

A PROBE INTO LOCAL CULTURAL VALUES IN LOCALLY PRODUCED EFL TEXTBOOKS IN INDONESIA

Yenni Hasnah¹, Pirman Ginting¹, Mandra Saragih¹, Adib Jasni Kharisma^{1*}, and Putri Lidiana Permata Sari²

¹ Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

² Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Asahan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

***Corresponding author:**
Adib Jasni Kharisma
adibjasnikharisma@umsu.ac.id

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As a result of shifts in the objectives of teaching English as a language for international communication in the current era, a substantial modification of EFL textbooks has been made to include accounts of various cultures, including local cultural aspects, to spark students' interest in the language and promote cross-cultural awareness. Despite this transformation, a notable gap exists in the scholarly discourse concerning how local cultures are depicted in localized EFL textbooks. That said, the objectives of this research were twofold: first, it sought to examine the portrayal of local cultural norms in Indonesian locally produced English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks; and second, it attempted to explore how the absorption of local culture promotes the intercultural communication skills of learners. To that end, two local ELT series were considered for analysis. To examine the cultural dimensions in the textbooks, a content analysis was conducted by referring to Yuen's (2011) cultural evaluation framework with four major categories: products, practices, perspectives, and persons. The findings underscore that these course books extensively feature local cultures, with cultural products receiving the most substantial coverage, while perspectives are comparatively underrepresented. Significant exposure to localized resources effectively drives learners' learning engagement and enhances their intercultural literacy. Consequently, the study highlights the significance of the inclusion of culturally relevant content in EFL textbooks tailored for learners, offering noteworthy implications for both ELT practices and academic research.

Keywords: Localized culture-based teaching; ELT materials; EFL learning; intercultural communication

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, the status of English as a contemporary lingua franca is no longer the exclusive domain of the inner circle of nations. The role of English has shifted to be a means of international communication widely shared by various backgrounds of communities throughout the globe (Baleghizadeh & Shayesteh, 2020). As English is widely spread and learned in non-English speaking countries, it is critical to include multicultural content in English Language Teaching (ELT) courses (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Incorporating diverse cultures in ELT textbooks is advantageous for increasing students' intercultural communicative skills, helping them think, feel, and recognize the varying cultures (Lee & Li, 2019).

Textbooks managed as references of ELT become crucial to depict the local and the global, including geopolitical and geo-economic intercourses between English-speaking and non-English-speaking aspects countries (Grant & Wong, 2018). On the other hand, the involvement of the learners' home culture is considered essential to offer students opportunities to carry out real-life-based communication (Toledo-Sandoval, 2020). The inclusion of learners' own native culture in ELT, as long as the language is concerned, might considerably ease and enhance learners' language learning (Mahmoud, 2015; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017), and is vital to developing fluent communication in the target language (Tuna & Razi, 2016).

Examining textbooks underlining cultural issues has become an appealing groundwork for scholars and researchers (Ajideh & Panahi, 2016; Kiss & Weninger, 2016; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). However, the appraisal of how local cultural values are portrayed in ELT textbooks has not been well confirmed, though the depiction of the local cultural elements has a noticeable effect on framing students' perspectives of other cultures (Kim & Paek, 2015). Most prior studies only reveal whether a textbook's cultural content is sufficient (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). Put differently, the focus is primarily on the superficial aspects of culture, the effortlessly noticeable, such as personal space, body language, eye contact, concepts of time, and various customs and traditions (Hinkel, 2012), and static elements that do not fully explore the target culture and delve into the sociocultural dynamics that take place within diverse contexts (Rodríguez, 2015). In addition, it is fundamentally grounded in a national concept of culture and language (Baker, 2012). Thus, further inquiry is required. Highlighting that local cultural aspects are significant in language learning, two research questions are addressed in the present research: (1) to what extent are the local cultural values depicted in the locally developed ELT textbooks in Indonesia? and (2) how does local cultural infusion amplify learners' intercultural communicative skills?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 EFL textbooks and English language learning in Indonesia

Textbooks are a nearly ubiquitous feature of ELT (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Papajani, 2015). They become a pivotal component of English instruction and learning for teachers and students (Juybari & Bozorgian, 2020) and are even regarded as a determining element in aiding a learning experience that strengthens intercultural communication skills (Deswila et al., 2021) since textbooks supply a great resource about one's country's norms, beliefs, and cultures (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). In addition to providing instructors with prepared resources, such as ideas for teaching various subjects, reading texts, listening sections, dialogues, and other supplementary materials, textbooks represent exercises and activities to enhance fluency in the use of English, as well as explanations and contextualized illustrations to enable learners to grasp the language work (Cunningsworth, 1995). Hence, they are often referred to as the pillar that holds all education systems together (Handayani et al., 2018). Moreover, textbooks are essential for advancing the knowledge, capabilities, and attitudes associated with intercultural learning and teaching (Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020).

