

## Target Culture Aspects in Indonesian Senior High School English Textbooks: An Analysis of *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*

Dewi Musfika Santi<sup>1</sup>, Azwar Abbas<sup>2</sup>, Kamisah Ariffin<sup>3\*</sup>, Nadhratunnaim Abas<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3,4</sup> Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pahang, Malaysia

<sup>1</sup>dewimusfikasanty@yahoo.com, <sup>2</sup>azwar.abbas@pbi.uad.ac.id, <sup>3</sup>kamisah@uitm.edu.my, <sup>4</sup>nadhra@uitm.edu.my

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\*Corresponding Author

### ABSTRACT

*Teaching culture is inseparable in any language teaching/learning. In second/foreign language teaching, the target culture knowledge is incorporated in the textbooks and related teaching materials to help students develop cross-cultural understanding and communicate effectively across different cultures. This study examined and compared the representation of the target cultural aspects in the Indonesian English textbooks for senior high school, Bahasa Inggris X, published by the Ministry of Education, and Smart 10, published by a private publisher. The study applied content analysis by using the descriptive approach. Data were gathered from the reading passages in every unit of the two textbooks, and Dweik and Al Sayyed's (2015) twelve cultural categories were used as the analytical framework. The findings indicate that the content of these two books has a more or less similar amount of the target cultures' values and perspectives. Based on all target culture aspects combined, the aspect of the personal name appears most frequently in the books, while the economy aspect occurs least frequently. It is hoped that the findings of the study will enlighten the relevant parties, such as course book authors/editors/illustrators, English teachers/educators, students, and future researchers, to consider more varieties of the target cultural contents in the material design of the textbooks.*

**Keywords:** local culture, target culture, textbooks

### INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are inextricably connected. As language cannot exist without culture, learning a language without knowing its culture is said to be turning people into a “fluent fool”, or someone who speaks a foreign language well but does not understand the social or philosophical content of the language (Choudhury, 2013). Valdes (1986) also put forward that it is not possible to teach a language without incorporating its cultural aspects. Teaching a language that devoids the cultural aspects may result in the learners lacking the communicative competence needed for effective cross-cultural communication. McKay (2004) postulated that the goal of learning about others' cultures is to communicate effectively across different cultures and develop cross-cultural understanding. This makes it clear that teaching culture is inseparable in any language teaching/learning.

In non-English speaking contexts, however, the concept of a ‘target culture’ is associated with the English language as it is learned as a foreign language. In second/foreign language teaching, the target culture knowledge is incorporated in the textbooks and related teaching materials. The cultural content of the teaching materials or references aims to introduce and expose learners to the cultural contexts of the target language. Inserting target cultures in textbooks is considered important not only to prepare the learners for wider communication but to understand the native culture, hence, building their respect and tolerance towards the culture, and avoiding impoliteness or misunderstanding. In addition, by understanding the target culture in English language learning, the learners will be able to reflect their own culture against the target culture which can help them to communicate more effectively. In other words, the goal behind incorporating the target culture in EFL classrooms is to impart intercultural communicative competence among learners rather than propagating or showing the superiority of the target culture over native culture.

However, in this globalised era, the world has no boundaries. Cultures seem to be integrated as people move, travel, and interact cross-culturally due to professional and social purposes. Thus, there is an issue raised regarding the teaching of cultural content in ELT, i.e. whose culture should be predominantly taught: the culture of the target language, the learners’ home/local/source culture, or the global culture?

