

# REPRESENTASI BUDAYA DALAM BUKU BAHASA INGGRIS UNTUK ANAK-ANAK: SEBUAH STUDY ANALISIS PERBANDINGAN ANTARA BUDAYA LOKAL, TARGET, DAN INTERNASIONAL

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## ABSTRACT

*Incorporation of cultural materials into EFL textbooks play a crucial role in the development of the linguistic abilities and the cultural consciousness of young learners. The balance between local, target, and international cultures forms the key theme of this study of cultural information presentation in EFL textbooks for young learners. This study investigates cultural representation in Indonesian young learners' EFL textbooks with a focus on the balance between the local, target, and international cultures. Based on content analysis of the My Next Words series, the study concludes a dominant representation of local culture, raising issues about limited intercultural exposure. The study concludes that more culturally balanced material is needed to foster global awareness and intercultural competence among learners.*

**Keywords :** *Comparative Analysis, Cultral Representation, EFL Textbook, Young Learner*

## INTRODUCTION

Young learners' language acquisition and cross-cultural awareness are greatly promoted by EFL (English as Foreign Language) textbooks that include cultural content. In addition to teaching language competence, such textbooks are also useful cultural tools that shape the attitudes of students towards both their native culture and foreign cultures (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). It is important to discover how cultures are portrayed in EFL textbooks since English is now extensively used as an international language and since young students tend to be exposed to different cultural narratives at the stage where they are still building up their knowledge about the world. Aside from acquiring a language, how these narratives are constructed can significantly impact students' perspectives on intercultural understanding and on cultural identities.

Cultural content in EFL textbooks performs two functions in the classroom. In order to be communicatively competent in the target language, students must first be exposed to the linguistic subtleties of specific cultural routines. Secondly, it functions as a means for transmitting ideals, beliefs, and practices of local and global communities. This experience is especially significant for young learners who are still developing their linguistic and cultural identities.

Textbooks are not culturally neutral learning materials; rather, they represent the implicit cultural presuppositions of the civilizations they represent and the producers, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1999) in their framework of cultural representations. As a result, the use of cultural material in EFL textbooks can raise awareness of worldwide cultural diversity and allow learners to comprehend their immediate cultural surroundings better.

The significance of cultural representation in EFL instructional materials is universally acknowledged, yet there is no agreement on the ideal way of attaining a balance in the presentation of local, target, and international cultures in these fields. The challenge is to offer students a balanced view that will increase their language proficiency and cultural awareness. Research has indicated that unbalanced cultural representation in English language textbooks can lead to a distorted world view, which may cause learners to discriminate against certain cultures (Lu et al., 2022). For instance, the replacement of locally published textbooks with imported textbooks may not cater to the needs of local learners and may dissuade exposure to global outlooks (Rahim & Daghigh, 2020).

The majority of the EFL textbooks have already been evaluated as having an uneven emphasis on target cultures. This tends to result in "linguistic

imperialism," a term used by Phillipson (1997), which sees the promotion of the linguistic dominance and cultural hegemony of English-speaking nations at the expense of other cultures. As Western beliefs, way of life, and cultural practices are portrayed in textbooks more often than the other, young learners will tend to absorb the message that these cultures are superior or preferable to their own. This tradition can make students disengage from their indigenous selves by creating a disconnect between them and their own culture (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019). Also, it restricts students' exposure to a range of different international views, which is critical in today's interdependent world.

But there are potential challenges to EFL textbooks emphasizing only local culture. Promoting local culture can inhibit the development of intercultural competency, though it can help learners make language learning more relevant to their daily lives and enhance their sense of identity. Byram (1997) defined intercultural competence as the ability to understand and communicate with people from other cultures. EFL learners must achieve intercultural competence so that they can use English as a communicative language for different contexts. If textbooks focus too much on the local culture, students may not be adequately exposed to the target and global cultures required for the acquisition of these skills (Shin et al., 2011).

The problem, then, is how to obtain the optimal balance between target, local, and international cultural representation in EFL textbooks. Researchers have come up with models to guide the creation of more balanced materials. For instance, the majority of scholars, Karen (2011), Shin (2011), and Tajeddin (2020) suggest that textbooks should not only focus on the target culture of English-speaking countries but also provide more international cultures because English has gained a worldwide status. This would more effectively prepare students to use English in a variety of intercultural contexts and encourage a fuller appreciation of both cultural and linguistic diversity.