In Indonesia, the design and adoption of ELT textbooks should reflect the curriculum endorsed by the government. In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a new national curriculum—called Curriculum 2013 or K-13. It should foster character-building by integrating local cultural values, norms, and facts into the classroom (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). Indonesia's education system has undergone several changes over the last two decades, one of which is the change in the application of the foreign language curriculum. This is because of a change in perspective that English is no longer considered exclusive to the culture of native English-speaking countries. On the other hand, there is an assumption that teaching English as a lingua franca requires relevant pedagogy based on the local context. To accomplish these objectives, the government introduced textbooks by considering cultural and other authentic variables for students. The designed English textbooks serve a vital function in language teaching and learning, as most English instructors rely on textbooks as their primary source of instruction (Kim & Paek, 2015).

Additionally, the changing approach to EFL teaching is grounded in a fundamental paradigm shift as a consequence of the shifting sociolinguistic landscape of English over the recent decades, which then aims to increase language learners' awareness of the diverse cultures and languages of the 21st century and help enhance their intercultural communication skills (Lwin & Marlina, 2018). As today's ultimate purpose of learning English is to serve globally effective communication, cultural facets, including different varieties of English, need to be incorporated into ELT materials so that learners can proceed with simple communication and be appreciated by other English speakers with ease (Dang & Seals, 2016).

2.2 The manifestation of local cultural values in ELT materials

Cultures and languages are inherently intertwined (Alaei & Parsazadeh, 2019; Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020; Stapleton, 2000; Shen, 2019). Culture, in the realm of pedagogy, is in operation in that decisions must be

made about the cultural orientation of linguistic resources and instructional approaches (McKay, 2003). Culture is thus not simply dealing with its contents but also a series of dynamic activities associated with learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Exposing cultures in pedagogical settings is essential to enable learners to perceive themselves from distinct standpoints and encourage them to recognize parallels and differences across diverse cultural groups (Genc & Bada, 2005). In light of the critical need to incorporate cultural elements into language instructions, language experts have placed a greater focus on cultural materials; even so, most of the contents delve into the culture of English-speaking communities (Renner, 1993; Shin et al., 2011; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017), and fizzle out to stimulate language learners' critical reflection on their own cultural values, meaning, and behaviors with respect to those of others (Keles & Yazan, 2020; Stapleton, 2000).

Considering the number of non-native English speakers outweighs the number of native speakers, teaching English as a global lingua franca is compromised. Supplying a single target culture no longer serves the demands of children acquiring English as an international language (Shin et al., 2011); on the other hand, learners' daily lives or culture needs to be emphasized. Such a phenomenon has prompted an increasing corpus of research highlighting the essence of local cultures in a student-centered framework (Shin et al., 2011). Xiong and Peng (2020), whose study focused on Chinese cultural values, designated that integrated Chinese culture generates more possible cultural learning chances for the readers to negotiate meanings and knowledge in a critically reflective fashion. Furthermore, Toledo-Sandoval (2020) recommends that countries recognizing English as a foreign language demand the integration of local cultural elements in the ELT materials to interconnect the gap between learners' home circumstances and the international culture.

Nevertheless, promoting local cultures more prominently and discounting target cultures and other international cultural aspects is at the expense of learners' learning (Rahim & Daghigh, 2019), and can dismiss learners' intercultural communication skills. As Majdzadeh (2002) reported, localized Iranian English textbooks emphasizing national identity rather than English culture may hinder Iranian children's intercultural communication skills and ability to learn English naturally and effectively. In the same light, Rahim & Daghigh (2019) contend that localized cultural content intrigues learners to such an extent that they become quite estranged from the target language's culture. On the other hand, relying more on the cultural backdrop of mainstream English-speaking countries rather than non-native speakers may make acquiring English more onerous. In consequence, culturally varied resources, including local, target, and global cultures (Gray, 2002; Hajar & Shakila, 2013)—unbounded to explicit forms such as personal names or place names but include implicit presentations and meaningful contexts (Tang, 2022)—should be infused into ELT courses to enable learners to discern distinct voices and viewpoints (Shin et al., 2011) and boost their cultural awareness and intercultural communication competencies (Baleghizadeh & Shayesteh 2020; Lee & Li, 2019; Saamee & Nomnian, 2021). In addition, Arslan (2016) asserts that the association of one's own culture, targeted culture, and related international cultural elements might be rewarding as it enables learners to view the distinctions among cultures and be more tolerant of diversity.

