

RESEARCH ARTICLE

CULTURAL CATEGORIES, CULTURAL DIMENSIONS, AND GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: Diverse cultural context and representation of gender equality in English textbooks are able to support students in achieving intercultural communicative competence, also critical and creative thinking ability according to the Independent Curriculum English learning objectives. Thus, this research aims to investigate cultural categories, cultural dimensions, and gender representation in Independent Curriculum English textbooks “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” for senior high school using qualitative content analysis method and theoretical frameworks; cultural categories (Chao, 2011), cultural dimensions (Moran, 2001), and gender representation (Porreca, 1984). The result findings revealed that the universality across culture dominated cultural categories representation, practices and products dominated cultural dimensions representation, and male representation dominated gender representation. Therefore, the learning materials need to be improved by providing more diverse cultural context and no to contain gender bias.

Keywords: cultural categories; cultural dimensions; gender representation; Independent Curriculum; textbook content analysis

REPRESENTASI KATEGORI BUDAYA, DIMENSI BUDAYA, DAN GENDER DALAM BUKU BAHASA INGGRIS UNTUK SEKOLAH MENENGAH ATAS



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Abstrak: Konteks budaya yang beragam dan representasi gender yang setara dalam buku teks bahasa Inggris dapat membantu peserta didik memperoleh kompetensi komunikasi antarbudaya, serta kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif sesuai dengan capaian pembelajaran bahasa Inggris berdasarkan kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi representasi kategori budaya, dimensi budaya, dan gender dalam buku bahasa Inggris kurikulum Merdeka “Life Today” dan “Pathway to English” untuk sekolah menengah atas menggunakan metode kualitatif analisis konten dan kerangka teori kategori budaya (Chao, 2011), dimensi budaya (Moran, 2001), dan representasi gender (Porreca, 1984). Temuan penelitian menunjukkan representasi kategori budaya didominasi universalitas lintas budaya, representasi dimensi budaya didominasi bentuk praktik dan produk budaya, dan representasi gender yang bias didominasi representasi pria. Maka dari itu, pengembangan materi ajar dalam buku teks diperlukan dengan menyediakan konteks budaya yang lebih beragam dan tidak mengandung gender bias.

Kata kunci: analisis buku teks; dimensi budaya; kategori budaya; kurikulum merdeka; representasi gender

INTRODUCTION

Textbook as primary resources in language learning and teaching by providing learning materials which not only about language aspects or linguistically, but also need to present content that can support students to understand how language is used in real communication for its real aims, such as social cultural content. Social cultural content needs to be contained in English textbook, thus students are able to achieve social cultural competences besides having good English proficiency to be able to carry effective communication in real situations (Cunningsworth, 1995; Hinkel, 2014). Additionally, some English learning objectives in Indonesia based on Independent Curriculum are students are expected to achieve intercultural communicative competence, and to have critical and creative thinking (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022). Furthermore, social cultural content that need to be represented is gender equality. Positive representation of men and women need to be included in English textbook to avoid gender stereotypes which can affect students’ views regarding the matter (Cunningsworth, 1995). Similarly, in Indonesia setting, it specifically stated that textbook should not contain gender-biased representations (PERMENDIKBUD No 8 Tahun 2016 Pasal 2 Ayat 2).

Research of culture and gender depictions in English textbooks has been conducted in Indonesia and international, Pakistan and Turkey. The findings of the research set in Indonesia showed the imbalanced culture and gender representations in which the cultural representation leaned more to certain countries and gender representation was dominated by male representation (Paramitha et al, 2023; Sofiah, 2024; Syarif & Maulana, 2023). In addition, the research was conducted in Pakistan and Turkey also revealed the same findings where the analyzed English textbooks portrayed imbalanced culture and gender representation in the learning contents (Akram & Arslan, 2024; Kokcu & Gunduz, 2023).

Despite many research has been conducted about culture and gender representation in English textbooks, there is still lack of research that focuses on cultural categories, cultural dimensions, and gender representation in English textbooks for 3rd grade of senior high school specifically. Therefore, this research is conducted to fill the gaps that have not been encompassed. Furthermore, the objective of this research is to respond to the following research questions:

1. What types of cultural categories are represented in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English textbooks for senior high school?



2. What types of cultural dimensions are represented in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English textbooks for senior high school?
3. How gender is represented in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English textbooks for senior high school?
4. How cultural categories, cultural dimensions, and gender are represented in “Life Today” compared to in “Pathway to English” English textbooks for senior high school?

