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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cultural Categories and Gender Representation in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and Friends

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Abstract: This research examines the cultural categories and gender representation in the English textbook "English Starter" for seventh-grade junior high school students. The study uses Chao's cultural type theory (2011) and Susanto's gender theory (2021). The results show that 61% of the pictures are Universality across Culture, 28% Source Culture, 4% International Culture, 7% intercultural Interaction, and 0% Target Culture. In terms of gender representation, male gender names are represented 49% and female 51%, while female gender is represented 51% and female 52% in address terms, identity markers, adjectives, and nouns. This uneven presentation of cultural categories highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach to curriculum development. The book also demonstrates gender equality, with female gender being more dominant than male, avoiding bias and boosting women's confidence.

Keywords: Cultural categories; gender representation, Textbook Analysis.

Cultural Categories and Gender Representation in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and Friends

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji kategori budaya dan representasi gender dalam buku teks bahasa Inggris "English Starter" untuk siswa SMP kelas tujuh. Studi ini menggunakan teori tipe budaya Chao (2011) dan teori gender Susanto (2021). Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa 61% gambar adalah Universalitas lintas Budaya, 28% Budaya Sumber, 4% Budaya Internasional, 7% Interaksi antarbudaya, dan 0% Budaya Target. Dalam hal representasi gender, nama gender laki-laki diwakili 49% dan perempuan 51%, sedangkan gender perempuan diwakili 51% dan perempuan 52% dalam istilah alamat, penanda identitas, kata sifat, dan kata benda. Penyajian kategori budaya yang tidak merata ini menyoroti perlunya pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif untuk pengembangan kurikulum. Buku ini juga menunjukkan kesetaraan gender, dengan gender perempuan lebih dominan daripada laki-laki, menghindari bias dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri perempuan.

Kata kunci: Kategori budaya; representasi gender, Analisis Buku Teks

Introduction

English plays a significant role in the educational. The purpose of education is more significant as the agent of change, especially in character and value. The process of learning or developing the values, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge required to live a life is known as education. Training, courses, and everyday life experiences are examples of non-formal learning environments. Formal learning environments include universities and schools. Education not only provides knowledge and learning but also facilitates culture, gender equality and resists gender violence through textbooks in the classroom when language is acquired.

Culture is the way of life of a person or group of people that evolves and is inherited downward. Samovar, Porter & Stefani (1998) and Hofstede (1991) in (Lund, 2006) argue that culture is the software of thinking about how to behave and act in a particular group where culture is learned consciously or not but after learning becomes automatic without realizing it. Culture is studied through strong human creations that provide a common identity and support the creation of meaning in a society. According to Kramsch (1996) in Akbar et al (2020) there are two definitions exist for the term "culture." First, the term focuses on the humanities and how a social group uses its material products—whether they be works of literature, works of art, social structures, or ordinary artifacts—to represent both itself and other people. Second, it refers to "the attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving, and remembering shared by members of that community," which is derived from the social sciences. So that, Culture is a way of life that evolves and is inherited, encompassing beliefs, customs, habits, behaviors, and common artifacts.

Cultural competence and language are closely related; both require a good way of thinking and acting in accordance with the language associated with the culture. According to Nguyen (2017) in Riadini & Cahyono (2021), knowledge of a particular culture develops a positive attitude in students as members of the community, which makes them more tolerant of other cultures. So to make students understand other cultures, a textbook is needed that develops intercultural communication. According to (Nurjanah, 2019), a language that requires knowledge of the substance, culture, and wisdom of a community or nation is vital for communication. Without language, culture cannot be expressed or communicated. Teaching language also entails teaching new cultures, especially the English language, which is quickly becoming the standard international language of communication. She adds that the most important thing that any country in the world has is its culture. Every element of existence is created by culture. The way they speak, how they live, and many other aspects of their lives are influenced by their community.

