

Cultural Persons' Representations in High School English Language Teaching Materials in Indonesia

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Abstract

Integrating both local and target cultures in English Language Teaching Materials and emphasizes the need for balance to promote cultural diversity and understanding become an important thing in today's era. During teaching practice activities at SMAN 17 Tebo, the researcher found that the cultural materials in the English Teaching Materials used are not balanced between the source culture, target culture, and international culture. This has an impact on cross-cultural understanding and less than optimal cultural awareness among students. The purpose of this research is to explore the representation of cultural persons in government textbook and teacher-made modules. This research uses qualitative content analysis as a research design. This research involved a sample of government-approved English language textbooks entitled "Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress" and a teacher-made module at SMAN 11 Tebo. The results show that from the theme of great athletes in chapter one of the Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook and teacher-made module, it can be seen that the dominant sports branch comes from international culture. While the cultural persons represented as athletes are dominated by the source culture. It is recommended that future development of English language teaching (ELT) materials, both in government textbooks like Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress and teacher-made modules, should strive for a more balanced representation of source culture, target culture, and international culture for fostering intercultural competence among Indonesian students.

Keywords: Cultural Persons, Cultural Integration, Textbook, Teacher-Made Module



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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, where English as a lingua franca is used across diverse cultures, teachers need to consider how culture is represented in teaching materials (Cavalheiro, 2015). However, Sudartini (2012) stated that the issue of culture in English Language Teaching (ELT) has become a pressing concern due to the increasing recognition of the importance of cultural awareness in language education. Furthermore, culture is an integral part of language learning, as it provides context, meaning, and authenticity to the language being taught (Europe, 2013). Thus, it can be said that English teaching materials play a crucial role in language education and in shaping the student learning experience (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Therefore, integrating cultural awareness into the English language teaching material is an important element and not just a simple trend in preparing students to thrive in a global world. This is one more reason why it is important to enrich student learning experiences, promote respect, and empower students to communicate effectively across cultures (Yuliana, 2021).

With the use of ELT materials, especially textbooks, teachers can enhance students' understanding of language and culture, this is done by highlighting cultural information in the materials (Sihombing & Nguyen, 2022). However, the role of culture in the materials is often overlooked or inadequately addressed (Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013). This is due to a lack

of cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Based on research conducted by Syahri & Susanti (2016) their research results revealed that while some books were aware of promoting local culture, others lacked sufficient local cultural content. The study highlights the importance of integrating both local and target cultures in English textbooks and emphasizes the need for balance to promote cultural diversity and understanding. The facts in the field that found by researcher during teaching practice activities at SMAN 17 Tebo show that the cultural material in the English Teaching Materials used is not balanced between the source culture, target culture, and international culture. This has an impact on cross-cultural understanding and less than optimal cultural awareness among students. Moreover, culture needs to be a big part of learning, because, one of the key goals of studying English as a foreign language for learners is to increase their cross-cultural competency (Raigón-Rodríguez, 2018).

A research conducted by Sari (2021) titled "Government-Made (BSE-Buku Sekolah Elektronik) vs Commercial Textbooks. Which One Is Better?", lies in the specific focuses on the comparison between government-made (BSE) and commercial textbooks in terms of various aspects such as visual materials, gender, and cultural sensitivity, as well as reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills. Additionally, research by Alfaya et al (2023) entitled Cultural Representation in the ELT Textbook "Work in Progress" investigated the cultural content representation using cultural elements (product, practices, perspectives, and persons) framework from Yuen (2011) and cultural types framework from (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). The results of this study demonstrated that, of the four cultural types represented in the textbook, the Target culture, which originated in England and America, was the most prominently represented. This was followed by the international culture, the free or neutral culture, and the last source or local culture. And then research by Imelwaty et al (2023) entitled "A Content Analysis of the Cultural Product in High-School English Language Learning Materials in Indonesia". The research intends to define how cultural products are portrayed in narrative texts used in English language learning materials for high school students in Indonesia. And the results show that there is not much representation of cultural products in the educational materials. The gap of this research over the previous research mentioned before is, this research will compare government textbooks Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress and teacher-made modules in terms of the representation of cultural elements, especially cultural persons. The adoption of Yuen (2011) framework about the four cultural elements, products, practices, perspectives, and persons.

