic of Indonesian culture. Most of the discussion is focused on Indonesia local culture and it is considered as an effective way to teach English to Indonesian learners. This notion is also approved by several linguists for example Andy Kirkpatrick (2007), Jennifer Jenkins (2000) and Sandra-Lee McKay (2008). They argued that English learning is more effective through involving local culture without depending on native culture. Moreover, they also suggested that it is not necessarily absolute to enforce student to imitate native performance because the main goal is to be able to communicate in English with their fellows. Moreover, the student themselves rarely use English to communicate with native speakers, so it is better to concern on the local culture than English speaking countries culture.

The writer also discovered that the cultural content of this books concerns on two kinds of culture; local and 'localized culture'. The 'localized culture' is a combination of different ethnic cultures in Indonesia. Supporting this notion, the textbook is oriented to a direct and explicit description about local cultures such the explanatory texts of local festivals and traditional dances.

Some intercultural behaviors and communications are also preceded in several parts of textbooks. But, there is no example of comparison between native English cultures and local cultures. Regarding this, the status of English in EFL context has been expanded to "English as an International Language" (EIL) by utilizing it as the medium to promote

local culture in international level. Thus, it can be concluded that Indonesian English Textbooks that has been analyzed by the writer are accommodating the idea that cultural content will improve language

proficiency. Therefore the idea that Indonesian English Language Teaching (ELT) to involve cultural value is well presented in the textbooks.

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