THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURES

IN AN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

Wahidatul Aufa[1]*, Ririn Pusparini[2],
[1]wahidatul.aufa@gmail.com, [2]ririnpusparini@unesa.ac.id

UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SURABAYA

ABSTRACT

Textbooks are essential for teaching and learning English. Cultural material is important in English textbooks since language and culture are inseparably linked. Curriculum changes are common in the Indonesian educational system, prompting textbook modifications, including those for English language materials. Recognizing that each textbook has unique advantages and limitations, this study investigates the cultural categories offered in the English textbook BRIGHT. It also tries to determine the primary cultural characteristics featured in this textbook. The study used a content analysis methodology, which involved carefully reviewing the textbook's material using an observation sheet. This study utilizes a qualitative design, focusing on textbook content analysis and documenting results as percentages. The findings show that the textbook focuses on source cultures with insufficient representation of target cultures. This limited representation emphasizes the need for better equal incorporation of cultural elements. The textbook is considered appropriate for Indonesian students since it follows important standards that advocate for the inclusion of both source and target cultures, making the material more relevant and improving cultural understanding and language abilities required for global communication.

Keywords: English textbook, Cultural representation, Analysis

A. INTRODUCTION

Textbook*s* are the essential tools that improve language and cultural learning (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2018). English textbooks are necessary because they provide extra assignments that give learners more knowledge. These assignments help students learn English by encouraging them to think in the language rather than just gaining knowledge from reading books and listening to lectures (Albari & Yamin, 2020). In the case of language, textbooks are resources that students can use effectively by practicing and strengthening their hands-on linguistic skills (Thumvichit, 2018). Furthermore, Circle and Xi (2017) claim that textbooks worldwide vary in cultural perspectives, depending on whether they draw from a specific culture, aim for a particular cultural context, or take an international approach. Cultural values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors are covered in EFL textbooks. These materials are usually utilized to help students understand the cultural context of English while fostering their intercultural competency (Wahid et al., 2023). The cultures of English-speaking countries like the US and the UK are usually represented in EFL textbooks. It may

lead to Indonesian culture, impacting cultural comprehension and thought. Because of the potential effects that it may have, it is essential to evaluate the cultural material in EFL textbooks. Successful cultural representation in any language curriculum necessitates a comprehensive awareness of the source culture and the target language. Moreover, it can inform and support global citizenship emotions and language education experience (Liu, 2016).

1. English Textbook

The textbooks for educating school children have played an essential role in smoothing the path to learning English as a foreign language (EFL)(Hamza, 2021). Textbooks provide a structured framework for understanding grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure in English. They help students understand basic concepts and grammar rules, an essential foundation in language learning. In addition, textbooks cover various topics and communicative situations, which help students develop English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. They also often include practical exercises that allow students to hone their English communication skills. A textbook is crucial because it is visually appealing, has a regular grammatical syllabus and adequate vocabulary exposure and practice, offers teachers methods and supplementary ideas, and allows students to prepare for what is coming and evaluate what they have done (Hanifa, 2018).

As stated by Firharmawan and Rahayu (2019), with the increasing pace of globalization and cultural interconnectedness, paying attention to the cultural aspect and emphasizing intercultural competencies (ICCs) in the EFL classroom has become unavoidable. Incorporating cultural elements into EFL classrooms may assist teachers in recreating practical situations and participation, enabling students to become better intercultural communicators. Several studies have researched how to represent culture in textbooks. There is a compelling reason to prioritize textbooks as a source of cultural knowledge for both teachers and students. Textbooks have a significant impact on teaching. Textbooks make lesson planning more accessible by providing various resources and tasks to cover multiple topics (Liu, 2016). Research indicates that EFL textbooks in other countries mostly focus on English-speaking societies, neglecting home cultures and global diversity. (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021).