2.3 Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication, which involves the blending of culture and communication practices, plays a fundamental role in shaping the dynamics of human interactions by facilitating the exchange of ideas, beliefs, and values among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby fostering mutual understanding and cooperation within a globalized society. By facilitating increasingly globalized and multicultural interaction (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2012), intercultural communication is crucial in addressing conflicts and enabling cultural exchange that contributes to sustainable development (Aleksandrova et al., 2024). Various theories have been developed to elucidate the notion of intercultural communication. For instance, Patel et al. (2011) posit that intercultural communication involves the interaction or intersection of culture and communication within a specific space, time, and context. It gives us the essential knowledge and competencies to engage with individuals from diverse cultures competently and suitably (Liu et al., 2019). In addition, intercultural communication can take place between two individuals of different cultures (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Bennett, 1998) (referred to as 'interpersonal' communication), between members of two groups (referred to as inter-group communication), within a business environment (referred to as organizational communication), and so forth (Shi-Xu, 2001). Cultivating the competencies to engage in intercultural communication enables individuals to enhance their understanding of diverse cultures and societies while reinforcing their awareness and appreciation of their cultural background. Hence, a solid understanding of the particular context and contextually appropriate behavior is essential for effective intercultural communication (Patel et al., 2011).

Intercultural communication was initially embraced within the field of translation studies. It has now evolved to be an integral component of language instruction (Irimia, 2012) and is relatively recent (Liddicoat, 2004). The intercultural representations integrated into language teaching, particularly within the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructional resources serve as valuable tools that aid learners in

enhancing their intercultural competencies, honing their communication abilities (Haerazi & Nunez, 2021; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020), and developing their capabilities of actively construing and critically contemplating cultural significances and depictions from diverse standpoints (McConachy, 2018). Furthermore, integrating intercultural communication into the language curriculum can assist students in cultivating respect for the language and culture being studied, recognizing their own cultural background, and bringing up the necessary skills to become competent, adaptable communicators (López-Rocha, 2016). Nevertheless, merely acquiring cultural information is insufficient for achieving intercultural competence. Students need to engage in a critical analysis of culture, rather than simply accumulating data and knowledge, in order to enhance their intercultural communicative competence (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Thus, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of intercultural communicative competence contributes to the cultivation of more culturally sensitive and effective communicators.

3. METHOD

3.1 Materials

This research endeavor addresses two fundamental concerns that warrant thorough scrutiny. Initially, it aims to delve into the degree to which the indigenous cultural values of Indonesian society are portrayed in the ELT textbooks that are locally developed within the country's educational context. Secondly, an equally crucial aspect of the inquiry, pertains to how local culture contributes to fostering and nurturing the enhancement of students' cross-cultural communication skills. In order to successfully achieve the objectives at hand, a meticulous analysis was conducted on two sets of ELT textbook series. The first book, "When English Rings a Bell" was specifically created for eighth-grade students, whereas the subsequent series, "Think Globally Act Locally" was tailored for the ninth grade. Both series of books have undergone revisions as a result of the endorsement of the new curriculum standard in 2013, which necessitated changes and updates to the content and structure of the series. This response to the new curriculum standard was deemed necessary to align the series with current educational requirements and ensure that it remained relevant and effective in meeting the needs of students and educators. The chosen materials had the distinctive quality of being locally produced and officially sanctioned by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. In other words, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, the government supplies and approves English textbooks for implementation in schools throughout Indonesia. These textbooks are intended to be the main learning sources open to all educators and learners nationwide for instructional purposes (Parlindungan et al., 2018). The textbooks are formatted in PDF and made available online, making them easily accessible and downloaded at no cost.