An increasing number of studies highlights how crucial it is for EFL textbooks to have a balanced approach to cultural representation. According to Shin (2011), textbooks should strive to create a balance between the local, target, and international cultures because doing so can help students develop their intercultural competency and feeling of cultural pride and identity. Incorporating international cultural components is crucial for equipping students to interact with the global world, as Lehtomaki, et.al. (2016) emphasize. According to their research, the EFL texts that included both international, target, as well as local cultural

materials helped students become more capable in the acquisition of advanced knowledge related to cultural diversity—the key ability under the even more globalized contemporary world.

In addition, a well-rounded approach to cultural representation can improve the social and cognitive growth of students. According to research, students' perspectives on global issues can be expanded and their critical thinking abilities can be stimulated by being exposed to a variety of cultural narratives (Dippold et al., 2018). Language learners are more likely to gain a deeper knowledge of various worldviews and values—which can promote empathy and open-mindedness—when they are exposed to a variety of cultures in their learning materials. These abilities are necessary for managing the complexity of the globalized environment as well as for cross-cultural communication.

The blending of local, target, and international cultures in EFL textbooks is especially significant in the Indonesian context. Indonesia is a diversified country, and the purpose of its education system is to develop a sense of national identity as well as world knowledge. Because of this dual function, Indonesian primary school textbooks have to make students familiar with the world outside their immediate locale and simultaneously inject cultural elements conveying the country's extreme heterogeneity. But many studies highlight that Indonesian EFL textbook content has a propensity towards giving higher priority to giving more attention to local culture in comparison to target and international cultures (Mahmud, 2019; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). The ability of students to acquire the intercultural competence required for effective communication in international settings can be compromised by this imbalance.

By comparing cultural representation in young learner textbooks in Indonesia, this study seeks to address the cultural imbalance that tends to occur in EFL textbooks. The study will contrast the local, target, and international culture representation in the textbooks and evaluate their implications for students' cognitive, social, and linguistic development, based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) model. The study compares the cultural content of a number of textbooks in an effort to clarify how cultures are currently portrayed in Indonesian EFL textbooks and to make suggestions for developing more inclusive and culturally responsive curricula.

The study draws from the existing literature, including the work of McConachy (2018), Amerian (2020) and Shin (2011) which identifies the importance of textbooks containing cultural perspectives to promote intercultural competency. The importance of an integrated approach that involves the local, target, and international cultures

will be highlighted by the research, which will be added to the current discussion on cultural representation in language learning. Beyond facilitating language learning, this approach allows young learners to be global citizens who are able to deal with the complexities of an increasingly interdependent world.

The way culture is presented in EFL textbook has significant implications on young learners' language acquisition and other-culture sensitivity. It requires a proportional and equitable representation of local, target, and international cultures in an effort to enhance intercultural competence and language students for communication across culture. This study compares EFL textbooks that are used in Indonesia in hopes of adding to the literature in the area of representation of culture in language pedagogy. Governments and educators can make certain that language materials represent the numerous realities of today's globalized world while enhancing appreciation for the local cultural identity of learners by taking a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultural Representation in English as Foreign Language (EFL)**

Several of the most important theoretical models that explore the interactions among culture, language, and education form the foundation for cultural representation in EFL textbooks. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), first proposed by Fairclough (1995), represents one of the most influential frameworks to examine cultural representation in educational texts. CDA studies look into language use in spreading ideologies, validating power relations, and building social realities. Even as pedagogic resources, textbooks are also perceived as neutral on occasions, but underlying cultural messages embedded within them have the power to influence students' perceptions about their own culture as well as other cultures. Textbooks are ideological resources, says Fairclough (1995), that have the potential to put forward marginalized points of view or validate mainstream cultural discourses. Applying CDA to EFL textbooks makes it possible for researchers to analyze the ways in which cultural content may empower or constrain learners by presenting them with an imbalanced or limited presentation of world cultures.