A textbook is an essential component of any language program since it incorporates student feedback and helps students practice their language skills as they learn (Richard in Nurjanah, 2019). When students are learning English, the textbooks can assist teachers in explaining any cultural stuff. So that, textbooks that include cultural references may have an impact on students' awareness of the subject matter. By using textbook, student will be interest with the content in the textbook itself. So that, textbook can be adding more material about culture. It is like what (Land, 2006) said that “An excellent book may be produced by considering the cultural content as a crucial component of language acquisition” . according to Sharif and Mohammadi (2013) and Hermawan and Noerkhasanah (2012) in Jayanti & Mustofa (2023) found that many EFL textbooks in Indonesia lack cultural information, with implicit assumptions about English language users and minimal local cultural information, despite being written for Indonesian context.

It is advised that education in the target culture be provided in addition to the target language course (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Hinkel, 1999; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999, in Faris, 2014:17). McKay (2002) agrees, then, to state that English should be able to be used by non-native speakers to explain their customs and culture. In this basic concept, ELT participants in Indonesia need to understand the cultural content in textbooks, which should be designed to reflect the three types of culture. These three cultural entities are the source culture, the international target culture, and the target culture.

To prepare students for the cross-cultural communication in authentic settings, it ought to be implemented. Whereas, Chao and colleagues (2011) developed the Main Categories of Culture to analyze cultural types and intercultural issues in textbooks. They identified five categories: source/local culture (SC), target culture (TC), international culture (IC), intercultural interaction (ICI), and universality across culture (UC). The main categories of Culture above would be explain: 1) source/local culture (SC) refers to Pan-Chinese culture (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong) but in this research will refers to Indonesian Culture; 2) Target Culture (TC), It includes English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK and USA); 3) international culture (IC), it refers to cultures of all countries in the world except SC and TC; 4) intercultural interaction (ICI), The process involves comparing and reflecting on the differences and similarities between SC, TC and IC; and 5) Universality across culture (UC), it includes Universalities among all nations.

Meanwhile, Gender refers to the roles and behaviors of men and women in a social environment that develops as long as there is social contact, where gender stereotypes place men as more capable than women. Sasongko in Saifuddin (2018) state that gender refers to the socially constructed roles, duties, and functions that differ between men and women and can alter with the times. Apsari et al. (2022) argued that gender roles continue to place men at the top of social culture, particularly in Indonesia's rural areas, which gives rise to gender stereotype when gender stereotype encompasses all facets of social life, be it roles played by men and women or equity between them. Men are perceived as more capable than women in the Indonesian setting since it is evident that the majority of stakeholders and leaders are male.

Gender representation describes the cultural construction of either of the two sexes (male and female), particularly when social and cultural distinctions are considered instead of biological ones (Jazadi et al., 2023). Gender representation covers all aspects of social life. Gender representation shows how some gender groups are treated. This gives rise to perceived injustice on the part of one gender. Gender representation also influences the way society views other gender groups regarding their duties and responsibilities. Bachore (2022) stated that gender issues regarding equality, especially the right to access education, employment opportunities, and administrative roles, make men's roles very valuable economically and socially, giving rise to unfair participation and difficulties for women in the aspect of finding work. The existence of gender discrimination has led to the emergence of a movement for gender equality to create justice, thus opening up opportunities for gender participation in every aspect of life.

One of the forms of discrimination that is often encountered is in the educational aspect. Education is the gateway for every individual to gain knowledge and apply that knowledge to maintain their survival. Textbooks are one source of knowledge in education. Dabbagh (2016), Jannati (2015), Nunun et al. (2020), Saifuddin (2018), Agni et al. (2020) and Azad (2020) found that Textbooks portray males as more prominent and active than women, whereas women's representation is consistently depicted as being lower than men's. This is a gender discrepancy. Gender representation in several worldwide ELT/ESL textbooks was the subject of several research. In several domains and aspects, textbooks for schools depict examples according to gender. The notion that some activities are reserved for males solely and that staying at home and taking care of the house is a duty best left to women can be found in a variety of textual elements, images, statements, instances, and adjectives and nouns. The problem of gender parity in textbooks, however, extends beyond simply having an equal number of men and women in the names, images, and speeches; rather, it necessitates paying close attention to the roles that are given to men and women in each situation. School textbooks are purposefully made for students to read as part of the discourse of EFL materials (Damayanti in Nisak et al 2020).