These particular textbooks were selected based on their significance and crucial role in the 2013 ELT curriculum, thus rendering them indispensable components. Furthermore, they were considered valuable curricular artifacts and indispensable resources for educators and learners (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Likewise, they were employed widely across the entire nation in EFL classrooms and distributed in the online format of Portable Document Format (pdf). Hence, educators and learners from diverse geographical locations throughout the country can effortlessly obtain them. The other critical justification was predicated on the consideration of whether the authors of the books in question furnish them with ample local cultural content, thus serving as a stepping stone for learners who may be devoid of sufficient understanding and familiarity with the target language and culture (Toledo-Sandoval, 2020).

3.2 Procedures

A thorough content analysis was conducted to appraise the local cultural components described in the educational materials. Content analysis was employed as a methodological approach, and this research technique provided a systematic and unbiased framework for extracting precise and valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written information to interpret and gauge certain occurrences (Baxter, 2020; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). In the current research, the cultural portrayals represented in images, activities, tasks, and literature, such as poems, short stories, and so forth (Rahim & Daghigh, 2019), were scrutinized through several stages. At the onset, the act of tracking each page of the textbooks was exhaustively carried out, ensuring that a systematic approach was taken to document and analyze the content of each page accurately. Additionally, it is worth noting that the focal point of attention was directed toward the carefully chosen artifacts as visual representations of the localized cultural practices that were prevalent within the specific context under investigation. Subsequently, they were extracted and made as the raw data. The raw data were procured and transformed. Following that, the distinctive cultural characteristics of the local area were categorized, systematized, and deciphered based on the cultural traits elucidated by Yuen (2011), which encapsulated the cultural components within four primary domains (products, practices, perspectives, and persons) defined as follows.

The category of products encompasses a wide range of cultural aspects related to various spheres of human life, including but not limited to entertainment, food, merchandise, print, clothing, tools, religion, dwellings, laws, education, and travel. The aspect of practices pertains to the particular behavioral patterns observed within a given society. These patterns include the daily routines and prevailing customs that shape the society's way of life. Personal space, forms of address, and various rituals also fall under the umbrella of practices. The dimension of perspectives is the particular components representing the underlying norms and values, superstitions, inspirations, myths, and general viewpoints of a specific society. Meanwhile, the categories that include well-known and infamous or fictitious individuals are referred to as persons (Baleghzadeh & Shayesteh, 2020). In addition, this study also uncovered the multi-layered meanings represented in the local cultural constituent drawn in the textbooks (Widodo et al., 2017).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An intensive investigation of the distribution of the local cultures in the two locally produced junior high school EFL textbooks of grades VIII and IV uncovers that the localized cultural aspects indicating products were predominant in comparison with the other aspects. In total, 434 pages from the two-book series were examined, and the pages depicting the cultures of both visual and non-visual texts were singled out and codified (see Table 1). The *persons* were portrayed most often within the four elements of local cultures. The findings indicate that the cultural facets focusing on products and persons in the *Think Globally Act Locally* surpass those in the textbook *When English Rings a Bell*, meanwhile, the dimension of *practices* in the eighth-grade textbook appears most frequently.

Table 1: The number of local cultural content drawn up based on Yuen's (2011) framework

Book	Focus on Cultural Elements			
	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Persons
Bahasa Inggris <i>When English Rings a Bell</i> (Grade VIII), 216 pages	11 pages	25 pages	2 pages	19 pages
Bahasa Inggris <i>Think Globally Act Locally</i> (Grade IX), 218 pages	22 pages	5 pages	0	26 pages

The depiction of cultures in the textbooks involves varying features, such as clothing, food, individuals, social behaviors, and other components that designate Indonesian practices. The ELT textbooks tend to serve the locally designed cultural elements through visual portraits or pictures, dialogues, and a combination of visual and verbal materials. For instance, the following exhibits how the present perfect tense is contrived through authentic materials. A traditional homemade cake called *tumpeng* was embodied as a symbol of the celebration or event (see Figure 1). The image containing such home-grown culture with real-life events is posed to provoke students' attention and help them easily comprehend the material being taught by associating it with their lives.



Figure 1: Indonesian traditional dishes (Wachidah et al., 2015, p. 108)

The portrayal of localized cultural content was also authentically imaged with clothes attributed to school uniforms, as well as the diversity of appearances such as straight and curly black hair. A double braid hairstyle has also become an inevitably distinctive feature of heterogeneity of the Indonesian community (Setyono & Widodo, 2019).