This research is crucial to find out whether the existing English textbooks in Indonesia, “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English textbooks for 3rd grade of senior high school, as resources for learning and teaching activity have met the textbook requirements set by the government and have aligned with the English learning objectives according to Independent Curriculum, specifically with Phase F or 3rd grade of senior high school English learning objectives. In addition, the results of this research are expected to give contributions to help in comprehending the research topic, and to give contributions by being a reference for curriculum and textbook developer to identify the needs of improvement for the learning materials of English textbook, for schools and educators to be more selective in choosing English textbook used for learning and teaching activity, then for future researchers who needs relevant research for conducting research in similar topic.

The theoretical frameworks were used in this research are cultural categories of Chao (2011), cultural dimensions of Moran (2001), gender representation of Porreca (1984): Cultural categories mean sources of where culture represented in learning materials come from. Chao (2011) was proposed a framework of cultural categories consists of five categories which she developed from cultural information framework of Cortazzi and Jin (1999). The five cultural categories are source culture, target culture, international culture, intercultural interactions, and universality across culture.

Meanwhile, cultural dimensions are forms of culture represented in learning materials. The cultural dimensions framework used in this research is based on Moran (2001). He proposed five cultural dimensions, they are products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons.

Furthermore, gender representation means how men and women represented in things related to social systems and culture. It can be how they are represented in society roles, work, and even language. Porreca (1984) presented six categories on how gender represented namely, omission, firstness, occupational role. nouns, masculine generic constructions, and adjectives.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative design with content analysis method. Qualitative research is a research design in which the research data are in form of text and picture (Creswell & Cresswell, 2023). Further, content analysis is a research technique used to draw inferences from data in text, picture, or works of art (Krippendorff, 2004). In addition, objects of the current research are two Independent Curriculum English textbooks, they are “Life Today” by Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and “Pathway to English” by Erlangga Publisher. Furthermore, working tables were the instruments used in this research for collecting and analyzing the data which were formed based on the theoretical frameworks used.

The data were collected by involving multiple steps, starting with the textbook selection which the textbooks were obtained from *Sistem Informasi Perbukuan Indonesia* website of *Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah*, and from Erlangga Publisher online book store. The next step involves a thorough reading and observation of the textbooks to acquire relevant data which in form of reading text, dialogue, and pictures learning materials. After acquiring the relevant data, they were classified from each chapter of the textbooks and were categorized into the research instruments based on the theoretical frameworks for each focus.

After the data were collected, the data analysis was conducted. The techniques of analyzing data were adapted from Creswell (2013). The data analysis was started by organizing the data collected into proper documentation to confirm that the data were relevant with research topic that

was being conducted. Further, the repetitive reading, analyzing, and classifying data were conducted in three iterative rounds to validate the data and the classification. The theoretical frameworks were used as the basis for data classification. Following the previous step, the data findings were interpreted based on the theoretical frameworks used. Then, they were represented descriptively and were visualized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After going through exploration in responding to the research questions, this research shows multiple outcomes of representation of cultural categories, cultural dimensions, and gender in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks for 3rd grade of senior high school.

Types of Cultural Categories Represented in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English Textbooks for 3rd Grade of Senior High School

Cultural categories are the sources in which cultural information comes from. The framework of Chao (2011) was used to investigate cultural categories in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks. It can be seen in Table 1 that 81 data were found in "Life Today" and 261 data were found in "Pathway to English" with universality across culture as the most represented category.

Table 1
Research Outcomes of Cultural Categories Representations

Cultural Categories	Life Today English Textbooks		Pathway to English English Textbooks	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Source Culture	28	35%	40	15%
Target Culture	2	2%	72	28%
International Culture	5	6%	51	20%
Intercultural Interaction	0	0%	1	0%
Universality across Culture	46	57%	97	37%
TOTAL DATA	81	100%	261	100%

Source Culture

According to Chao (2011), source culture is a culture belongs to English learners' country, in this setting means Indonesian culture. Source culture representations are revealed in a dialogue of electrical blackout in "Life Today" and a dialogue of extreme sport in "Pathway to English". They are categorized into source culture since the settings of the dialogues are in Indonesia.

Target Culture

Target culture means culture from English-speaking country, like England, the United States of America, etc (Chao, 2011). Examples of target culture in the English textbooks can be seen in figure 1 and figure 2. They are included into target culture because the settings are in English-speaking countries, USA and England.

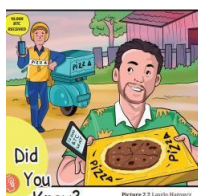


Figure 1
Target Culture in “Life Today”



Figure 2
Target Culture in “Pathway to English”

International Culture

International culture is a culture from country which is not from source culture nor target culture country (Chao, 2011). The figure 3 and figure 4 are the examples of international culture representation in the textbooks. They are categorized into international culture because the background of the pictures are in Netherlands and Germany.