Farooq in Ahour & Zaferani (2016) state that most researchers of ELT textbooks found that gender always proposes in a biased way. According to (Nunun, Wirza, & Noorman, 2020), the textbook contains negative and positive causes apart from providing a depiction of ideology and social roles but also creates prejudice and dangerous discrimination against each individual. In school textbooks, gender instances are also reflected in some regions and aspects. These consist of words,

images/pictures, instances, quotations, adjectives/nouns, and jobs that provide the idea that certain activities are exclusively suited for males and that remaining at home and taking care of the house is the role of women. However, the problem of gender balance in textbooks extends beyond simply having an equal number of men and women in the images, names, speeches, and other content; rather, it necessitates paying close attention to the roles that are given to men and women in each situation (Bachore, 2022). This can make students think that even in textbooks there are differences in gender positions. It is like what (Dabbagh, 2016) argue that “Such socially produced ideas can be heard in pictures louder than words and cannot be challenged so easily due to the non- rational logic laid in them.

One of the perceptions that arises when students open a textbook is its gender representation. They will reinforce the textbook-based gender interaction paradigm. Even while students want to see themselves positively, a lot of information aimed at them supports gender norms that restrict or even minimize their sense of self (Estacio et al., 2018). In their result reseach their found that although they can also be assigned to parts that were customarily attributed to female characters, male characters in the stories are nonetheless given more active roles. Moreover, the two-syllabic pattern of both male and female names supports the theory that young readers can recall them with ease.

Several studies analyzing English textbook have been done. One of them is the study conducted by Agni , et.al., (2020) entitled “Examining Gender Representation in an Indonesian EFL Textbook” using content Analysis with the categories pre-developed from Porreca (1984), Lee (2014) and Qatawneh and Rawashdeh (2019). This study identifies an EFL textbook published by the Indonesian government. The result of this research shows that the book is gender-biased as indicated from unbalanced (1) textual and visual representation (2) variety of activity, role, and occupation, (3) order of mention, and (4) adjectival portrayal. In all indicators, the female is underrepresented, hidden, and framed within traditional gender stereotyping. Whereas, Susanto (2021) state that Gender identity can be traced, among other things, through the manifestations of the use of 1) people's names, 2) gendered greetings, 3) titles of honor, 4) adjectives, 5) nouns, and 6) verbs. But in this research just focus in people’ s name, gendered greeting, gender identity, adjectives and nouns to represent gender in English textbook.

The most recent textbook to be released based on the independent curriculum is the English Starter textbook. Hence researching the textbook is required. According to this body of literature, no research has been done on the seventh grade English Starter textbooks using the independent curriculum. In this case, the writer wants to conduct a research with the title: “Cultural Categories and Gender Representation in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends.

Research Method

This research used a qualitative research approach. According to Sugiyono (2013), a qualitative research is often called naturalistic method because it is carried out in natural conditions (natural settings), which views social reality as something holistic/whole, complex, dynamic, and full of meaning. The relationship between symptoms is interactive (reciprocal), which is carried out on natural objects. He explains that in this approach, the researcher plays as the person or human instrument. In order to be an instrument, a researcher needs to possess a deep theoretical understanding and keen observation so that he or she may formulate questions, conduct analyses, take pictures, and create a more meaningful and clear picture of the social context they are studying.

According to Creswell W. (in Fiantika, et.al., 2022), a qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructionist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meaning meaning of individual experiences, meaning socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e. political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change oriented) or both”.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (in Sugiyono, 2013), the characteristics of qualitative research are as follows:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and researcher is the key instrument.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words of pictures rather than number.
3. Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
4. Qualitative research tends to analyze their data inductively.
5. "Meaning" is of essential to the qualitative approach.

The method of this research is descriptive-qualitative method. It is dependent on both text and image data. Mulyadi (2011) state that descriptive research, also known as taxonomy research, tries to study and clarify a phenomenon or social reality by describing a variety of factors related to the problem or unit being studied. It is research that offers a clearer picture of social conditions. According to Fiantika, et al.(2022), Research that characterizes or illustrates a problem is known as descriptive research. The goal of descriptive research is to precisely and methodically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. Researchers only observe and measure the variables in this study; they do not control or modify any of the variables. Therefore, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive study, where qualitative different from quantitative research; qualitative research based on analytical and interpretive approaches compared to numbers (Nunun and friends,2020).