Figure 2: The representation of individual character (Wachidah et al., 2015, pp. 6 & 16)

The diverse identities depicted in different appearances designate the undeniable uniqueness of Indonesia. As shown in Figure 2, the distinct character representing indigenous people indicates the existence of multi-culturalism in Indonesia as reflected by religion, skin color, hair styles, names, and geographical considerations (Parlindungan et al., 2018).

The local cultural features that illuminate daily life activities are also signified in the books.



Figure 3: The portrayal of daily household chores (Wachidah et al., 2017, p. 87)



Figure 4: The depiction of cleaning chores at school (Wachidah et al., 2017, p. 97)

The inclusion of such authentically natural day-to-day practices is beneficial for enabling learners to have stronger insight into how the language functions in a given circumstance. The provision of culturally localized learning materials can be positive to activate their schemata and connect with the lessons so they can acquire the learning contents and tackle the obstacles in grappling with a set of unacquainted lessons (Kanoksilapatham, 2020). The above figure depicted images are some instances of learning materials designed closely related to the day-to-day praxis of learners. Exposure to more concrete cultural themes is intended to boost the students' ability to keep up with the lesson and associate more with topics they encounter on a daily basis (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). As learning English is targeted at young learners, in particular in outer-circle countries, the incorporation of various features of local cultures and their real-life activities is notable for introducing them to a cross-border standpoint and bridging the gap between children's home context and the international culture (Toledo-Sandoval, 2020).

As can be noticed in Figure 3, students' daily home activities should engage them in the lessons and ease them in grasping the given messages. In the first image, a harmonious family bond is illustrated where all family members support one another and work hand in hand in doing the domestic chores. It is drawn that a father cooks in the kitchen and a mother sweeps the floor. Meanwhile, a daughter is watering flowers, and a boy is washing a bicycle. The portrayal of such actual household works is also reinforced at school and modeled by students, as depicted in Figure 4. The idea behind this is that the students are expected to be able to learn to communicate states and events in progress and to explain why things are happening. Accordingly, presenting the learners' real-life related materials outside the classroom is meant to arouse their personal interest and give them a chance to conceive the ideas of the lesson and recognize why they are essential because of their relevance to life. Another insightful idea that might be expressed is that the father cooking becomes an authentically meaningful lesson about gender equality; the shift of perception about the acceptance of the equal roles of males and females, such as sharing commitment in earning a living and caring about marriage (Parlindungan et al., 2018).

In addition to the culturally acceptable home routines, the emergence of well-known local places as teaching materials is compatible with providing learners with a stimulus for learning. Familiar and authentic situations can encourage learners to build up interactive communications and participate in the classroom with ease and comfort and can be efficaciously adopted in a language class involving the four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Ahmed, 2017). The following excerpt is an instance of how famed sites are deputized in textbooks.



Figure 5: Personal/local space delineated in conversation (Wachidah et al., 2015, pp. 133 & 136)

The insertion of famous labels of location such as *Jalan Teratai*, *Bali*, and *Tanah Toraja* (see Figure 5) appeals to learners' interest and is of great significance to drive a positive attitude and help build more substantive intercultural competence of EFL learners in the language classroom (Rodríguez, 2015). In this topic, they are expected to be able to describe people, animals, and things in order both orally and in writing. Introducing Indonesia as an incredible country with its wonderful landforms, stunning sceneries, and vibrant culture is worthwhile to encourage the students' interest in being active to get familiar with such attractive sites.

As the other objectives of the lesson are to endorse and criticize the cultural representation in the textbook, the ability to perform interpretation and reflection is a condition for students. These skills are undoubtedly rewarding to improve their ability to eloquently express more complex explanations of the nature of cultural representation. However, when they have less experience in reflecting on cultural phenomena, especially their own national culture, or they are less skilled in the target language, this can be a big issue. Therefore, the teacher's role in helping learners become capable of making sense of cultural representation for themselves is significant (McConachy, 2018). Facilitating the learners with interactive dialogues might be meaningful in tackling a challenge like this. Once they have felt comfortable utilizing dialogues, they can keep

conducting more related conversations, which might be fruitful in enhancing their understanding of or familiarity with the dialogues and the context-specific terms.