In addition to CDA, the Interculture Communicative Competence (ICC) model by Byram (1997) is another fundamental idea in language education. For Byram, learning a language necessarily also means learning about culture and that ICC acquisition must be a

significant priority in foreign language learning. This competence includes learners' abilities for effective and ethical communication in intercultural contexts. Byram's framework is concerned with five aspects: knowledge, attitudes, interpreting and relating skills, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness. These aspects stress the integration of a variety of various cultural perspectives into EFL materials so that learners are able to interact sensitively and respectfully in intercultural communications.

Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) model of cultural content is another important idea underpinning the examination of cultural representation in EFL textbooks. Cultural representation is divided into three general categories—local culture, target culture, and international culture. Their own culture's traditional norms, beliefs, and stories are their "local culture," and these can strengthen and sustain their sense of self and sense of familiarity in new environments. Target culture, which is linked to the traditions of nations where English is mainly spoken as a first language—primarily Anglo-American countries—gives learners practical linguistic competence together with understanding of social norms of English-speaking nations. Global culture, lastly, includes the practices and traditions of many non-English speaking nations, indicating a wider and more globalized strategy to intercultural communication. This framework offers a window whereby the balance or lack of balance of such cultural representations in textbooks can be analyzed, giving insight into the manner in which these materials influence learners' intercultural competence.

### **Cultural Content in EFL Textbook**

Cultural content in EFL textbooks has been previously categorized into three broad categories: local culture, target culture, and international culture. Local culture, as McKay (2002) defines it, is the students' home culture and a home base from which the students can begin learning the language. The use of local cultural content helps to keep the learners grounded in their own culture and identity and generate confidence in language as well as culture. It is shown through research that the use of local culture makes language more meaningful and relevant to learners by embedding new language forms in contexts that are already familiar to them (Esteban-Guitart et al., 2019).

Target culture, on the other hand, is understood to mean the culture of those nations where English is the primary language, for example, the United States and the United Kingdom. It is usually seen as the model of language instruction. Yet, as McKay (Alsagoff et al., 2012) and numerous others

have argued, cultural imperialism is also a probable consequence of the target cultural overemphasis in EFL textbooks. Learners may unknowingly internalize dominant English-speaking nations' assumptions and values as superior or authentic because they are constantly exposed to them, possibly suppressing their own cultural experience. This is particularly a problem in nations such as Indonesia, where they study English as a foreign language and the cultural context for the students is notably dissimilar from Anglo-American environments (Marcellino, 2015; Poedjiastutie et al., 2021; Suryanto, 2014).

With the inclusion of cultures from non-traditional English-speaking nations, international culture extends the diversity of representation in cultures. This content is essential in making students global citizens and ready to live in a globalized world. By incorporating a wider range of global perspectives, students can develop a pluralistic global mindset that is committed to diversity and develops intercultural competence (Otten, 2003). Research has indicated that the integration of foreign cultural elements enables students not only to enhance their language proficiency but also their broader knowledge of world affairs—a goal that increasingly becomes more and more relevant in today's schools (Lu et al., 2022; Mahmud, 2019; Rahim & Daghigh, 2020; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Shin et al., 2011).

### **Relevant Studies on Cultural Representation in EFL Textbook**

Target, international, and local culture presence in EFL textbooks are targets of blistering research interest, providing empirical evidence on how these textbooks affect learners' learning and culture building. In Indonesian EFL textbooks, for instance, Agustina and Kencana (2023) found that despite having almost zero local and target cultures included, local culture dominated them. This added focus of local culture, proposed by the authors, limits the experience of international perspective among students, and as a result may enhance the possibilities that they may find it more difficult to handle other cultures within a more globalized world. The authors are of the view that even if students' identity is formed largely by their local culture, its dominance may eliminate the accomplishment of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). In line, Mahmud (2019) found that EFL Junior High School textbooks in Indonesia mainly serves to promote familiarity and strengthen national culture and identity by incorporating local culture rather than introducing intercultural communication skill.

Song's (2013) study of Korean EFL textbooks, however, found that foreign and native cultures

were barely referred to or not referred to at all, with great emphasis placed on the target culture—that is, American English culture. Song had argued that such imbalance can alienate learners from their own local cultural environments and perpetuate Western norms of culture in language instruction.

The research believed that textbooks need to present more balanced representations of local, target, and global cultures so that language learning can occur alongside intercultural competence. This is aligned with the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) ideology, advocated by Gay (2018). For each student to be heard and valued in their classrooms, teaching material needs to cover a variety of types of cultures.

