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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**CULTURAL CONTENT REPRESENTATION IN READING PASSAGES ON THE BIG ENGLISH TEXTBOOK FOR PRIMARY STUDENT**

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**Abstract:** This research focuses on the amount of cultural material in the English imported textbook that a private “Dwi Bahasa” school uses on Big English Student’s book grade published by Pearson Education Limited, which is used at primary school in Indonesia. The research data were gathered from reading passages in culture connection part. To indicate which cultures are displayed in the textbook, the cultural contents are divided into three categories: source culture, target culture, and international culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) and the Intercultural knowledge based on Kurikulum Merdeka perception. The investigation discovered that international culture was prominent in imported textbooks.

**Keywords:** cultural categories; kurikulum Merdeka; textbook analysis.

**REPRESENTASI KONTEN BUDAYA PADA TEKS BACAAN DALAM BUKU TEKS THE BIG ENGLISH UNTUK SEKOLAH DASAR**

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini berfokus pada jumlah materi budaya dalam buku teks impor Bahasa Inggris yang digunakan sekolah swasta “Dwi Bahasa” pada buku siswa Big English yang diterbitkan oleh Pearson Education Limited, yang digunakan di sekolah dasar di Indonesia. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari bacaan pada bagian hubungan budaya. Untuk menunjukkan budaya mana yang ditampilkan dalam buku teks, konten budaya dibagi menjadi tiga kategori: budaya sumber, budaya target, dan budaya internasional (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) dan pengetahuan antarbudaya berdasarkan persepsi Kurikulum Merdeka. Investigasi menemukan bahwa budaya internasional menonjol dalam buku teks impor.

**Kata kunci:** kategori budaya; kurikulum Merdeka; analisis buku teks

## INTRODUCTION

English textbooks and other educational resources have a crucial role in contributing to a learning process that is able to increase intercultural communication skills and English proficiency. The integration of cultural resources in the textbook helps students to recognize the similarities and differences among other cultures. It is a good idea to understand the culture around the world and improve English proficiency by exploring English textbooks. The additional material of textbook includes a variety of cultural content can grow the cultural awareness of students (Deswila, 2021). It means students are able to appreciate and respect the different cultures around the world. Language and culture have connected each other (Faris, 2014).

The idea of combining language and culture has come up for discussion, principally in doing an observation of how culture is illustrated in English textbooks. The integration of learning English through the cultural dimension has a number of advantages (Riadini, 2021), and the requirement of integrating culture teaching in EFL has been long acknowledged by educators, too (Juan, 2010). However English learning in Kurikulum Merdeka has been designed to raise the understanding of intercultural competency based on S.K. Kepala B.S.K.A.P. Number 8 year of 2022 (Kemendikbud, 2022). Through their educational process at the school, students are supposed to understand and respect the points of view, norms, and products of Indonesian cultures and foreign countries.

In culture, the viewpoints are those people's opinions on the world. The practices then communicate cultural characteristics in activities. Furthermore, the Big English textbook is supposed to have the essential balance of cultural elements for students to develop their intercultural competency since the textbook is one of the learning tools used in the classroom and may enable students to identify between Indonesian and other cultures. Intercultural competence has been widely accepted as the aim of EFL teaching. To obtain this competence, culture teaching must be implemented in the college English teaching. Textbooks have played a vital role in teaching and learning. Textbooks introduce students to the cultures of different countries and regions, thus making it convenient for students to exert a relatively remarkable influence on fostering students' cultural awareness and competence in intercultural.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis was investigated in a culture connection reading passages of Big English books for primary schools' grade four. The Big English book was an imported book published by Pearson Education Limited (2017). This study used textbook analysis. Textbook analysis was one of the research techniques that concerned the content of the textbook. It applied a qualitative approach was used to review or analyze books, journals and another document to find the result of the research (Krippendorff, 2004). The investigation of this research under the frame of Cortazzi and Jin (1999). This study aimed to respond to the following questions

- 1) does the textbook cover a wide range of cultures or just a few, like British or American culture only?
- 2) What are the social groups represented? And Does the textbook contain Intercultural Knowledge based on Kurikulum Merdeka?