- 1) Who was Dayang Sumbi? Describe her.
- 2) Who was Tumang? Why did Dayang Sumbi marry him?
- 3) Was Tumang a human being or a dog?
- 4) What did Sangkuriang know about Tumang?
- 5) One day Sangkuriang killed Tumang. Did he kill him because he was a bad son to his father? Why did he kill him?
- 6) If you were Dayang Sumbi, would you tell Sangkuriang the truth or would you keep the secret from him? Explain your answer.
- 7) What happened to Sangkuriang after he killed Tumang?
- 8) When Sangkuriang saw Dayang Sumbi, he proposed to marry her. Was he a bad son to his mother? Why did he want to marry her?
- 9) Why did Dayang Sumbi ask Sangkuriang to build a lake and a boat in one night?
- 10) Why could not Sangkuriang finish the boat?
- 11) How did the boat get upside down?
- 12) What have we learnt from the story?
 - a. You must not kill your parents.
 - b. You must not marry your mother.
 - c. You should not hide the truth.
 - d. You should accept the truth that you will get old.

Figure 6: The representation of an Indonesian folktale (Wachidah et al., 2015, pp. 132 & 133)

Another aspect of culture represented in the textbook deals with a folktale. The interpolation of (local) folktales as learning materials attracts children because of their relatively simple language form and clear storylines with a proper beginning, middle, and ending. With the commonality of their narrative patterns, folktales can serve as an effective pedagogical springboard to delve into the English language and simultaneously comprehend cultural parallels and contrasts (Lwin, 2017). The folktale exhibited in the textbook as evidenced in Figure 6 is *Sangkuriang* derived from East Java Indonesia. It recounts the origin of *Tangkuban Perahu Mountain*, which is reflected in the Sundanese ethnicity that inhabited East Java. People fabricated the legend of Sangkuriang based on the shape of the mountain, which resembles an upside-down boat. The provided literary-related topic is meant to enthuse the learners to get involved in the instruction session, designed through varying dynamic instructions, including listening, reading, and speaking. This corresponds with the idea put forward by Dikul and Kiting (2019) that serving students with traditional stories and tales can bring a sense of enthusiasm to the learning sessions. Hence, education becomes more engaged and concentrated. The distribution of folktales is also intended to inspire students to acquire common social purposes reflecting moral values, and to educate them on what is considered morally desirable (Lwin & Marlina, 2018). It teaches students that the good are always rewarded and the wicked are frequently penalized, thus equipping them with the knowledge necessary to maintain proper conduct while choosing between good and evil (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021).

4.1 Representation of products, practices, perspectives, and persons

In reference to Yuen's (2011) investigation of the representation of culture in textbooks, the findings uncover variations in the frequency of occurrence of aspects of culture. Of the two series of textbooks, persons are portrayed the most frequently, whereas perspectives are depicted the least. The detail is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The percentage of products, practices, perspectives and persons

Book	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Persons
Bahasa Inggris When English Rings a Bell	19.3%	43.8%	3.5%	33.3%
Bahasa Inggris Think Globally Act Locally	41.5%	9.4%	0%	49.1%

The cultural aspect of persons is embodied in verbal and imaged form, including names of unfamous individuals. Most of the names represent real people in this aspect, although a few fictional characters are included in the facet of products. The manifestation of individuals is materialized in varying dialogues involving well-known Indonesian names such as Siti, Udin, Dayu, Beni, Edo, and Lina. The illustrations rolled by the names are created by ascribing characteristics representative of Indonesia's social culture actual to learners. Hence, the manipulation of local culture-based English lessons can be driven as a feasible and legitimate alternative to address their local cultural concerns and treated as an ideal and potential means of integrating different academic disciplines to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century (Kanoksilapatham, 2020).

The other dominantly emerging cultural feature is *the product*. The instances of products highlighted in the two-volume set of books include merchandise, clothing, buildings, food, household appliances, and musical instruments, e.g., school uniform, *ulos*, *angklung*, and *sambal uleg*. However, the number and varieties of the items vary. The load of the aesthetic traditional features is based on familiarity. In other words, the products deputized in the textbooks are derived from more dominant cultures in the societies. Thus, the provided products are closely related to and familiar to students. *Ulos*, from the culture of Batakese tribes in North Sumatra Indonesia, is a traditional garment worn over the shoulder at funerals, marriages, and other ceremonial events. Due to its great cultural and historical significance, *ulos* is now well-known nationwide. The existence of such familiarity with learning materials helps cater more to learners (Awayed-Bishara, 2015). It provides them access to and analysis of the cultural practices and meanings they experience (Byram, 1997).