Investigations on the content of most international EFL or ESL textbooks have found dominant features of cultural aspects of the Inner Circle (Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). For example, Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) in their analysis of seven series of international ELT textbooks that were designed for ESL/EFL contexts in several Asian countries (with a total of 25 books), found the domination of the Inner Circle cultural content in the books examined. Along the same line, an analysis of the cultural content in ELT textbooks in Turkey indicates a high coverage of cultural topics from the US and England as the main target culture of English (Susanthi, Pastika, Yadnya, & Satyawati, 2018). Narlu (2021) added that the aspects of Turkey’s native culture were extremely neglected in the ELT books examined, while the target foreign culture was often presented in texts for reading. Similarly, the English language textbooks in Hong Kong were found to prefer the cultures of English-speaking countries of Africa or Asia (Yuen, 2011). ELT textbooks in Korea, too, were found to contain mostly British or American values, rather than internationally-oriented cultures (Zeng, Shenkar, Lee, & Song, 2013). In the same vein, Shah, Ahmed, and Mahmood (2014) in their evaluation of the cultural content representations in the ELT textbook series in Pakistan found that the content of the target culture was higher than the local/source culture. Such cultural imbalance in the ELT textbooks has been criticised for not offering equal representative contents of cultural values from a myriad of cultures (Tseng, 2002; Yuen, 2011). Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) argued that different voices and cultural perspectives need to be accommodated in ELT textbooks to enable language learners to figure out the diversity of cultural values and perspectives.

Despite the numerous findings on the prevalence of target culture content in textbooks, there have been multiple studies that show the contrary. The studies pointed out that locally produced ELT textbooks reflect the source culture of the particular country, rather than the target cultures (Canga Alonso & Cifone Ponte, 2021). The findings revealed that Saudi Arabia and Chile are extreme in the use of their own-designed materials with little reference to the culture of Inner Circle countries. The studies suggested that some countries with state-promoted religions, most of which are Muslim countries, tend to offer a counterview regarding the overwhelming influence of the target culture in the ELT textbooks.

In the local setting, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) underlines global diversity as one of the indicators of the profile of Pancasila (Principles of the Indonesian State) students. This indicator means that the students are expected to love the diversity of cultures, religions, and races not only in their country but also in the world while affirming that they also act as global citizens. To support this, the 2003 Act of the Indonesian National Educational System suggests that EFL teachers maintain national cultures rooted in local wisdom. Understanding the target cultures will help to

maintain their own culture. Thus, as far as the design of ELT textbooks is concerned, it should be aligned with the principle of the 2013 curriculum, which underlines the competence of graduates of secondary education, that is, to be able to contribute actively to world communication and civilization.

There have been several studies done regarding cultural aspects in the locally published Indonesian ELT textbooks. However, most of these studies examined the textbooks used for the Junior High School level. For example, Muniroh (2018), in her analysis of the cultural aspects in the textbook 'When English Rings the Bells', found that the local cultures dominate the social content of the book in terms of the way people live or their social behaviours. Lestari and Desyara (2019) reported similar findings in their investigation of the same book, that the local culture is predominantly presented. Along the same line, Pratiwi (2020) inspected the cultural content of 'When English Rings the Bell' and three series of Bright books. The study confirms that the target cultures are scarcely tapped in the books compared to the local Indonesian culture. Such observations may suggest that the lack of target culture representation in the textbooks for the lower level of study is one of the strategies for character building and cultural identity among the students. As pointed out by Shemshadsara (2012), the development of students' cultural awareness starts by encouraging them to recognize their cultural identity in relation to others.

The present study is an attempt to see whether or not the cultural content in the local textbooks changes its pattern as the level of study goes higher. In addition, it also seeks to find out the differences in the cultural representations in the two ELT textbooks written for the Senior High School level: 1) *Bahasa Inggris X*, the formal national textbook for grade X, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, and 2) *Smart 10*, a widely used supplementary textbook for grade X, published by Pinastika, a private company. Therefore, the research questions for the study can be best expressed as the following:

- i. Are the target culture aspects presented in the *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* textbooks?
- ii. What are the most and least frequent aspects of target culture presented in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* textbooks?
- iii. Which textbook, *Bahasa Inggris X* or *Smart 10*, presents the most on the target culture aspects?

It is hoped that the findings of the study will enlighten the relevant parties, such as course book authors/editors/illustrators, English teachers/educators, students, and future researchers, to consider the cultural content in the material design of the textbooks.

## METHODOLOGY

The study applied content analysis by using a descriptive approach. The focus of the study was the cultural representations in the two locally published ELT textbooks mentioned earlier, i.e *Bahasa Inggris X*, issued and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, and *Smart 10*, published by a private publishing company. Both books were written in accordance with the Curriculum 2013. *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* were chosen for this study as they would be able to achieve the objectives of the study, i.e the culture that dominates the textbook content at the senior high school level, and the book that dominantly presents the target culture.