According to the following questions above, the analysis of the research was conducted in three steps. The first step investigating the content culture in the Big English textbook such as, the nation, the symbol and the words. Afterward compare the result with Cortazzi and Jin (1990) framework. The last step did an observation of culture content information from some E-books source and e-journals from Google Scholar.

This research used Discourse analysis, a systematic research method that explores the social context and background of written or spoken language. As described by Krippendorff (2004), the researcher applied a qualitative approach to review and analyse books, journals, and other documents, leading to the research results. The investigation, guided by the framework of Cortazzi

and Jin (1999), focuses on intercultural issues within textbooks. The research design, a descriptive one, systematically describes and analyses the cultural categories within the chosen EFL-imported textbook, allowing for a thorough exploration of the culturally categorized representations presented in the textbook.

As Kalkhoran (2020) points out, discourse analysis is not just about examining how knowledge is produced within different discourses. It's also about understanding the performances, linguistic styles, and rhetorical devices used in accounts. More importantly, it's about identifying the context of the various interpretive repertoires and attempting to match one to the other. This process, crucially, helps us understand the function of the different stories being told from the respondent's point of view. The primary data for this research will be collected from the imported textbook "Big English" for primary multilanguage school grade four published by Pearson Education Limited in the United States. The textbook content through reading passages in 9 units. Two different data-gathering methods were employed in this study—the first was document review. The nation of cultural representation categories and Kurikulum Merdeka's perspective will be the basis for analysing cultural representation categories in the book using the theory of cultural content by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and Kemendikbud (2022).

Source culture means the culture of the researchers; therefore, the source culture was Indonesia due to the nation of the researcher was Indonesia. Meanwhile the target culture was the English language, America, British, Australian and New Zealand were the nation which used English as the first language. While International culture was the global culture not included in target and source cultures. Furthermore, after finding the data from the textbook, the analysis continued to identify the data through those categories and put the right data in each category based on the nation mentioned in the reading passage.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research examines the cultural content of reading passages from the Big English students' book for grade four. It assesses the data according to the standards of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and several publications. These recommendations are intended to further the philosophy of cultural representation in the Big English Textbook. The researcher concentrates on C.L.I.L. material, which emphasizes cultural elements. The English textbook was an imported publication by Pearson, which permitted adaption from the United States. Furthermore, the writers were not of Indonesian origin. The writers were Christopher Sol Cruz and Mario Herrera. This book was first released in 2017 and subsequently printed in China. This book is an imported textbook in Indonesia. This textbook is often used in Indonesian private schools, especially bilingual ones. In addition to an imported book, this textbook addressed four linguistic components: hearing, reading, speaking, and writing. This textbook presents multiple themes in each chapter, including narrative reading, life science subject links, and global cultural connections. This study examined global cultural associations related to reading passages.

The Big English textbook included diverse cultural knowledge in the Cultural Connection Around the World reading passage. There were hairstyles around the world, superstitions around the world, school lunches around the world, home remedies around the world, dragon myths from around the world, living traditionally in a modern world from around the world, leap year from around the world, the world weirdest collection from around the world, and the world greatest from around the world.

### **Culture Representation on Textbook**

The first unit showed one target culture from the U.K. and three international cultures from Egypt, Japan and Africa. Meanwhile, there was not any source culture shown in the first unit. The reading



passage displayed some information about hairstyles from around the world. One example of international culture was Japan. In Japan, the famous hairstyle was the “Chonmage,” Chonmage was a hairstyle of Sumo. Every Sumo should have Chonmage, a symbol of traditional hair in Japan. It mentioned that if one day the sumo wrestler retired, they had to cut off the Chonmage. Furthermore, one of the information target cultures was the hairstyle of U.K. judges. In the U.K., the judges wore white wigs from wool. It was a copy style from rich or famous people long ago. In the 1700s, rich and famous people put powder on wigs. Nowadays, the judges wear a white wig made from wool simply without putting any powder on the wig.