This research adopts the research of documents as an instrument. Zuriah (in Fiantika et al., 2022). states that documentation is the process of gathering data from written sources, such as archives and books, regarding theories, viewpoints, legislation, and other subjects linked to research issues.

The technique of this research is content analysis. Data analysis is the process of methodically gathering information through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and written and audiovisual documentation. It also involves selecting and identifying relevant data and drawing conclusions that are simple enough for researchers and other people to understand (Fiantika, et al., 2022). Techniques for analyzing data in qualitative research include gathering and reducing data, presenting data, and concluding with findings and verification.

The aim of this study is to analyze cultural categories and gender representation of EFL textbook entitled "English Starter by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends." For semester 1 and 2. The design of the research will be implemented by content analysis. Nisak et al (2020) say that Content analysis is a frequently applied method in social studies, its main purpose being the identification of patterns in texts. It is a research method used to analyze the content of various forms of communication, such as written, verbal, or visual materials. The goal is to systematically and objectively identify and quantify certain characteristics within the content. In analyzing data, related categories with gender issues used as themes for types of gender representation. This procedure corresponds to the classification process systematic of coding and identification theme patterns. A Content Analyst is research methods that require interpretation subjective to the data.

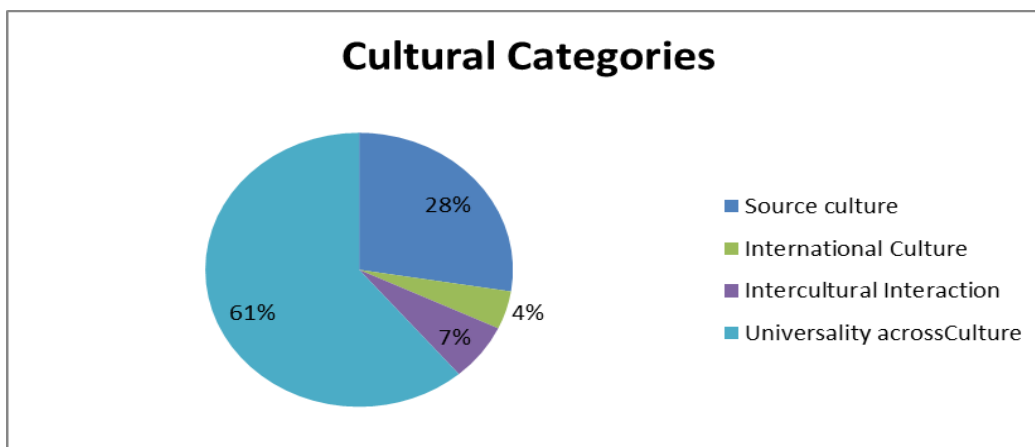
Results and Discussion (12pt)

From the qualitative descriptions for all the elements of all the chapters, the complete analysis has been done. Here are the tables showing the research findings.

Table 1 Cultural Categories

Category	code	Total	Percentage
Universality across Culture	UC	109	61%
Source Culture	SC	49	28%

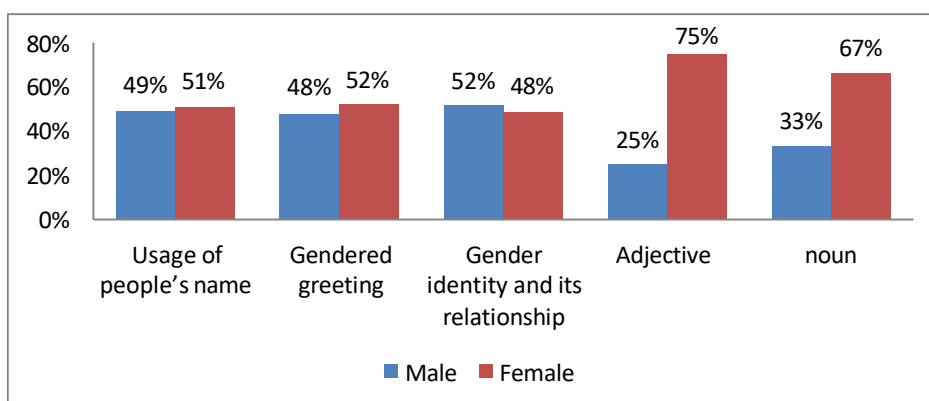
Category	code	Total	Percentage
Intercultural Interaction	ICI	12	7%
International Culture	IC	8	4%
total		178	100%