Moreover, Circle and Xi (2017) claim that textbooks worldwide vary in cultural perspectives, depending on whether they draw from a specific culture, aim for a particular cultural context, or take an international approach. A textbook rooted in the learner's culture reflects their background, while a target culture textbook mirrors the language they're learning. The international target culture is shaped by influences from English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries that consider English an International language. Some visible cultural components include items, people, practices, and perspectives. Goods encompass physical and cultural aspects, encompassing manufactured items associated with a specific culture, such as historical sites, songs, folklore, books/novels, comics, inventions, and meals. Persons refer to cultural figures or renowned individuals, including singers, poets, writers, national figures, athletes, painters, and heroes. Cultural aspects manifested as rituals, events, and practices specific to a particular culture (e.g., holiday celebrations, ceremonies, handed-down traditions) are classified as practices. Perspectives entail how a culture perceives particular actions that might differ from another culture's viewpoint; for instance, native speakers may view giving gifts to teachers as unprofessional (Ayu, 2020).

2. Types of Culture

Based on the Byram category, culture has been divided into major "C" and small "c" categories. Politics, history, education, economy, music, geography, and social structure are examples of big "C" culture, whereas little "C" culture refers to cultural values, including lifestyle, daily routine, customs, greeting, weather, holidays, body language, and food (Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020). Cultural values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors are covered in EFL textbooks. These materials are usually utilized to help students understand the cultural context of English while fostering their intercultural competency (Wahid et al., 2023). The cultures of English-speaking countries like the US and the UK are usually represented in EFL textbooks. It may lead to Indonesian culture, impacting cultural comprehension and thought. Because of the potential effects that it may have, it is essential to evaluate the cultural material in EFL textbooks. Successful cultural representation in any language curriculum necessitates a comprehensive awareness of the source culture and the target language. Moreover, it can inform and support global citizenship emotions and language education experience (Liu, 2016).

The issue is that the instructional program needs to explicitly address what culture should be taught and studied through the textbook. In this context, it is critical to analyze the cultural content in the textbook to avoid cultural dominance or bias, which has frequently been a problem in ELT (Kusumaningrum & Sumardi, 2023). If language programs only include the target culture as a model, learners might feel their own culture is inferior. Therefore, language programs and text books should also include the learners' own culture. This approach helps learners appreciate their own culture and understand the differences between cultures (Dahmardeh & Kim, 2020).

Some previous studies conducted by Astiandani (2021), Gunantar (2017), and Song (2019) only focus on the analysis of the culture in English textbooks related to K 13, while the researcher will focus on the analysis of the culture in English Textbook related to Freedom Curriculum. The central aim of the study was to examine the cultural context and representations within the textbook. Thus, this research aims to investigate a study explicitly focusing on analyzing the English textbook titled *"The Representation of Cultures in BRIGHT, an English Textbook for Junior High School Students published by Erlangga."* This particular textbook is utilized by students in their first year of junior high school. It's worth noting that this textbook was published by Erlangga publisher in 2022 and was developed according to the guidelines and standards set forth by the Kurikulum Merdeka.

B. METHOD

This study analyzed the cultural content in a first-grade junior high school textbook titled BRIGHT: An English textbook for Junior High School Students and how these cultural categories are presented. This study employs content analysis, a systematic research methodology, to analyze and deduct insights from textual and other qualitative information. This approach serves as a widely adopted qualitative research technique. In this study, the researcher selected the textbook "BRIGHT, an English textbook for SMP/MTs Grade VII" as the primary subject of investigation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The researcher used a checklist worksheet as the primary instrument to collect data for the analysis of cultural types in this research. This worksheet addresses the research questions and serves as a tool for systematically examining and categorizing cultural elements. The

research instrument used in this study is based on Byram's definition of culture, which distinguishes between big "C" and little "c" cultures. Big "C" culture refers to a society's vital cultural achievements and aspects, including literature, art, and history. In contrast, small "c" culture refers to the daily components of life, including habits, rituals, and social standards. The researcher also utilizes the book Evaluation Table from Pusat Kurikulum to make some alternative improvement suggestions in developing the book (Sa'id et al., 2015).