The second Indonesian EFL textbook study by Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018) mentioned the requirement for greater cultural parity in terms of representation. What they found was that, although there was extensive emphasis on local culture, other cultures were not represented, and they proposed that this would suppress students' cross-cultural communication. The authors assert that textbooks must facilitate students' communication with people from other cultural backgrounds as well as mirror their local cultural environment. Ariawan, et al. (2022) who looked at Indonesian national commercial textbooks used in senior high schools for tenth and eleventh grades noticed an imbalanced trend towards the incorporation of foreign cultures, concurs with this viewpoint. According to Ariawan's research, students' intercultural awareness can be raised by using a more comprehensive approach to cultural information that includes local, target, and international viewpoints.

These studies indicate how it is necessary for EFL textbooks to use cultural representation in a balanced sense. Target culture is needed for language proficiency learning and intercultural understanding, while local culture maintains learners' sense of self and society. But teaching students about international cultures is useful as it enhances their horizons and gives them the competences, they need to prosper in an increasingly globalized world.

### **Research Gap**

Despite the growing body of literature critiquing cultural representation in EFL textbooks, little of the literature to date has focused on either secondary or tertiary education contexts, and comparatively little attention has been paid to materials designed for young learners at the primary level. Besides, though various research (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Mahmud, 2019; Setyono & Widodo, 2019) has highlighted the local culture dominance of Indonesian EFL

textbooks, little overall, grade-level examination that clearly measures and assesses the local, target, and international culture coverage of a whole textbook series exists. Few have attempted combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to not only study frequency but also depth and context of cultural content. The present research bridges that gap as it offers an in-depth content analysis of the My Next Words textbook series Grades I–VI, offering a glimpse into cultural tales inscribed in early English learning and how they can be consequential to intercultural communicative competence development of young Indonesian learners.

## METHOD

This research uses content analysis as methodology, an extensive and accepted way of identifying and determining particular properties systematically and in an objective matter within texts, images, and other media forms (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis is also particularly suitable in this research because it allows detailed examination of cultural content embedded in education materials and specifically the "My Next Words" EFL textbooks for Grades I–VI, which are very common across Indonesian primary schools. Employing content analysis, this study intends to uncover the presence and balance of local, target, and international cultures in these textbooks, thereby gaining insights into how cultural representation is managed in young learners' EFL learning. Using this approach, it is possible to carry out replicable and comprehensive analysis of implicit and explicit cultural content in textual and visual media.

The research was focused on examining the cultural content across the whole series of the "My Next Words" textbooks. This includes six books in all, Grades I–VI. A systematic approach was employed in choosing cultural content within the textbooks. The examined cultural content consisted of both textual and pictorial ones. Textual elements comprised dialogues, reading materials, vocabulary items, instructions, and activities that could convey cultural norms, values, and orientations. Visual elements, on the other hand, comprised images, illustrations, photos, and other graphical materials supporting the text. Visuals tend to reinforce the cultural messages inherent in the textual content, therefore they also carried equal importance in this analysis.

Three levels of cultural content were identified for analysis: local culture (Indonesian), target culture (primarily Anglo-American), and international culture (cultures other than Indonesian and Anglo-American). To accommodate the range of cultural representation,

data collection involved the identification and classification of every instance in which culture was depicted, either explicitly (for instance, references to specific cultural practices, values, or traditions) or implicitly (for instance, representations of individuals, clothing, or settings that are indicative of a specific cultural context). The identification and coding of cultural content followed a manual review of each textbook, page by page. Both explicit references (e.g., references to holidays, foods, or traditions) and implicit cultural markers (e.g., visual depictions of cultural attire, environments) were catalogued. This comprehensive review ensured that all relevant content was captured for subsequent analysis.

The information collected was analyzed using Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) theory of cultural representation of classifying EFL materials into three broad categories of cultural content: local culture, target culture, and international culture. The theory played a central role in the coding and classification process because it offered a systematic and organized way of identifying how each textbook depicted different cultural points of view.

The first step in the data analysis process was coding. This involved giving Cortazzi and Jin's categories to the cultural items that were encountered. All instances of cultural content—visual and textual—were coded local, target, or international culture. Each book was coded separately because of this, with the effect that the different grade levels could then be contrasted.