Picture 1 Presentations of Cultural Categories

Table 2 Gender Representations

Category	Male total	Female total	Total	Percentage
Usage of people’s name	95	99	194	73%
Gender Identity and its relationship	17	16	33	13%
Gendered greeting	11	12	23	9%
Adjective	2	6	8	3%
Noun	2	4	6	2%
Total	127	137	264	100%



Picture 2 Gender Representations

Discussion

1. Cultural categories in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends

These goals in language teaching and study challenge the contextual relationship between learning English and the countries of the target culture. Therefore, there must be a balance between the use and mastery of English, the source culture, and other cultures. So that, presenting the source culture and other cultures in equal proportions is crucial for the use and mastery of English. Based on the research results obtained, out of 178 images collected, 109 or 61% represent universality across culture, 49 or 28% represent local culture, 12 images or 7% represent intercultural interactions and 8 images or 4% represent international culture. In this case, there is a cultural imbalance presented in the book English Starter, which requires attention from both the authors and educators. This book does not contain information about the target culture through images, as well as limited occurrences of international culture and cultural interaction. The frequency of cultural categories with significant differences in distribution between the target/international/intercultural culture and the source culture can be demonstrated.

2. Gender representation in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends

The research reveals a significant difference in the appearance of male and female characters in the "English Starter" textbook. Female names are more frequently used than male names, with 99 female names out of 194 names. In the section on gender identity and relationships, male references appear 17 times, while female references represent 16 times. In terms of gendered greetings, female references appear 12 times, while male references appear 11 times. In the use of gender adjectives, female gender is represented more than males, with 8 words representing males and 75% representing females. In the noun category, 6 words representing females and 33% representing males. The findings suggest that female gender representation in English textbooks is more dominant than male, boosting students' confidence and self-esteem. This contrasts with previous findings that identified gender bias or imbalance in English textbooks.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion above, it can be concluded as follow:

1. Cultural categories in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends

From the 179 pictures being analyzed, there was 61% included in Universality across Culture (UC), 28% Source Culture (SC), 7% intercultural Interaction (ICI), and 4% International Culture (IC). In this book, the cultural categories are presented unevenly, especially in the target culture where it is not depicted in the types of images. Incorporating local cultural components into textbooks is very important for enhancing students' understanding and relevance, but it is also crucial to ensure they are exposed to the target culture, international culture, and intercultural information. However, the study found that this book fails to achieve this balance. This English textbook focuses more on source culture and cross-cultural universality, so there are no images that reveal the target culture. The imbalance in content distribution found in the textbooks studied indicates the need for a more comprehensive approach to curriculum development. Books should be presented by fulfilling the cultural categories where culture is presented by balancing all cultural categories. In other words, each cultural category must be represented.

2. Gender representation in “English Starter” by Bachtiar Bima M. and friends

Based on the research findings and discussion, it is known that in terms of text, male gender names are represented 49% and female 51%. In the use of identity markers and their relationships, male gender is represented 52% and female 48%. In the use of gendered greeting, male gender is represented 48% and female 52%. In the use of adjectives, male gender is represented 25% and female 75%. In the use of nouns, male gender is represented 33% and female 67%. Based on the representation of gender, it can be stated that male gender is not more dominant than female gender.

In this case, this book contains more words that represent the female gender. So that, this book has shown inequality in terms of gender representation. Female gender has been displayed more than male gender. But this is good for boosting women's confidence from a gender perspective. Improved representation of women in textbooks can enhance education and society by promoting gender equality and enhancing understanding of women's historical and societal roles.

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