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Cultural Representation in "Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress" Textbook for Grade X

Christy Devina Silalahi[1], Ariatna[2]

[1] English Department, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia
[2] English Department, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail:
[1] christysilalahi83@gmail.com
[2] ariatna@unimed.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the representation of cultural elements in the *Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress* textbook for Grade X students in Indonesia. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis, the study analyzed reading materials and visual contents across six chapters based on Yuen's (2011) framework, which categorizes cultural elements into Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. The findings reveal an uneven distribution of cultural elements. Products were the most dominant element with 46 instances (74%), followed by Persons with 9 instances (15%), Perspectives with 5 instances (8%), and Practices with only 2 instances (3%). Source Culture was most prominent in Persons, while Target Culture dominated Products. No Source or International Culture representation was found in Practices. These findings indicate that the textbook primarily presents culture at a surface level, with limited representation of deeper cultural dimensions. Consequently, students may have fewer opportunities to develop intercultural communicative competence. The study highlights the need for a more balanced representation of cultural elements in EFL textbooks to support intercultural learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are inseparable; language reflects the values, ways of thinking, and identity of a society (Kramsch, 1993). In English language education, this relationship underscores the importance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which requires learners not only to master linguistic forms but also to understand and critically engage with cultural knowledge (Byram, 2021). When cultural understanding is absent, learners may misinterpret meaning even with correct grammar, making cultural integration in language learning essential (Byram & Wagner, 2018).

Textbooks play a central role in delivering this cultural content. They provide structured linguistic and cultural input (Richards, 2015) and serve as the primary bridge between classroom instruction and real-world cultural contexts (McGrath, 2013). The importance of cultural representation in textbooks is further reinforced by global and national educational frameworks, including the OECD (2018) PISA Global Competence framework and Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which mandates the development of Global Diversity (*Berkebinekaan Global*) as part of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2021).

The concept of cultural representation in EFL materials has been widely examined through various theoretical lenses, one of the most influential being Yuen's (2011) framework, which categorizes cultural elements into four dimensions: Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. Products refer to tangible and intangible cultural artifacts such as food, music, literature, and landmarks. Practices encompass collective behaviors, traditions, and rituals that members of a culture engage in. Perspectives reflect the values, beliefs, and worldviews that underpin cultural practices and products. Persons refer to individuals, both historical and contemporary, who represent or have contributed to a particular culture. This framework is particularly valuable for textbook analysis because it moves beyond surface-level observation, enabling researchers to assess whether cultural content is presented in a deep, meaningful, and balanced manner that supports genuine intercultural understanding.

The significance of balanced cultural representation becomes especially critical in the Indonesian EFL context, where English is taught as a foreign language and students have limited exposure to target cultures outside the classroom. In such settings, the textbook becomes virtually the sole source of cultural input, making its content highly influential in shaping students' cultural perceptions and intercultural attitudes (Risager, 2018). When textbooks predominantly feature surface-level cultural elements, students are deprived of opportunities to develop critical cultural awareness, the ability to reflect on and compare cultural values across different societies. This limitation is particularly concerning given that Grade X students are at a formative stage of identity development, where exposure to diverse cultural perspectives can significantly shape their openness, empathy, and readiness to engage in intercultural communication in an increasingly globalized world.

However, studies consistently show that EFL textbooks tend to present culture at a surface level. Concrete elements such as products and persons dominate, while deeper elements such as practices and perspectives remain underrepresented (Noorfauzi, 2023; Jismulatif & Putri, 2023). A preliminary analysis of the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook for Grade X, used at SMAN 14 Medan, revealed a similar pattern, with cultural content largely limited to famous places, traditional foods, and well-known figures, while values, beliefs, and social norms were rarely present.

To address this gap, this study analyzes how cultural elements are represented in the textbook using Yuen's (2011) framework, which classifies cultural content into four elements: Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. This study therefore asks: How are cultural elements represented in the "Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress" textbook for Grade X students? The findings are expected to inform teachers, curriculum developers, and textbook writers in evaluating and producing materials that more comprehensively support ICC development.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis to investigate the representation of cultural elements in the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook for Grade X students. Qualitative research was selected as it allows for in-depth examination and interpretation of textbook content (Creswell, 2023). Content analysis was

applied as the analytical method, enabling the researcher to draw valid and replicable inferences from texts within their contextual use (Krippendorff, 2004).