After the coding exercise, the frequency of every cultural category was quantitatively examined to assess how often local, target, and international cultures appeared in each textbook. The frequency provided information regarding the relative overrepresentation or underrepresentation of specific cultures. Findings were visually depicted through the utilization of charts and graphs to highlight trends of cultural depiction throughout the series.

In addition to frequency counting, a qualitative analysis was conducted to discover the nature and context of cultural representation. Analysis focused on the quality of the cultural content—whether superficial or substantive, stereotypical or nuanced—and how the textbooks portrayed cultural interactions. The qualitative component allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how culture is presented, beyond mere counts.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were interpreted in the context of the previously described theoretical frameworks, which included Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP).

These models offered a critical framework through which to examine the cultural content of the textbooks and judge whether or not the representation of various cultures was equitable, inclusive, and helpful in building intercultural competency.

This study attempts to find some understanding of how the "My Next Words" textbooks support or hinder young learners' ability to function between various cultural viewpoints by quantifying both the quantity and quality of cultural representation. To establish whether these books are indicative of larger trends in EFL teaching, the results will also be compared with existing research. Lastly, suggestions will be made on how the cultural content in the subsequent editions can be enhanced in a manner that such resources enhance international knowledge and multicultural consciousness as well as language acquisition. By offering research-informed information regarding how textbooks can be written to promote young learners' language and culture learning, this research adds to EFL teaching.

## RESULT

This study analyzes how values from different cultures are depicted in EFL textbooks that are used in Indonesian primary schools, i.e., the My Next Words series. These books are widely used to teach children in Grades I to VI English. The cultural content, both visual and textual, was analyzed and coded into three categories: local culture (Indonesian), target culture (most commonly Anglo-American), and international culture (cultures from nations other than Indonesia or the central English-speaking world). The findings show a pervasive preoccupation with local culture throughout the series, with relatively infrequent appearances of target and international cultures.

Cultural representation in each grade level of the My Next Words series is varied, but an overall trend of dominance from the local Indonesian culture can be seen. Across the six textbooks, local culture is represented by 77% of all cultural elements that have been found, target culture by 11%, and international culture by 12%. These results indicate that despite the attempt of the series to depict a multicultural set, Indonesian cultural values dominate the series, which can limit the exposure of students to global perspectives and intercultural understanding. Figure 1 shows the percentage of cultural elements throughout the books series.

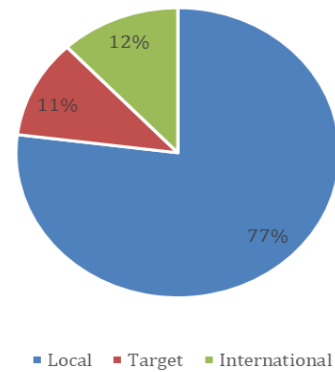


Figure 1. The Percentage of Cultural Representation in My Next Words Textbooks

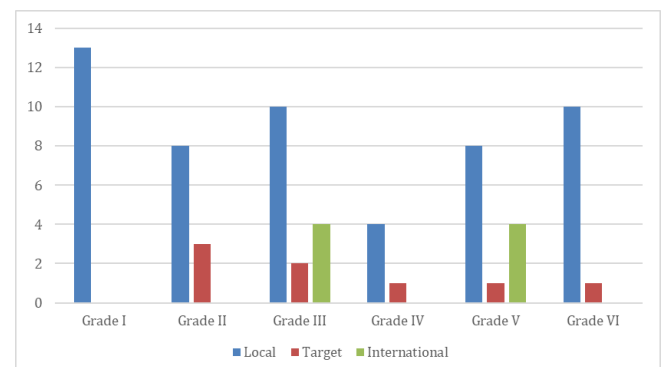


Figure 2. The Representations of Cultural Portrayal in My Next Words Textbooks

Figure 2, presenting the distribution of local, target, and international culture in each grade, depicts that in Grade I Book, there are 13 cultural representation aspects, and all of them are deeply rooted in local culture. This grade is highly centered on showing Indonesia's multicultural diversity, with various characters representing Indonesia's races, religions, and ethnicities. For instance, Made, the Balinese boy, personifies the Balinese culture, while Mr. Togar of Batak tribe, Joshua of Eastern Indonesian tribe, Aisyah, Muslim girl, and Cici, Chinese-Indonesian girl, add more diversity. They appear throughout the series and provide incessant re-enforcement of local cultural identities. The characters and their daily interactions reflect important values such as hospitality, equality, and tolerance, core aspects of Indonesian social norms. This strong emphasis on local culture, however, leaves no room for exposure to target or international cultures at this level.