Moreover, the second unit of the textbook found five international cultures from India, China, South Korea, Russia and Spain. Further information shows that there was one target culture from the United States. Nonetheless, there needed to be more information about the source culture. The reading passage on cultural connection explained superstitions around the world. One of the facts from the international target culture was from India. The superstitions in India stated that people kept away from cutting hair on Tuesday and cutting fingernails at night. They believed that if they did those activities, they would have a harmful effect. At the same time, the example from the target culture was from the United States. In the United States, people believe that if they could see the shadow of the groundhog on the second of February, winter would come up in six weeks soon. In the third unit of the textbook, the result showed that there were three international cultures from Zambia, Japan, and Italy, and one target culture from England. However, there was no source culture found. The reading passage was about school lunches from around the world. One of the pieces of information from international culture was Zambia. In Zambia, the children at school had lunch with Nshima, and Nshima was a traditional food from Zambia. It was made from white ground maize. Children ate Nshima with their hands and prepared tasty sauces for their lunch. Meanwhile, one of the pieces of information from the target culture was from England. In England, children prepare delicious food, such as sandwiches with fillings, fruit, chips, juice and cookie. Children in England brought their lunch from home too.

In the fourth unit of the textbook, there were two pieces of information about international culture from China and Russia. In contrast, there was no target or source culture in that reading passage. One example of international culture was from China. In China, the egg was able to cure a headache. It was beneficial when people had a headache. It was one of the home remedies to cure headaches. When people were sick, they just boiled the egg, then took off the shell and rubbed it on the head and neck until the egg cooled.

In the five units, the reading passage explained the kind of dragons. There was one source culture found through that reading passage, the Komodo dragon. It explained the condition of the Komodo dragon recently. According to the article, the species of the Komodo dragon were endangered, so people paid more attention to this species by protecting them from extinction. The reading passage also explained that Indonesia was home to the Komodo dragon. Besides source culture, there were two target cultures from America and Australia. According to the passage in Australia, it talked about a mythical dragon that lived 50.000 years ago. The name was Bunyip. It was a dangerous dragon that lived in the water and ate animals, even people. There was also an international culture from Japan. Japan had a beautiful and magical creature that lived 4.000 years ago. The name of the dragon was Fuku Riu.

In the sixth unit, the reading passage described many tribes without technology. The reading text identified three international cultures. This unit does not show the target culture and source culture. The three international cultures originate from Kenya, Southeast Asia, and Russia. Kenya, located on the African continent, explains the Maasai tribe. The Maasai are known as a nomadic tribe existing in Africa. They build homes in the woods using natural materials, moving periodically to build a new home with each change of location. Meanwhile, a tribe from Southeast Asia is named

Hamong. This tribe lives in the mountainous areas of Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. This tribe uses their ancestral language to communicate among themselves. The language originates from Southern China and significantly differs from other languages. The last tribe is named Koryak. Koryak originates from Russia. This tribe lives in the Arctic tundra, an icy area. To get food, people catch fish or herd reindeer.

The seventh unit's reading text described Leap Year. A leap year is a particular year with 366 days in a year. It happens every four years. The reading passage indicated two international cultures. This unit does not represent both the target culture and the source culture. The two international cultures come from Rome, Finland, Scotland, and Denmark, located on the European continent. In Roman society, it was believed to be unlucky to begin a new career, travel, or purchase during a leap year. They believe several superstitions about unexpected events in leap years. Nevertheless, in Finland, Scotland, and Denmark. It has been suggested that a leap year is an excellent opportunity for a unique event, such as a woman proposing marriage to a man on leap day. If the man rejects, he must buy a present for the lady.