The data source was the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook for Grade X, authored by Bima Lukmanul Hakim, Gusti Nur Hafifah, and Landung Simatupang, and published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia (Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2022). The textbook consists of six chapters and 169 pages, serving as the primary English learning resource aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. The data consisted of all reading materials and visual contents across six chapters, including descriptive, recount, expository, infographic, and narrative texts.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher herself, who was responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data (Creswell, 2023). A Cultural Representation Assessment Table was used as a secondary instrument to systematically record and categorize cultural elements based on Yuen's (2011) framework, which classifies cultural content into four dimensions: Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. The table recorded each identified cultural element along with its textual or visual evidence and page reference.

Data collection followed Krippendorff's (2004) content analysis procedure through two steps: (1) unitizing, in which all reading materials and visual contents across the six chapters were identified as the units of analysis; and (2) sampling, in which only content containing cultural elements relevant to the research objective was selected for further analysis. Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of three stages: (1) data condensation, where cultural elements were selected and categorized according to Yuen's (2011) framework, while irrelevant content was excluded; (2) data display, where the identified elements were organized into the assessment table and their frequencies calculated to determine which dimensions were dominant or underrepresented; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, where findings were interpreted and cross-checked against the original textbook to ensure consistency and credibility.

RESULTS

The analysis of cultural elements in the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook for Grade X identified a total of 62 instances across all four dimensions of Yuen's (2011) framework. The overall distribution of cultural elements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Cultural Elements Based on Yuen's (2011) Framework

No	Cultural Elements	Total Instances	Percentage
1	Persons	9	15%
2	Products	46	74%
3	Practices	5	8%
4	Perspectives	2	3%
	Total	62	100%

As shown in Table 1, Products is the most dominant element with 46 instances (74%), followed by Persons with 9 instances (15%), Perspectives with 5 instances (8%), and Practices with only 2 instances (3%).

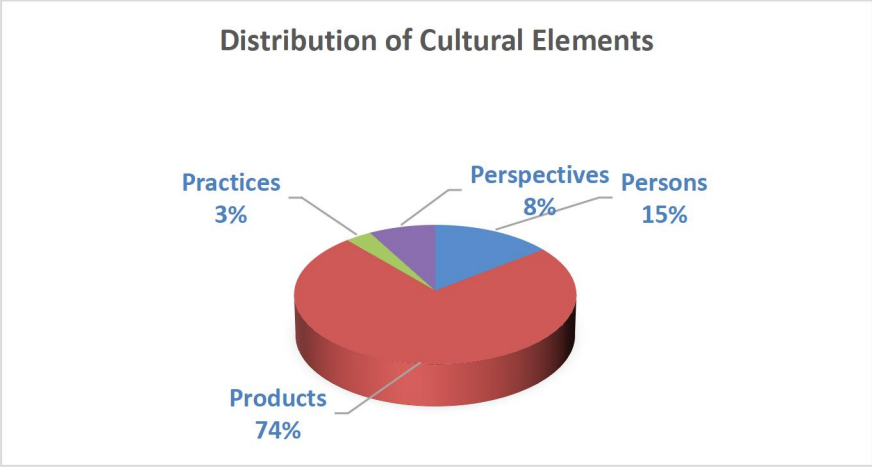

Figure 1. Distribution of Cultural Elements Based on Yuen's (2011) Framework

Persons

The Persons element contains 9 instances in total. Source Culture is the most dominant type with 7 instances, represented through Indonesian athletes and public figures such as Anthony Sinisuka Ginting, Aries Susanti Rahayu, Greysia Polii, Leani Ratri Oktila, Boaz Solossa, Windy Cantika, and graffiti artist Fivust. Target Culture and International Culture each contribute 1 instance, with International Culture represented by

Cristiano Ronaldo (p. 11) and Target Culture appearing once in Chapter 5 through a text on responding to graffiti (p. 126).

Products

The Products element is the most frequently represented dimension with 46 instances. Target Culture dominates with 22 instances, followed by International Culture with 14 instances, and Source Culture with 10 instances. Source Culture products include traditional Indonesian foods such as Aceh Noodles, Crispy Deep-fried Prawn Ulakan, Es Pisang Ijo, and Cendol (Chapter 4, p. 81–82). International and Target Culture products are represented through fairy tale stories adapted into films, such as *Red Riding Hood* (2011) and *Pan* (2015), featured in Chapter 6 (p. 153–154).