The data were gathered from all the reading passages in every unit of the books. Reading passages were chosen as they are more likely to contain cultural values compared to other types of passages (Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990 as cited in Faris, 2014).

To discover the target cultural representation in the books, Dweik and Al Sayyed's (2015) twelve cultural aspects were used as the analytical framework: *politics and history, religion and religious*

activities, food and beverages, ecology matters, economy, leisure or places, dress, art, literature and science, social behaviour, education, family and gender relationship, and personal names. Table 1 describes these cultural aspects in detail.

**Table 1: The Cultural Aspects (Dweik & Al-Sayed, 2015)**

No	Aspect	Example
1	Politics and history	National flags, national or prominent heroes, prominent figures, commemorate events, leaderships, governments, and other matters which depict other countries
2	Religion and religious activities	Religious ceremonies, places of worship, religious holidays
3	Food and beverages	Name of food and beverages, various types of food and beverages, recipes, plants, and eating tools
4	Ecology matters	Mountains, weather, seas, climate, river, and lake
5	Economy	Currencies, trade, buying and selling goods, and name of banks
6	Leisure or Places	Popular sports, tourism objects, music, entertaining programs, traditional music
7	Dress	Typical dress, casual clothes, formal clothes, and clothes for specific occasions
8	Art, literature, and science	Famous poets, dramas, playwrights, and biographies.
9	Social behaviour	Greetings, expressions, punctuality, gift exchange
10	Education	Refers to items related to educational systems, kinds of schools, school subjects, university subjects, and grading system
11	Family and gender relationship	Role of men and women in social life, equality of men and women, family gathering
12	Personal Names	Name of male and female, nicknames, and family names

The data were taken through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To do this, Shelley and Krippendorff's (1984) content analysis techniques of unitizing, sampling, reducing data, recording/coding, inferring, and narrating were employed. The analysis took the form of quantifying how frequently particular words or names, places, or other aspects appear across a sample of texts based on the framework. Descriptive analysis was used to explain and discuss the findings. Two inter-raters who were experts in the field were consulted to ensure the validity of the analysis. The Cohen-Kappa Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) showed 83% reliability agreement indicating the validity of the analysis. Table 2 presents a sample of the data display and analysis.

**Table 2: Data Display and Analysis**

Data	Code	Aspect	Explanation
John, this is Ina	CH.01/P.15/P/SM *(Chapter 1/Page 15 /Personal names/ Smart 10	Personal names	John is a common English name and surname
Half-sister/brother	CH.01/P.002/F/BI *(Chapter 1/Page 2 /Gender & Family Relationship/ Bahasa Inggris X	Gender & Family Relationship	'Stepbrother/sister' is commonly used in the local culture instead of half-sister/brother

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented based on the research questions which are relative to i) the presentation of the target culture in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*, ii) the target culture aspects that are presented in the books, and iii) the book that contains the most target culture aspects.

### Target Culture in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*

The analysis of the data shows that the target culture is incorporated in both *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* textbooks besides the local Indonesian culture. It is found that *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* contain 54% and 46% of the target culture aspects respectively in both books. This shows that these ELT books offer a higher representation of the target culture as compared to the other textbooks examined in previous studies locally (Muniroh, 2018; Lestari & Desyara, 2019; Pratiwi, 2020) and internationally (Abbasiam & Biria, 2017; Mahmoodaskoud, Asghar, & Hussain (2012).

The findings of this study also suggest a change in the amount of cultural content in the textbooks as the study level goes higher. Contrary to the studies on textbooks for junior high school which report that the local culture dominates the content (Muniroh, 2018; Lestari & Desyara, 2019; Pratiwi, 2020), the present study on the textbooks for senior high school reveals that the target culture aspects are found more frequently in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*.