In My Next Words Grade II, local culture is still dominant in the textbook, though marginally supplemented by target culture. Of the 11 cultural content elements, 8 are local and 3 are elements of target culture but zero of international culture. Once again, as in Grade I textbook, the main characters taken from the diversity of Indonesian cultures are everywhere present. The textbook's

themes are also well embedded within Indonesian traditions, and most of the cultural content is about conventional local traditions such as Indonesian customs, food, and traditions. Although there is the presence of target culture items, the pervasive element of local culture means that the students remain largely immersed within their own culture at this juncture, and this might limit their exposure to other alternative global views.

My Next Words Grade III is the first book of the series in which more cultural diversity is offered. My Next Words Grade III has 10 items of local culture, 2 items of target culture, and 4 items of international culture. The greater number of international cultures is commendable, and there are several instances through which this can be evidenced. For example, with Alfonso, an Italian student, it introduces learners to a foreign individual who represents a fresh cultural perspective. Global food like pizza, spaghetti, and bread also appear in the textual as well as pictorial elements, representing global dining cultures. Breakfast with milk and bread, for instance, represents typical practices among Western target cultures, contrasting with local Indonesian breakfast culture. This textbook introduces the first glimpse of a more intercultural experience, encouraging students to recognize and understand cultures beyond their own and the Anglo-American focus.

The My Next Words Grade IV textbook has fewer cultural elements compared to earlier books, primarily because it focuses on daily activities with an emphasis on grammar (present continuous and simple present). But there are some important examples of cultural representation. Among all the identified cultural content, rap music and snakes and ladders emerge as targets and international culture symbols, respectively. Though Indian in origin, snakes and ladders was embraced by British culture and therefore symbolizes one facet of the target culture. Concurrently, the inclusion of rap music, a genre with Latin American cultural roots, introduces students to global cultural practice. These examples are relatively narrow, but they are an attempt to broaden the cultural landscape by introducing students to international and target culture influences.

My Next Words Grade V textbook gives a more balanced and diverse picture of local, target, and international cultures compared to the grades preceding it. Out of the cultural content identified, 8 of them are representative of local culture, 1 item of them is representative of target culture, and 4 of them are representative of international culture. The visual and written content utilized in this textbook is peculiar in its depiction of Papua's culture in that the characters are dressed in baju

kurung (traditional clothes) and the Honai house, a Papuan customary dwelling, is depicted. Additionally, Alfonso's character makes an appearance in this textbook, continuing the narrative of intercultural encounter. The content thus attempts a better endeavor to engage students with a greater variety of local and global cultures. The emphasis on local culture continues, suggesting more identification with national identity than with an equivalent focus on interculturalism.

In the final book, My Next Words Grade VI, the cultural content centers around past and future events, with the textbook emphasizing local tourist destinations in Indonesia. It contains 11 elements of local culture, 1 element of target culture, and 1 element of international culture. Dominant local cultural features are presented in the form of descriptions of Indonesian icons such as Borobudur Temple, Lake Toba, and other culturally significant locations. On the other hand, the global cultural feature is introduced through the depiction of famous international icons such as the Eiffel Tower, Kabbah in Mecca, and the Great Wall of China. These international references provide students with a glimpse of foreign landmarks, although the presentation is limited compared to local content. The availability of such landmarks is an attempt to socialize the students to the world's geography and culture but the proportion of international culture is bad.

My Next Words series begins to tackle a wider range of cultural diversity in Grade III. There are ten components of local culture, two components of target culture, and four components of global culture addressed in this textbook. Most examples illustrate how much more foreign culture is addressed, and this is a good aspect. Alfonso, the Italian student, is utilized to show how to introduce students to a foreign character who offers a new viewpoint when it comes to culture. Bread, spaghetti, and other foods found around the world are also emphasized in the oral and visual presentation, which emphasizes the food customs diversity throughout the world. The appearance of breakfast using bread and milk, for example, is symptomatic of Western target cultures and is different from those of the Indonesians. Figure 3 presents some examples of cultural diversity in the textbooks including local culture (Indonesian traditional dance), target culture (breakfast menu with milk and bread), and international culture (World popular landmarks).