Practices

The Practices element is the least represented dimension with only 2 instances, both belonging exclusively to Target Culture, with no Source Culture or International Culture representation found. The first instance appears in Chapter 5 (p. 110), where a text describes the social practice of street art appreciation in public spaces in the United States and Western Europe. The second instance is found in Chapter 6 (p. 137), through the use of American teenage slang such as *whateva'* and *fyi* in a dialogue from the fractured fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Perspectives

The Perspectives element contains 5 instances with no International Culture representation. Target Culture contributes 3 instances and Source Culture contributes 2 instances, with all instances concentrated in Chapter 5 within the theme of graffiti. Target Culture perspectives are represented through the American societal view that graffiti symbolizes disorder and crime (p. 109–110). Source Culture perspectives reflect contrasting generational viewpoints within Indonesian society, where the older generation tends to view graffiti as vandalism while the younger generation increasingly recognizes it as a form of street art (p. 127).

Overall, the findings reveal an uneven distribution across all four cultural elements. Products dominate the representation at 74%, while Practices accounts for only 3% of the

total instances. In terms of culture types, Source Culture is most prominent in the Persons element, Target Culture dominates in the Products element, and Practices is the only element containing no Source or International Culture representation whatsoever.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings reveal a significant imbalance in cultural representation across the four dimensions of Yuen's (2011) framework, confirming the broader trend identified in previous studies on Indonesian EFL textbooks (Noorfauzi, 2023; Jismulatif & Putri, 2023). The overwhelming dominance of Products (74%) suggests that the textbook presents culture primarily through its most visible and tangible forms, while deeper dimensions such as Practices (3%) and Perspectives (8%) remain critically underrepresented. This pattern indicates that the textbook still tends toward surface-level cultural representation across different grade levels under the Merdeka Curriculum.

The dominance of Products, while exposing students to diverse cultural artifacts, risks limiting cultural learning to surface-level knowledge. As Moran (2001) distinguishes, knowing *about* culture through products is fundamentally different from knowing *how* to participate in cultural practices and understanding cultural values. This concern is particularly evident in the near-absence of Practices, where all 2 instances belong exclusively to Target Culture, leaving students with no exposure to cultural behaviors from their own background. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) emphasize that cultural practices are crucial in intercultural language learning as they help students understand how behaviors shape and are shaped by social contexts.

The limited representation of Perspectives, concentrated entirely within a single topic in Chapter 5, further restricts students' opportunities for critical cultural thinking. Although the textbook presents contrasting Indonesian and American viewpoints on graffiti, the absence of International Culture perspectives and the narrow thematic scope limit its potential to develop genuine intercultural reflection. Alptekin (2002) argues that intercultural language teaching must actively engage students with diverse cultural values and worldviews beyond isolated examples.

While the dominance of Source Culture in the Persons element reflects a deliberate effort to strengthen students' national identity in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's Profil

Pelajar Pancasila, the minimal representation of Target Culture and International Culture figures limits students' exposure to diverse global role models. As Bennett (1993) emphasizes, developing intercultural sensitivity requires learners to move beyond their own cultural frame of reference, a progression that is constrained when textbook persons remain predominantly drawn from a single cultural origin.

Overall, the imbalanced cultural representation found in this textbook may hinder the development of students' intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2021), which is particularly significant given the Merdeka Curriculum's explicit mandate for Global Diversity (*Berkebinekaan Global*). Textbook writers and curriculum developers are therefore encouraged to incorporate a more balanced representation of all four cultural elements — particularly Practices and Perspectives to better support students' intercultural development in an increasingly globalized world.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the representation of cultural elements in the Bahasa Inggris Work in Progress textbook for Grade X using Yuen's (2011) framework. The findings reveal a significant imbalance across all four dimensions, with Products dominating at 74%, while Practices remains critically underrepresented at only 3%. In terms of culture types, Source Culture is most prominent in the Persons element, Target Culture dominates Products, and Practices contains no Source or International Culture representation whatsoever. These findings confirm that the textbook still tends toward surface-level cultural representation, which may limit students' opportunities to develop intercultural communicative competence as demanded by the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on Global Diversity (*Berkebinekaan Global*).

This study is limited to one textbook used at a single school, and the analysis focused exclusively on reading materials and visual contents across six chapters. The findings may therefore not be generalizable to other English textbooks or educational contexts in Indonesia. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar analyses using different theoretical frameworks, such as Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) source-target-international culture typology or Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi's (2004) four-senses framework, to provide broader and complementary perspectives on cultural representation in EFL materials. Textbook developers and teachers are also encouraged to

incorporate a more balanced representation of Practices and Perspectives, particularly from Source and International Culture to better support students' intercultural development in an increasingly globalized world.

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