In supporting the verity of this exploration, the researcher reviews some affiliated findings that banded the same problem but different aspects. The first is an exploration conducted by (Noor & Triskaya, 2024) entitled "An Analysis of Cultural in Selected English Textbooks for Junior High School". The results showed that the textbooks presented multicultural integration from three culture categories: source culture, international culture, and target culture. Second, (Sugirin & Nurhayati, 2016) entitled "A Study On Cultural Integration In The English Textbooks For Junior High School". The study also identified that there were 409 Western cultural elements and 739 Indonesian ones, but they were not adequately explained to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Third, an exploration was conducted by (Nafiah, 2020) entitled "Developing English Modules with Integrated Islamic Values and Jambi Local Wisdom". The module was found to be beneficial for both students and teachers, providing a suitable and practical resource for teaching English, especially for procedure text types. Fourth, a research conducted by (Nur Fitria, 2023) entitled "Using Authentic Material and Created Material (Teacher-Made) for English Language Teaching (ELT): Benefits and Limitations". The research emphasizes the importance of utilizing a combination of both authentic and created materials to enhance the effectiveness of English language

teaching. Fifth, research by (Agustina & Kencana, 2023) entitled “The cultural content and intercultural communicative competence in the global and local textbooks used in Indonesian EFL classes”. The study employs content analysis to assess the representation of source culture (students' own culture), target culture (culture of English-speaking countries), and international culture (diverse cultures globally). Last, research was conducted (Albari & Yamin, 2020) entitled “Cultural Content Analysis On Government-Issued English Learning Textbooks”. The study results revealed that the cultural content in the textbooks is disproportionate.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the researcher used qualitative content analysis. The scientific study of communication content is known as content analysis. It is an analysis of the message's substance in light of its contexts, meanings, and purposes (Baxter, 2009). The used of content analysis with a document review as an instrument helped the researcher to analyze and identify the types and frequency of cultural elements included in the government textbooks and teacher-made module. Two sources were used to analyze the data for this research. The first was a government textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress”, and teacher-made module that is used in SMAN 11 Tebo grade 10. Chapter One of the textbook and the teacher-made module with the theme Great Athletes are the materials chosen in this research because Great Athletes is included in one as cultural figures that are respected public. It is in line with the definition of cultural persons by (Yuen, 2011).

Then, the researcher analyzed the four steps of content analysis by (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). First, data collection, The researcher collected the data about cultural persons that appeared in the government textbook and teacher-made module. The cultural persons were in the form of a picture, text, or description. Next, made a classification based on source culture, target culture, and international culture. Second, data coding, after completing the data collection, the researcher gave the codes for every cultural person and the classification that has been done. Next, to make it easier to compare the data, percentages were created based on the frequency of the data categorization. Third, in data analysis, the researcher analyzed the coded data using the framework from (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) and (Yuen, 2011). Last, data interpretation, the researcher interpreted the findings in the context of exploring the representation of cultural persons in the government textbook grade 10 Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress and teacher-made module at SMAN 11 Tebo.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to find out the comparison of cultural persons in Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook and teacher-made module with research question “How are the cultural persons represented in government textbooks and teacher-made module?”. To answer this research question, the researcher used framework from Yuen (2011) to explore the cultural elements especially the cultural persons that are represented in Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook and teacher-made module at SMAN 11 Tebo. The researcher also used (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) framework to make a classification of source culture, target culture, and international culture to identify which culture is dominant in Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook and teacher-made module at SMAN 11 Tebo.

The results show that from the theme of great athletes in chapter one of the Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook and teacher-made module, it can be seen that the dominant sports branch comes from international culture. While the cultural persons represented as athletes are dominated by the source culture. Chapter One of Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook, as a government-approved educational resource, tends to prioritize the representation of

source culture with percentage 53% in textbook, and 100% in teacher-made module over target 20% in textbook, 0% in teacher-made module, and international cultures with 27% in textbook and 0% in teacher-made module. And all of the cultural persons appeared in Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook and the teacher-made module are the types of real cultural persons or well-known cultural types.

This result is similar with the study from Sugirin & Nurhayati (2016) that identified there were 409 western cultural elements and 739 Indonesian cultural elements in textbook that has identified by them. The tendence towards Indonesian cultural figures aligns with the government's educational goals of fostering national identity and pride among students. Indonesian athletes such as Anthony Sinisuka Ginting, Greysia Polii, and Lalu Muhammad Zohri, for example, are prominently featured. These figures embody cultural values such as perseverance, family orientation, and national pride, which are central to Indonesian society.

Table 1. Comparison Of Cultural Person Representations In “Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress” Textbook Chapter 1 And Teacher-made Module In SMAN 11 Tebo

Cultural element			ELTM	
			Bahasa inggris work in progress textbook	Teacher-made module
Cultural persons	Source culture	Count	8	4
		percentage	53%	100%
	Target culture	Count	3	0
		percentage	20%	0%
	International culture	Count	4	0
		percentage	27%	0%
Total			15 100%	4 100%

From the table above, we can see that cultural persons that represent in Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook and teacher-made module were dominated by the source culture. 8 of total 15 cultural persons appeared in Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook with percentage 53% belong to source culture was the highest. Over the target culture with only 20% and international culture 27%. On the other hand, 4 of total 4 cultural persons with percentage 100% in teacher-made module belong to source culture. The teacher-made module has not present the cultural persons from target and international culture yet.