Figure 3. (1) Example of Local Culture: Indonesian Traditional Dance; (2) Example of Target Culture: Having Breakfast with Bread and Milk; (3) Example of International Culture: Some Popular Landmarks Around the World

The study's implications are that there is a need to rethink the cultural content of such EFL textbooks in order to better prepare students with intercultural knowledge and skills. In achieving a better balance between representation of local, target, and international cultures, such textbooks can more effectively carry out their role of empowering Indonesian students to be able to cope with multicultural and interconnected global society.

## DISCUSSION

An examination of the "My Next Words" series of EFL textbooks for Indonesian primary school students reveals high inclusions of local culture but minimal representations of international and target culture. Such a discovery has high implications in raising questions on what balance must be achieved to assist in causing higher intercultural sensitivity among young language learners. Although Indonesia is multicultural, the emphasis of textbooks on local culture raises the question as to whether it was a moment to introduce students to a more global international outlook and to their intercultural communicative competence. The subsequent discussion employs the prisms of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to account for these findings.

## Cultural Representation Analysis Using Cortazzi and Jin's Framework

Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) model situates cultural content in textbooks in three broad categories: local, target, and international cultures. Based on this model, the examination of the "My Next Words" textbooks shows that local culture dominates with 77% of the total cultural items identified. This dominance is in line with the Indonesian Ministry of Education's effort to apply educational materials in support of national identity. The same patterns are seen in other studies as well, where strong national identity and social unity are facilitated by highlighting the local cultural elements (Ariawan et al., 2022; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). In the multicultural Indonesian setting, for example, the presence of Indonesian multiculturalism in the form of characters like Made from Bali, Mr. Togar of Batak, and Cici, a Chinese-Indonesian child, enhances a sense of oneness and commonality.

Although that attention to local culture does much to encourage the evolution of a positive sense of national identification among young learners, it can unwittingly exclude them from access to general cultural contexts. The fact that both target culture (11%) and international culture (12%) are so low indicates perhaps that students are not acquiring that intercultural sensitivity needed to prosper in a very interconnected world. Students will not gain an authentic sense of the other cultures from the infrequent insertion of foreign cultural features like the Eiffel Tower and the occasional exhibitions of target culture, e.g., breakfast habits with bread and milk. According to Prihatiningsih (2021), such inconsistency can restrict the potential of students for international interaction by decreasing their knowledge on multiculturalism.

This phenomenon is not unique in Indonesia only. Lu, et.al. (2022), for example, found the same patterns in Chinese EFL textbooks, where inner culture has been highly emphasized at the cost of international and target cultures. Both occurrences lead to the limited intercultural view because of the little exposure to outside foreign cultures, which would be harder for the learners to express across cultural boundaries. Minimal exposure to target and foreign cultures can deprive students of the abilities necessary to communicate freely with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, a vital aspect of global citizenship.

## Evaluation Through CDA, ICC, and CRP

The prevalence of local culture in the "My Next Words" textbooks can lead to narrow-mindedness by limiting students' exposure to the diverse realities of the English-speaking world and other international environments, from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Knowing how ideology and power are represented in discourse,

for instance, textbooks and other teaching materials, is crucial, CDA maintains. These textbooks' overemphasis on local culture might be said to constitute a kind of cultural insularity, in which students are mainly exposed to the values and norms of the home culture, possibly to the detriment of a wider, global worldview.

Setyono and Widodo (2019) argue that in this specific context, such differences in representation might exacerbate cultural insularity and make it difficult for people to critically examine and understand other cultures that are distinct from their own. Such textbooks could perpetuate a monolithic culture by projecting local culture at the expense of all else, discouraging students from questioning or venturing beyond other viewpoints. As intercultural communication grows more crucial in today's globalizing world, this sort of declaration of not critically engaging with other cultures is especially unsettling. The lack of representation of foreign and target cultures in "My Next Words" leaves suspicion afloat that children are not learning to analyze cultural differences or even the power relationships behind them.