The analysis involved the use of codes and categorizations based on cultural categories present in the English textbooks. Cultural information included source culture and target culture while cultural categories were derived from Sa'id (2015). Eight cultural categories were utilized: food and drinks, places, art, traditional ceremony, social behavior, beliefs and values, and person. Textual data, comprising utterances, sentences, and words, along with pictorial data in the form of pictures, were then analyzed based on cultural information and categories. The data in this research encompassed utterances, sentences, words, and pictures, with the frequency of occurrences being tallied to aid the study's analysis.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the collected data, the researcher identified two types of cultures depicted in the BRIGHT English textbook: the source culture and the target culture. Each type of culture has different culture elements. The elements can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Elements of Culture

No	Elements of Culture	N	Categorize of Culture	
			SC	TC
1	Foods and Drinks	16	11	5
2	Places	60	43	17
3	Art	5	2	3
4	Ceremony	0	-	-
5	Social Behaviour	2	2	-
6	Beliefs and Values	2	2	-
7	History	0	-	-
8	Person	88	59	29
Total		173	119	54
Percentage		100%	68.79%	31.21%

1. Source Culture

In BRIGHT, source culture is prominently represented in six categories. First, it is tied to the food and beverage category. However, it is unfortunate since knowing about traditional ceremonies and history is missing. The six categories found in the textbook are food and drink, places, art, social behaviour, beliefs and values and person.

Food and Drink

Eleven items are revealed by examining the cultural elements of food and drink issues from English-language publications. For instance, Nasi Kapau is from West Sumatra, Baubar Patin is from South Kalimantan, and Coto Makassar is from Makassar. BRIGHT highlights four traditional foods from various parts of Indonesia to spotlight source culture via food and drink by giving short descriptions for each cuisine. It can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 1. Garang Asem

Place

An analysis of cultural representations in the "place" category of the textbook reveals 43 important locations, such as Jogja, Semarang, and Rote Island, are part of the source culture. BRIGHT offers more details about the waterwheels in Mengkang Village, Sangalaki Island, and Gili Meno by exposing the source culture. BRIGHT included photographs and a detailed description of the three places in the text. It can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 2. Sangalaki Island

Art

Two significant elements were found in the source culture's artistic elements. There are the Jaipong dance, which originates from West Java, and the Chicken Batik from Ciparage, Karawang. It can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 3. Jaipong Dance

Social Behavior

Cultural research under the category of "social behavior" identified two contents that strongly reflect Indonesian behavioral culture. The first is the culture of mutual assistance, while the second is the requirement for students in Indonesia to wear school uniforms while at school. It can be seen in the following figure:
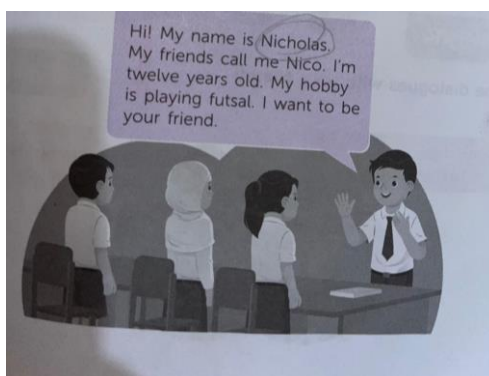

Figure 4. Indonesian Students

Beliefs and Values

In cultural studies, a finding that falls under the category of "social behavior" clearly shows Indonesian behavioral culture. Specifically, Muslim female students are expected to wear the hijab to school. It can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 5. Indonesian female student wearing hijab at school

Person

An analysis of how people are portrayed culturally in the textbook falling under the "person" category reveals that fifty-nine entries emphasize on people in their original cultural setting (source culture). Ninuk Dwi Wryati and Henry Amelia Anggraini are two examples. It can be seen in the following figure:
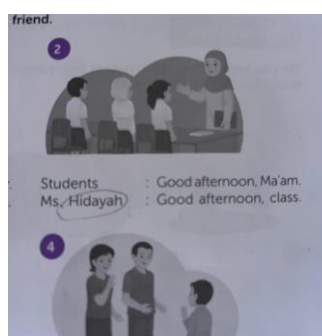

Figure 6. Indonesian Students and Teacher

2. Target Culture

Target cultures are represented in four categories in BRIGHT namely food and drink, place, art and person. Each category is elaborated below.