Previous studies have shown that the book for junior high school, i.e *When English Rings a Bell*, contains lower aspects of the target culture while the local culture still occurs dominantly. On the other hand, the present analysis indicates that *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* contain 54% and 46% of the target culture aspects respectively. This confirms the assumption stated earlier that the lack of target culture aspects in the textbooks for the lower grade is in accordance with the aim of developing the students' cultural awareness and identity first before being introduced to other cultures. Thus, the increase of the target culture representations in the textbooks for the higher grade shows that the textbooks are in line with the aim of the 2013 curriculum that underlines the secondary education graduates' competence to contribute actively to world communication and civilization.

### Aspects of Target Culture Presented in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*

In general, the analysis shows that the target culture aspects in the framework of investigation are presented in the textbooks. Table 3 shows the detailed occurrences of the cultural aspects found in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*.

**Table 3: Target Cultural Aspects in *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10***

No	Cultural Aspects	Frequency		
		<i>Bahasa Inggris X</i>	<i>Smart 10</i>	Total
1	Politics and history	32	0	32
2	Religion and religious activities	5	2	7
3	Food and beverages	0	12	12
4	Ecology matters	13	7	20
5	Economy	0	5	5
6	Leisure or places	37	23	60
7	Dress	3	3	6
8	Art, literature, and science	3	6	9
9	Social behaviour	13	16	29
10	Education	31	17	48
11	Family and gender relationship	32	21	53

12	Personal Names	41	68	109
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>210 (54%)</b>	<b>180 (46%)</b>	<b>390</b>

In total, there are 390 occurrences of the target culture in both textbooks. As can be seen from the table, all the twelve target culture aspects are found in *Smart 10*, except for one, i.e. *politics and history*. There are a total of 180 (46%) /occurrences of the target culture elements found in the book. In comparison, *Bahasa Inggris X* contains all the target culture aspects, except for two, which are *economy* and *food and beverages*. Nonetheless, *Bahasa Inggris X* has slightly more target culture content compared to its counterpart (210 or 54% occurrences).

The data show varying proportions of the target culture aspects presented in the books. In *Bahasa Inggris X*, aspects of *personal names*, *leisure or places*, *politics and history*, and *family and gender relationships* dominate the target culture content with 41 (19.5%), 37 (17.6%), 32 (15.2%), 32 (15.2%) occurrences respectively. Table 4 shows some samples of these target culture aspects presented in the book.

**Table 4: Samples of the most frequent target culture aspects in *Bahasa Inggris X***

<b>Data</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Mark Zuckerberg	Personal names	Is an American media magnate (well-known as Facebook founder), internet entrepreneur, and philanthropist.
When I graduate, perhaps work for the <i>US National Parks service</i>	Leisure or Places	The United States has 63 national parks, which are congressionally designated protected areas operated by the <u>National Park Service</u> , an agency of the Department
Someone who has made a difference; e.g. <i>Mother Theresa</i>	Politics and History	Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu or well-known as <u>Mother Theresa</u> was a nun at Catholic church and well-known in history.
She is my <i>half-sister</i>	Gender & Family Relationships	' <u>Stepbrother/sister</u> ' is commonly used in the local culture instead of half-sister/brother

Meanwhile, aspects of *food and beverages* (0 or 0%), *economy* (0 or 0%), *dress* (3 or 1.4%), and *literature and science* (3 or 1.4%) are least frequently presented among others. Samples of these aspects are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Samples of the least frequent target culture aspects in *Bahasa Inggris X***

<b>Data</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>T-Shirt</i>	Dress	A casual style of fabric shirt named after the T shape of its body and sleeves
<i>Niagara Science Museum</i>	Literature and Science	A science museum was established in Niagara Falls, New York in 2009. The museum's mission is to demonstrate the history of scientific findings.

In *Smart 10*, *personal names*, *leisure or places*, *family and gender relationship*, and *education* are the dominant target culture aspects found in the book with 68 (37.8%), 23 (12.8%), 21 (11.7%), and 17 (9.4%) and 16 (8.9%) occurrences respectively. Table 6 shows some samples of these target culture aspects presented in the book.