Moreover, the examination shows that intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is not sufficiently promoted by the "My Next Words" textbooks. Byram (1997) defines intercultural competency (ICC) as the capacity to communicate successfully across cultural divides; this necessitates language fluency in addition to familiarity with a variety of cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviors. Understanding and interacting with a variety of cultural perspectives is a crucial part of intercultural proficiency. This helps students acquire the skills, information, and perspective required for intercultural communication. Students might not be getting the exposure needed to develop these competencies if target and foreign cultures aren't represented as much in the "My Next Words" series.

The findings support Shin, et.al. (2011) argues that textbooks presenting cultures in a balanced manner allow students to understand cultural diversity and increase their ability to communicate with people from different backgrounds. In the case of "My Next Words," the emphasis on local culture can hinder the development of these intercultural competencies, exposing students to a narrow view of the world community. While the brief allusions to global landmarks like the Great Wall or the Eiffel Tower are of no more than superficial interaction with other cultures, the existence of target culture markers—like references to Western foods or normal daily routines—happens to be inadequate to project the complete Western cultural custom.

The values upon which the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) model is based are

valuing students' cultural identities and exposing them to a wide diversity of cultural perspectives. Gay (2018) believes that preparing a balanced curriculum that considers the cultural backgrounds of the students and encourages them to explore other cultures is fundamental in teaching in a culturally responsive manner. The CRP target of affirming students' own cultural identities follows the "My Next Words" series' focus on regional culture, especially within the context of Indonesia's diversity. These books' presentations of a range of Indonesian personalities and cultural practices and traditions, in which students have their own real-life experiences repeated back to them, affirm the students' self-identity sense and sense of belonging.

To assist students, broaden their minds, and sharpen their critical thinking, CRP also supports exposing them to various cultural lenses. The "My Next Words" series does not completely embrace the principles of CRP in this regard because it merely exposes the students to limited target and global cultures, thereby failing to enable them to engage with various cultural lenses. The texts can be reinforcing cultural boundaries rather than cultivating critical awareness of cultural diversity because they place considerable value on local culture. One of the principal functions of CRP, the ability of students to comprehend and appreciate the wealth of the world, can be undermined by the lack of cultural diversity in the curriculum.

The results of this study will significantly assist in the planning of future EFL textbooks, especially in Indonesia. Although the "My Next Words" series' emphasis on local culture is consistent with national educational priorities, the unevenness of cultural representation suggests that more effort will need to be expended to include target and foreign cultures in the curriculum. Such future textbooks would foster global understanding and prepare the children better for the globalized world by introducing more cultural content.

More accurate and balanced descriptions of local, target, and world cultures in textbooks will contribute towards the development of intercultural competency which will enable students to interact with individuals from different cultural contexts. More global cultural inputs, including literature, music, customs, and historic sites from many countries, can be provided in EFL textbooks to more appropriately provide students with a global perspective and facilitate their capability for effective cross-cultural communication.

While the findings of this study offer valuable insights for developing more balanced EFL textbooks, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. This research is confined to the analysis of a single textbook series and focuses

solely on textual and visual content, without considering how teachers and students engage with these materials in actual classroom practices. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent broader teaching contexts. Future studies are encouraged to include classroom observations, teacher and student perspectives, and cross-country comparisons to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural representation shapes intercultural learning in EFL settings.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed a significant imbalance in the My Next Words EFL textbook series, in which it is dominated by local culture with only small amount of target and international cultures representation. While this supports national identity and aligns with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) by affirming students' cultural backgrounds, it also limits learners' exposure to diverse cultural perspectives, which are essential for developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). From the perspective of a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this disproportion can strengthen isolating cultures and dominant local ideologies, reducing opportunities for learners to engage critically with international discourses. The sparse presence of target and foreign cultures restrict students' exploration of intercultural spaces and disempower them as global citizens.

This study is restricted to a single series of textbooks and considers primary-level materials in Indonesia. Future studies can look to consider comparative studies between publishers, levels of instruction, or countries and how teachers negotiate cultural content in classroom practice. It can also look at how students respond to different forms of cultural content so that it can better monitor its impact on language learning and intercultural development. Target, local, and international cultures need to be integrated more harmoniously into EFL content. That would help learners more towards mastering the language and learning the intercultural abilities needed to thrive in the contemporary globalized world.

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