Food and Drink

The target culture in BRIGHT's food and drink subjects displays 5 contents, including Brain Sandwiches from the United States. In revealing the culture, BRIGHT describes brain sandwiches, insects, and tarantulas as the weirdest foods in the world, all of which originated in the United States. It can be seen in the following figure:
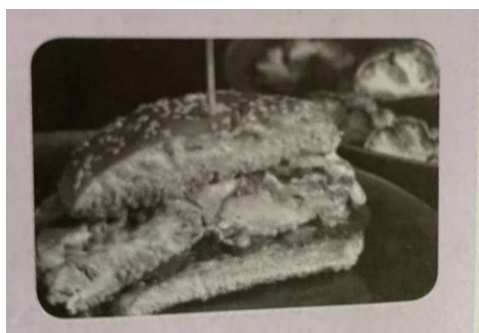

Figure 7. Brain Sandwich

The data showed that that incorporating learners' native cultures into textbooks plays a crucial role. This indicates that by integrating their cultural backgrounds, learners gain a deeper appreciation for their heritage and a nuanced understanding of cultural diversity (Kusumaningrum & Sumardi, 2023) Such integration ensures educational materials resonate with students personally, fostering an environment that promotes cultural appreciation and sensitivity across diverse contexts.

Place

Examining cultural representations in English-language books' "place" category indicates that the target culture encompasses 17 notable locations, including Pennsylvania, the USA, and England. The analysis of cultural representations in the "place" category of English-language books reveals that the target culture includes 17 central locations, including Pennsylvania, the United States, and England. Furthermore, BRIGHT acquaints the target culture by demonstrating The Statue of Liberty as an iconic and extraordinary location in the USA portrayed in a conversation exercise. Bright also explains many things to see and do in San Diego by describing Balboa Park, the USS Midway Museum, La Jolla Cove, and Birch Aquarium. It can be seen in the following figure:
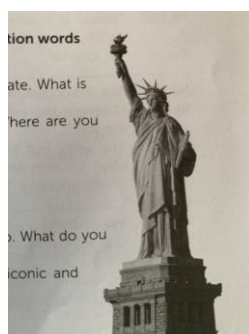

Figure 8. Picture of Liberty Statue in USA

Art

Examining cultural representations in an English-language book's "art" category reveals that the target culture comprises 3 prominent works: The Harry Potter film, Percy Jackson, and The Lightning Thief books. BRIGHT introduces the Harry Potter movie as the one of target culture form by explaining the plot, the characters, the setting, the special effects, and the critic's opinion. It can be seen in the following figure:
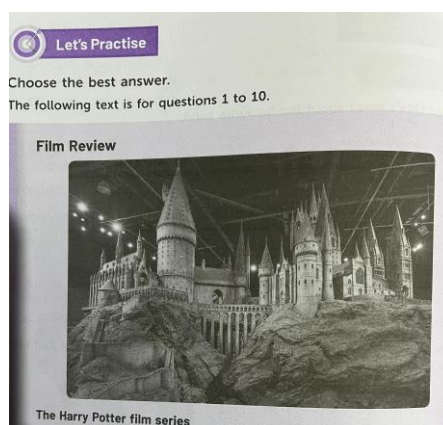

Figure 9. Harry Potter Movie Review

Person

A review of how people from the target culture are portrayed in English-language publications falls into the "person" category, where 29 entries are devoted to people from that country. Mr. Steward, Nicholas, Mr. Albert Giles, and Jose Barbaddos are a few of these names. BRIGHT covers a description of Emma Watson, an English actress and model, in its reporting on "person" in target culture. It is in line with the statement of Zerkina et. al (2018) that traditionally, British people tend to favor female names that end with "a" (like Sarah, Emma, Hannah, Mia, and Anna). It can be seen in the following figure:
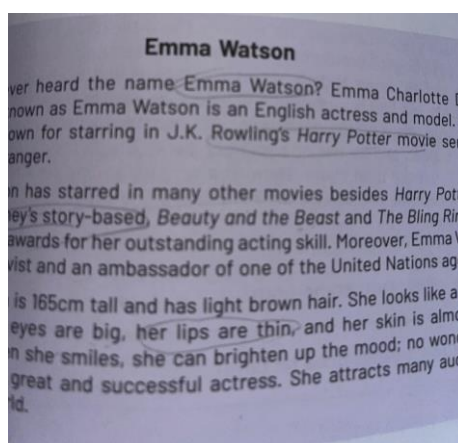