**Table 6: Samples of the most frequent target culture aspects presented in *Smart 10***

<b>Data</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>Smith</i>	Personal names	<u>Smith</u> is a common English name and surname
<i>Niagara Falls</i> is a famous area of waterfalls	Leisure or Places	Situated in New York, formed by the Niagara River, which drains Lake Erie into Lake Ontario.
She is also my <i>half-sister</i>	Gender & Family Relationships	' <u>Stepbrother/sister</u> ' in the local culture instead of half-sister/brother
<i>St. Raphael Vocational School</i>	Education	One of the vocational schools of international standard in the <u>U.S</u>
<i>Warmest congratulations!</i>	Social Behaviour	A common way of congratulating people in the western style

Meanwhile, aspects of *politics and history* (0 or 0%), *religion and religious activities* (2 or 1.1%), *dress* (3 or 1.7%), and *economy* (5 or 2.8%) are least frequently presented among others. Samples of these aspects are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Samples of the least frequent target culture aspects presented in *Smart 10***

<b>Data</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>Merry Christmas</i>	Religion and Religious Activities	A Christian celebration
That's a nice cute <i>T-shirt</i> you're wearing	Dress	A casual style of fabric shirt named after the T shape of its body and sleeves
The salad is <i>US\$</i> 3.25	Economy	<i>US\$</i> is the symbol for the American currency

Overall, the data show that the aspect of the personal name appears the most frequently in the books selected. A total of 110 occurrences (28.2%) from this aspect are presented in the *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10*. This is in line with Shah et al.'s (2014) contention that the sociological sense of culture is the most dominant aspect in target culture analysis of OPE textbooks. As personal names like 'John', 'Smith', and 'Mary' are common and have always been associated with the target culture, they can easily depict any situation involving the English language.

On the other hand, the overall results show that the *economy* is the least presented aspect in both books. A total of 5 occurrences (1.3%) are found. This is probably because the economy is not a topic that can be easily discussed in a general proficiency ELT book. Thus, only common or general knowledge attributes like currency signs are presented.

### **The Textbook with Dominant Target Culture Aspects**

The analysis shows that *Bahasa Inggris X* and *Smart 10* both present the target culture aspects. Quantitatively, there is a marginal difference in the overall percentage of the occurrence of the target culture. As mentioned earlier, the former contains 54% of the total cultural aspects found, while the latter only contains 48%. The findings indicate that regardless of the publishers (government-based or private), these two books have shown an increase in the amount of the target culture values and perspectives in the textbooks used for a higher level of study. This can help prepare students to understand various cultures and communicate better, especially with the target language community. As pointed out by Shin et al. (2011), ELT textbooks need to address different voices and cultural perspectives to enable L2 learners to figure out various cultural values and perspectives (Shin et al., 2011). In the same vein, Ariffin (2006) has earlier contended that books that only feature the local culture do not help to prepare EFL students to travel and live in the target language country.

### **CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the textbooks, regardless of the publishers, indicates that the writers have incorporated the target culture aspects to help students understand different voices and cultural perspectives in addition to their own. Such incorporation can also facilitate students in communicating effectively across different cultures and developing cross-cultural understanding. However, the findings indicate that the target culture aspects are limited to common features such as names of persons, places, and family relationships. Other aspects are scarcely tapped.

While the local culture may enable students to activate their local knowledge, the incorporation of more of the target culture elements can help convey ideas beyond the Indonesian terms and absorb ideas and values from outside the country that can benefit the nation. Hence, course book



authors/editors/illustrators and English teachers/educators will consider providing more diverse target culture aspects in the material design of the textbooks. The instructional materials and activities should, therefore, include exposure to the culture's contexts and environment that represent the norms of the target culture. More varieties of the target culture contents in the instructional materials will lead to improved intercultural communicative competence. Such incorporation of multicultural values can create global citizens who make contributions at both national and international levels (Riadini & Cahyono, 2021; Setyono & Widodo, 2019).

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Santi, D.M. conceived and planned the entire study. Ariffin, K., Abas, A., and Abas, N. contributed to the supervision of the study. Santi, D.M. and Ariffin, K. were in charge of writing the manuscript. All authors provided feedback and contributed to shaping the study, analysis, and manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We certify that the article is the Authors' and Co-Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity, and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to Jurnal Intelek.

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