With respect to practices, the cultures are confined to daily life, dominant customs, personal space, traditional games, and society (for example, playing marbles and birthday parties). In most cases, they appear in both visual and oral formats. Several cultures of practices are exhibited through images, yet in others, they are referenced in the text with accompanying brief descriptions. For instance, as displayed on page 45 of the eighth-grade textbook discussing a topic focusing on giving and responding to invitations, the subject matters are presented as dialogues; some are illustrated with text-accompanied photographs of people. The given individual images possess physical characteristics typical to Indonesians, such as the two braided hairstyle. In addition, the fashion depicted in the pictures are typical of Indonesian school uniforms, and some of the other images demonstrate how Indonesian women dress on a daily basis in a manner typical of the hijab. The depicted images describe the indigenous Indonesian manner of sending and responding to birthday invitations.

Exposing students to actual representations of indigenous customs and culturally authentic texts makes learning relevant and effective for all students. Further, Kozhevnikova (2014) claims that fostering a culturally inclusive learning environment simultaneously boosts all individuals to thrive in practical intercultural, language competencies, and tolerance. More importantly, providing students with real-world relevance (learning in an authentic environment with real-life conditions) can be a positive opportunity to encounter and evaluate multicultural aspects from various perspectives, such as background, language, communication, social values, and beliefs (Koen & Ebrahim, 2013).

Contrary to that, perspectives that refer to individuals' values, beliefs, and attitudes, serving as the basis for cultural products and guiding principles for their practices or behaviors (Lee & Li, 2019), are the least alluded to in the book series. Of the two series of books analyzed, the perspectives are expressed twice only through the exposure to traditional handmade and a folktale from certain regions in the ninth-grade book. The expression of perspectives is alluded to by the souvenir of a bag traditionally distinctive in appearance. The souvenir is called a 'token' made in Papua, a province in Indonesia. The bag is enormous and has very long straps. Traditionally, it is hung on the head to carry many things, and the native people of Papua believe it is a symbol of hard work. Folklore is also presented as another cultural perspective describing people's beliefs, and it is called *Sangkuriang*. This tale is so well-known among the people of Indonesia that it has even been elevated to the status of a legend. As narrated previously, this mythology is presumably assumed to be the cause of the existence of Mount *Tangkubang Perahu*.

4.2 Fostering intercultural communicative skill

As learning goals, cultural understanding and the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries have recently been incorporated into Indonesia's English language courses. It is claimed that providing information about other cultures as a fixed body of knowledge may enhance cultural knowledge, but it has little bearing on intercultural communication skills or cross-cultural understanding (Lee & Li, 2019). Therefore, it is critical to establish a realm where interculturality can thrive to provide students with the agency to consider their own culture in light of other cultures. In order to grasp and esteem the target language's culture and then compare and contrast the various defining elements of the cultures involved, young learners need sufficient language facilities to communicate or express their cross-cultural understanding. Consequently, developing young learners' local cultural awareness seems crucial, plausible, and realistic (Kanoksilapatham, 2020). The integrated local cultural conceptualizations can increase students' understanding of their cultural practices

and conceptions, allow them to discuss these conceptualizations in cross-cultural interactions, and encourage pride in their own culture and cultural identity (Dinh & Sharifian, 2017).

Though the textbooks served as learning material resources envisage the intercultural breadth of diverse tribes, they only include cultural manifestations from a small number of ethnic majorities, hence it would be troublesome when the books were utilized as learning resources for pupils from tribes other than those listed. Furthermore, the prominent embodiment of the majority ethnic culture would affect how students from the majority group continue holding their own culture in interaction. In contrast, minority groups would accentuate the manner in which communication is undertaken on their own. As such, there would be little prospect of establishing a third shared culture if multiple cultures were to maintain their ground in intercultural communication encounters that provide a shared venue where individuals from all cultures can mingle beyond cultural boundaries on the basis of shared values and beliefs to reaffirm their unique identities and voices (Patel et al., 2011).

The exposure to culturally-based learning materials that exclusively concentrate on the majority ethnic group becomes prejudiced for learners from minority cultures, and they find it challenging to evaluate or reflect on the content owing to their unfamiliarity. As exemplified in the discourse of Figure 7, the theme under discussion is drawn from one of the majority ethnic groups. It is an Angklung, a distinctive traditional musical instrument. Those acquainted with the traditional instrument may benefit from the offered content.