The reading text of the eighth unit detailed the world's strangest collection. This section presented three unusual collections. The reading passage identified two international cultures and one target culture. Nonetheless, this unit lacks a target culture. The two international cultures originate from Turkey and Mexico, whereas the target culture is from the United States of America. The first reading passage describes Turkish culture. Turkey has an unusual collection. A hair museum has a collection of thousands of hairlocks from people traveling from the area. Before leaving the town, they would present their hair locks to the potter. However, in Mexico, the Museum of Underwater Art exists. The museum is inside the National Marine Park of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. This museum exhibits an extensive collection of underwater sculptures. Meanwhile, In the United States, there exists a UFO Museum. This museum exhibits a large amount of data on UFO encounters.

The reading passage of the ninth unit shows the world's most significant events worldwide. The reading text identified two international cultures and one target culture. However, this unit does not contain a target culture. The two international cultures originate from Finland and China, whereas the target culture originates from the United States of America. The first culture originates from Finland, describing the Air Guitar World Championship conducted there. This championship is presented by people who cannot yet play the guitar. The second culture originates from China, where competition for attracting bees exists. People who want to join the competition must be ready to cover their bodies with 25 kilograms of bees and be the winner. The last culture originates from the United States. In the United States, there exists a Cherry Pit-Spitting Competition. In this competition, participants place a cherry in their mouth and have 60 seconds to consume the fruit before expelling the pit as far as possible.

#### **The representation of dominant culture in the Big English textbook**

According to those data, the reading passages in the Big English textbook, especially in the C.L.I.L part, show that international culture was prominent. It can be seen in the table below. The amount of international culture was founded 24 times. The target culture was discovered only six times, and the source culture was found once.

**Table 1.** Cultural Content represented on the Reading Passages

| <b>Culture Content</b> | <b>Quantity</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Source culture         | 1               | 3%                |
| Target culture         | 7               | 23%               |
| International culture  | 23              | 74%               |



Researching the book, it discovered that international culture was the predominant theme in the imported textbook. This is seen in the figure below. International Culture presented data at a rate of 74 percent. Meanwhile, the Target Culture had 23 percent of the data. However, the Source Culture represented just 3 percent. It indicated that the book provided a bunch of information about international culture too, not only focused on target culture, it also delivered Indonesian culture even only 3 percent.

#### ***Source Culture***

The source culture refers to the culture originating from the learner's country. The subject in the present case is Indonesia. After researching the 31-reading passage in the Big English textbook, the researcher discovered that one reading passage, or 3 percent, was classified as S.C. The Weird and Wild Animals unit shows one of the famous Indonesian animals. The Komodo dragon lives on Komodo Island, in the center of the Indonesian archipelago between Sumbawa and Flores islands. This study indicates that 3 percent of the source cultural content can be found in international English textbooks. Even the source culture displays just one reading passage. This certainly can be seen as valuable for students, who will be proud of their culture because one of their cultures appears in international English textbooks. Integrating source culture in the English textbook aims to establish learners with the topic and provide more comprehensible input. (Hardy 2024).

#### ***Target Culture***

The target culture is a culture in which English is used as the language of communication. It is based in English-speaking countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. It is based on the framework of Cortazzi and Jin. The researcher discovered that only six reading passages, or 19 percent, from 31 reading passages were classified as T.C. What does your hairstyle reading passage talk about English culture, The school lunch reading passage tells about English culture, too, and the dragon reading passage tells about American and Australian culture and the world's weirdest collection of reading passages from the USA. These reading passages were indicated as the target culture. Representation from the target culture should be included in the material for language learners to increase motivation and deeper involvement in learning English.

#### ***International Culture***

International culture is a global culture that is not included in the target and source cultures. Twenty-four reading passages, or 77%, of the 31 reading passages in the Big English book were classified as I.C. The categorization of international culture is since an international press published this book. This textbook offers a limited amount of information about international culture. In line with McKay (2004), learning about material from international cultures allows students to develop sociolinguistic and cross-cultural competencies by understanding how to interact with individuals from different cultures.