Figure 10. Emma Watson's Biography

Considering the two cultures, source culture and target culture, the present study revealed that the source culture is much more dominant than the target culture, appearing 68.79% of the time compared to 31.21% for the target culture. This significant difference indicates a clear preference for the source culture in the materials studied. The source culture includes a wide range of cultural aspects such as foods and drinks, places, art, social behavior, beliefs and values, and notable persons, reflecting a rich and varied cultural heritage. In contrast,

the target culture is represented by fewer aspects, specifically foods and drinks, places, art, and notable persons, showing a more limited focus. This is in line with earlier research by Gunantar (2017). The findings indicated that the textbooks under review effectively incorporated elements of source or Indonesian culture. On the contrary, Song (2019) indicates that international culture (68%) has the highest proportion, whereas source culture (2%) is largely neglected in comparison to target culture (46%). According to the data, the most obvious strength is a large amount of international culture (68%). It helps students appreciate culture from an etic perspective and makes them aware of cultural distinctions for cross-cultural comparison.

The result of this study indicates that cultural representation is mainly focused on source culture. The results show that parts of the source culture are thoroughly elaborated using detailed explanations rather than simple statements. In contrast, exposure to the target culture in the textbook is insufficient, as cultural features are just mentioned without in-depth explanations. This comprehensive exploration of source culture enables students to learn English while better grasping their cultural heritage. As a result, the imbalance in cultural representation may impair students' capacity to engage appropriately and appreciate the target culture, reducing their total linguistic and cultural competency. The findings of this study accord with the finding of Astiandani and Purwati (2021), which also indicated that cultural content in English textbooks is heavily influenced by the source culture. These researchers investigated the cultural content in the most recent high school English textbook aligned with the 2013 education curriculum. They found that the target culture, particularly the cultural dimension related to products, constituted a significant portion of the English textbook.

Despite the limited representation of target cultures in BRIGHT, the aim is to provide students with basic knowledge of other cultures. This foundational understanding can later assist them in preparing for future cross-cultural communication (Pratiwi, 2020). Another reason relates to the current curriculum's goal of improving students' language and cultural skills. Students are expected to become proficient in the language, develop cultural competence, and maintain their cultural identity (Ariawan, 2020). Thus, cultural identification is critical in assisting students in introducing, sharing, and reflecting on their own culture with others. Furthermore, recognizing their cultural identity allows students to compare their culture to others. In other words, students must thoroughly comprehend their culture to respect various civilizations. (Pratiwi, 2020)

This book is appropriate for Indonesian students because it adheres to the requirement that textbooks provide content from both the source and target cultures (Mahmood et al., 2012). Including parts of Indonesian culture makes the topic more relatable and accessible for pupils to understand (Parlindungan et al., 2018)). At the same time, including components from the target culture helps students develop the cultural awareness and language abilities required for global communication. Thus, by balancing the source and target cultural content, this textbook efficiently meets the learning demands of Indonesian students.

E. CONCLUSION

The study's findings show how culture is expressed in BRIGHT materials, emphasizing both source and target cultural components. According to the established idea, source culture appears more frequently than target culture. It is classified into six distinct categories within the materials, with only ceremonial and historical categories excluding source cultural features, which are adequately articulated. In contrast, target culture is defined in four categories. Still, it glaringly lacks descriptions of ceremonial, social behavior, beliefs and values, and history, indicating insufficient exposure to the target culture because students no longer recognize it. Thus, it can be concluded that the textbook is appropriate for Indonesian students and meets the critical demand for content from both the source and target cultures. Including Indonesian cultural characteristics makes the curriculum more approachable, while target culture components aid in developing cultural awareness and language skills essential for global communication. Thus, by harmonizing source and target cultural material, the textbook efficiently facilitates Indonesian students' learning needs.

Based on this study's conclusions, several recommendations are made regarding the cultural content in English textbooks for future authors, teachers, and school policymakers. Firstly, textbooks should balance source and target cultural aspects to facilitate comparisons and foster cultural understanding. Future authors should incorporate local history, wisdom, traditions, beliefs, and values to enhance students' sense of identity and cultural knowledge. Teachers and policymakers should analyze the cultural content of textbooks to ensure it meets students' needs and preferences and is appropriate for the educational context. Future research should examine the broader spectrum of classroom cultural dynamics and how diverse cultural backgrounds influence interactions and outcomes to develop more culturally responsive teaching strategies. These recommendations promote cultural inclusivity and enrich students' learning experiences by deepening their understanding of cultural diversity.

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