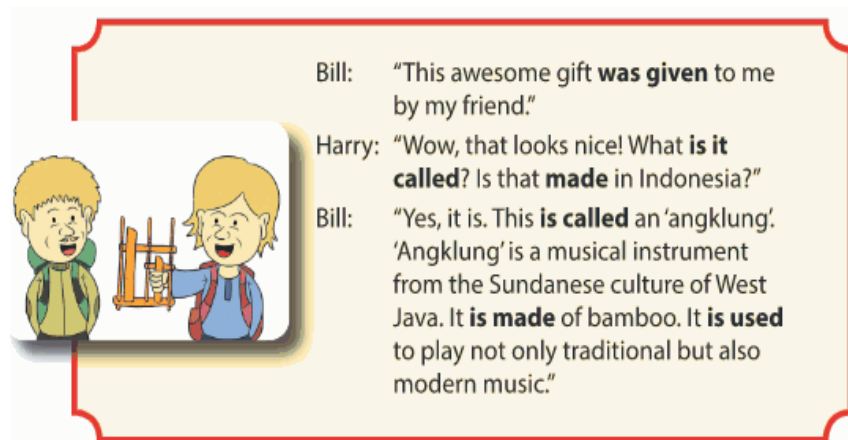


Figure 7: Traditional instrument (Wachidah et al., 2015, p. 149)

The book's authors have made tremendous attempts to present authentic discourse closely tied to the learners' daily lives; nonetheless, it is regrettable that such a topic may be alien to users from minority groups. As discussed, the textbooks devote more attention to cultural products, practices, and persons, such as school uniforms, everyday activities, and food, but provide fewer aspects of perspectives addressing values, beliefs, and attitudes. Given that the cultural perspective is reflective of preconceptions, the absence of these components might affect the behaviour of the learners in understanding and appreciating their culture. The lack of cultural awareness can result in cross-cultural misunderstandings with various complicated causes that can easily escalate into conflicts. It becomes worse in social life because misunderstandings and intercultural conflicts are complex phenomena that include culture, perception, identity, ethnocentrism, relationships, building trust, conflict management, and intercultural communication competencies that include cognition, metacognition, and social metacognition (Hinner, 2017).

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the installation of local cultural values in Indonesian locally produced textbooks. Government-recognized books have been set up as the main sources for EFL in Indonesia. The findings show that the materials represent varying features of local lectures. The cultures are embodied with various identities from different tribes and regions over in the country, including names, traditional food, and instruments; yet, akin to the argument put forth by Toledo-Sandoval (2020), they are deficient in topics related to social identity, social groups, beliefs, behavior, social and political institutions, socialization and the life cycle, and national history. Leaving out such fundamental concerns gives students fewer chances to think critically about and compare the values of different cultures, which undoubtedly affects their ability to interact with people from other backgrounds. The other findings likewise reveal that the culturally related content is most

prevalently drawn from the majority ethnic group, whereas minority cultural identities are underrepresented. Presenting material that relies more on the dominant ethnic groups' culture is certainly problematic for those from minorities who assume it strange, making it challenging for them to comprehend or grasp the presented lesson.

When it comes to the pedagogical implication of employing local cultures as a learning resource, engaging students in their real-world activities is crucial for promoting their cultural awareness. Such awareness contributes to more successful intercultural and culturally acceptable communication (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). Even if the integration of the local culture is crucial in nationally created materials, EFL/ESL students ought to have access to resources highlighting English-speaking nations' cultures. This enables students to compare and contrast their culture with different civilizations from around the world, enhancing their understanding of the social mores of other countries and their overall cultural literacy (Yasemin & Reyhan, 2011). It is revealed that the localized textbook series may not contribute to enhancing cross-cultural understanding among learners due to their lack of providing cultural elements that enhance learners' critical knowledge. Thus authors and teachers need to give more consideration to how cultures are represented in EFL resources to equip students with the fundamental intercultural repertoire (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014).

This research is limited as it focuses only on local cultural values. Further research on ELT materials examining the portrayal of local, target, and international cultures and how the three circles of cultures are integrated into English language learning could be probed by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain more thorough insights. Moreover, other cultural facets, such as collectivism, artifacts, and other emerging values or norms infused in ELT textbooks, could also be explored and elaborated more comprehensively to portray the constructions of ideology and moral values reflected in the cultural materials. As this investigation is solely concerned with the cultural contents in the two junior high school textbooks of grades 8 and 9, the school textbooks for other grades could potentially be examined.

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