This research examined how culture is conveyed in imported textbook for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. In this hypothetical situation, the textbook represents not only the target cultures but also the source and international cultures. As a result of all this, an Intercultural competence developed through textbook attention may not only motivate intellectual development and develop an understanding of other people's information and behave as an existence in a rapidly evolving world. One of the essential factors in cultural learning is textbooks. According to Wandel (2003), textbooks should include resources that stimulate different viewpoints and discussions about cultural stigma. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), elements of the target culture are commonly expected in second or foreign-language textbooks. It is consistent with the study's findings. The English textbook "Big English" (second edition) for Primary level students contains some cultural information, such as source culture, target culture and international culture. In this case, the textbook reflects not only the target cultures but also the source and international cultures. The international

culture dominated the culture content in this textbook, and it could be seen as the result of the data collection.

### **The Intercultural Culture Knowledge in Merdeka Curriculum**

In Big English textbook, the source culture is recorded just one time. The source culture information is shown in the textbook, unit five, entitled Dragon. It is prestige for Indonesia because one of Indonesia's cultural types of information is mentioned in the imported textbook entitled "Big English". Despite the source culture mentioned once, it does not mean that this book is not suitable for the Indonesian primary student. This book is acceptable for primary school students, particularly for Multilanguage schools. This data is proof enough to indicate that Indonesia has a famous culture which introduced in imported book. Besides the source culture, some information about the target culture was found in these textbooks.

The target culture is mentioned six times in reading passages of Big English textbooks. The target culture is expressed through cultural content from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. As a result, the target culture is rarely shown in those textbooks. One example is the Reading passage School Lunches discusses the culture of school lunches in England. Other than the source and target cultures, international culture includes various cultures. It appears twenty-four times in the reading passage of Big English's textbook. The International cultural content comes from countries such as Japan, Zambia, China, Russia, Egypt, Thailand and others. As a result, this imported book reflects an intercultural culture. It is lined with SK Kepala BSKAP (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan) No. 8 Tahun 2022 (Kemendikbud, 2022), which stated that English learning outcome in Merdeka curriculum has the objective to develop the students' awareness about intercultural competence. The students are expected to understand and appreciate the perspectives of Indonesian cultures and foreign cultures through learning process in the school. The perspectives of culture refer to the way of people in viewing the world. In conclusion, this book has provided intercultural categories to support students in gaining a better understanding of culture competency.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis results show that all cultural sources for information were discovered in the English textbook Big English for primary school. The result shows that culture is expressed in reading passage on C.L.I.L part as the source culture, target culture, and international culture. They cultural content appeared in the reading passages of English textbook materials. Among the three components of cultural information, cultural contents dealing with international culture were most frequently presented (74%). Immediately, in 23% of contexts, cultural contents in the target culture were presented.

The discovery, however, demonstrates that the cultural contents of the source culture needed to be more represented in reading texts in the English textbook. It was only shown in 3% of the cases. It interrupts the cultural presentation of this English textbook. The findings show the cultural contents of the source culture had been appeared in reading texts throughout the imported English textbook. Even it was only seen in 3% of the contexts. It shows that one of Indonesia culture appeared in imported textbook which published in United State.

In conclusion, this English textbook's cultural materials are well expressed and could be easily implemented into the English language learning and teaching process because it is aligned with the interculture competency of Merdeka curriculum too. Furthermore, according to the analysis results, the English textbook "Big English" for primary school students, which contains cultural content based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) source of cultural information, is acknowledged for use by English teachers. Each language is connected to a culture, and learning a foreign language



naturally teaches about the culture's basic knowledge. The examination of the textbooks revealed three exciting observations: source cultural content, target cultural content, and international cultural content. According to the study's findings, the Culture connection reading passage in Big English students' book represents various cultural information. Furthermore, this research is essential in developing students' cultural identities and beliefs about cultural diversity through imported books. Students learn and comprehend from the English language textbook's source materials. The culture illustrated in textbooks will help the learners become regional and international citizens.

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