Discussion

The dominant focus on source culture may limit students' exposure to global perspectives and hinder their ability to develop intercultural competence. While these athletes are important cultural persons within Indonesia, the lack of representation of international and target culture figures such as Lionel Messi or Valentino Rossi may restrict students' understanding of how similar values are shared or differ across cultures. This limitation can lead to a more insular worldview, which might be counterproductive in an increasingly globalized world. Supported by Jismulatif et al (2022), their study result that the representation of foreign and Indonesian cultures in an unbalanced manner, with a significant overrepresentation of Indonesian culture compared to foreign cultural elements. And the cultural person dimension, which includes references to famous individuals, shows a mix of Indonesian and foreign names, but the representation is still skewed toward Indonesian culture. The textbooks feature more Indonesian public figures, businesspeople, and artists than foreign ones.

Teacher-made modules, on the other hand, often provide more flexibility in content and can incorporate a broader range of cultural persons. These modules might balance the representation of Indonesian cultural figures with those from target and international cultures. Teachers may introduce global icons like Cristiano Ronaldo and Muhammad Ali to highlight universal values such as resilience, sportsmanship, and dedication, allowing students to see the connections between Indonesian culture and the broader global context. However, if these modules still lean heavily towards source culture due to curriculum guidelines or teachers' preferences, the issue of cultural imbalance persists. While this approach supports the development of national identity, it might not fully prepare students for the cultural integration required in global communication. This imbalance could affect students' ability to appreciate and understand different cultural perspectives, which is critical in mastering a global language like English.

The findings of this research supported by some previous research. First, (Noor & Triskaya, 2024) entitled "An Analysis of Cultural in Selected English Textbooks for Junior High School". This study has a similar result with this research. From the three english textbook analyzed grade VII, VIII, IX, two of them (grade VII, and IX) were dominated by source culture. On the other hand, english textbook grade VIII was dominated by international culture. Second, (Ariawan, 2020) entitled "Cultural Aspects Representation in English Textbook". The purpose of this study was to explore cultural aspects revealed in the textbook. The results showed that source culture or indonesian culture take the first place with 61.2% over target culture 19.85% and international culture 14.9%. the dominant source culture in this study is the same problem with this research.

Third, (Jismulatif & Putri, 2023) "The Culture Gap: An Analysis of Source, Target, and Global Culture Representation in Indonesian English Teaching Textbooks". This study found that the cultural content in Indonesian English textbooks predominantly represents Indonesian culture (source culture). This dominance is significant, indicating that the textbooks focus more on local and national cultural elements rather than target cultures (such as those of the USA and UK) or international cultures. In another word, this study is in line with the findings of this research. Fourth, (Sihombing & Nguyen, 2022) "Cultural content of an English textbook in Indonesia: text analysis and teachers' attitudes". The analysis revealed an imbalance in the representation of different cultures, with Indonesian culture being over-represented and other cultures under-represented. The researchers argued that a more balanced representation of various cultures is crucial for promoting intercultural competence and understanding among students. This is essential for effective English language learning and teaching in a multicultural context. Last, (Rambe & Rambe, 2021) "The Position of Source Culture in the Current Efl Textbooks in Indonesia Reflected in 3 Research Findings". The data of this study are; Analysis Of The Cultural Content Of Third Grade English Textbooks In Cianjur, West Java, Cultural content in Indonesian case English Teaching Textbooks (ELT), and Analysis Of Cultural Content In Pathway Textbooks. The results show that the position of source culture in the three journals occupies the highest position with 43% achievement and is followed by 16% target culture and international culture with 40% as the lowest percentage. The results align with this research that presented the source culture as the dominant cultural aspect over the target and international culture.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the representation of cultural persons in government textbook and teacher-made module. By using the cultural elements and cultural aspects framework, they are source culture, target culture, and international culture. The result of this research found that Chapter One of the Bahasa Inggris Work In Progress textbook was

culturally integrated and presented cultural persons from the source culture, target culture, and international culture but lacked of balance among them. Moreover, the teacher-made module has not presented target culture and international culture at all.

In brief, the representation of cultural persons in the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook and teacher-made modules primarily reflects the source culture 53% in the textbook and 100% in the teacher-made module, with limited inclusion of target 20% in the textbook, and 0% in teacher-made module. Then, 27% of the international cultures in textbook, and 0% in teacher-made module. While this approach strengthens national identity and cultural pride, it may also restrict students' ability to engage with and understand the broader global context. To enhance students' intercultural competence, ELT materials should strive for a more balanced representation, integrating diverse cultural persons from various backgrounds. This balance is essential for fostering intercultural competence among Indonesian students, preparing them to navigate a globalized world while maintaining a strong sense of national identity.

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