Figure 3
International Culture in “Life Today”

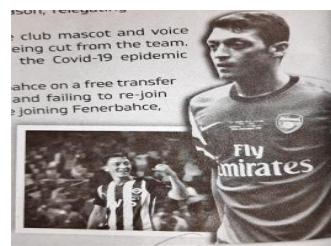


Figure 4
International Culture in “Pathway to English”

Intercultural Interaction

Intercultural interaction means the interaction, cultural differences or similarities, of country from source culture, target culture, and international culture (Chao, 2011). Intercultural interaction category is represented through a reading text about survey of elderly in nursing home in "Pathway to English". It is included in intercultural interactions because the survey were conducted in Indonesia as source culture and nursing home in Iceland, Denmark, Netherlands, Japan, and Italy as international culture. Meanwhile, "Life Today" has no representation of this cultural category.

Universality across Culture

Based on Chao (2011), universality across culture means general knowledge or things that doesn't belong to any specific culture of country. The representations of universality across culture in the English textbooks showed in a reading text discussed about the use of e-money for online shopping in "Life Today" and a reading text of expressing a complaint in "Pathway to English". They are categorized into universality across culture because they talked about general things that doesn't belong to specific culture of country.

Based on the research outcomes of cultural categories, universality across culture is dominated in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English textbooks, and the representation gap with other categories are big. Following that, the English textbooks might intend that students to learn and understand more of general knowledge tho shape their views since Chao (2001) defined universality across culture as general knowledge which is not attached to certain culture. However, English learning objectives according to Independent Curriculum is for students to be able to achieve intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, it can be inferred that the English textbooks aren’t sufficient enough for helping students to achive the learning objectives because of the domination of universality across culture and are lack of other cultural categories representations. This outcome is in line with the research outcome of Sofiah (2024) in which the English textbook she analyzed were dominated by universality across culture.

Types of Cultural Dimensions Represented in “Life Today” and “Pathway to English” English Textbooks for 3rd Grade of Senior High School

Cultural dimensions are types or forms of culture. The concept of Moran (2001) was used to investigate cultural dimensions in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks. It can be seen in Table 2 that 96 data were found in "Life Today" English textbook, and practices is the most represented category. Meanwhile, 248 data were found in "Pathway to English" English textbook with products dominated cultural dimensions representation.

Table 2
Research Outcomes of Cultural Dimensions Representations

Cultural Dimensions	Life Today English Textbooks		Pathway to English English Textbooks	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Products	28	29%	111	45%
Practices	30	31%	56	23%
Perspectives	20	21%	38	15%
Communities	12	13%	0	0%
Persons	6	6%	43	17%
TOTAL DATA	96	100%	248	100%

Products

According to Moran (2001), products cultural dimensions are tangible and intangible things produced and used by people. It involves artifacts, places, and art forms. The examples of products cultural dimensions are shown in the figure 5 and figure 6. They are categorized into products dimensions because financial things and movie posters are things created and used by people.



Figure 5
Products Cultural Dimensions in “Life Today”



Figure 6
Products Cultural Dimensions in “Pathway to English”

Practices

Practices are actions and interactions carried out by people of culture that involve operations, acts, scenarios, and lives (Moran, 2001). Figure 7 shows an activity of doing a transaction which is the example of practices cultural dimensions in “Life Today”. On the other hand, the example of practices cultural dimensions in "Pathway to English" is represented through a reading text about brits tradition of drinking tea.



Figure 7
Practices Cultural Dimensions in “Life Today”

Perspectives

Perspectives involve perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes of the people toward something (Moran, 2001). A dialogue of electrical power in "Life Today" and a dialogue of role model in "Pathway to English" are categorized into perspectives because they talked perceptions of the speakers toward the topics.

Communities

Based on Moran (2001), communities mean social context, circumstances, and groups that carry out cultural practice. The figure 8 shows people of Baduy tribe in Indonesia which is example of communities in "Life Today". On the other hand, "Pathway to English" has no representations for communities cultural dimensions.



Picture 2.6 People of Baduy dalam

Figure 8
Communities Cultural Dimensions in "Life Today"

Persons

Persons cultural dimensions mean people who represents the culture. A reading text of Ricky Elson in "Life Today" and a dialogue of Dorothy Aldis in "Pathway to English" are the examples of persons cultural dimensions. They are categorized into persons cultural dimensions because they introduced about Ricky Elson and Dorothy Aldis as well as their works and achievement.

The research outcomes showed that "Life Today" English textbook is dominated by practices representations which it might want to emphasize culture and its relevance to real world as Moran (2001) stated that practices mean actions and interactions are done by people. Meanwhile, "Pathway to English" English textbook is dominated by products representations which might want to provide cultural contents that are easy to comprehend since Moran (2001) defined products as cultural things created and used by people. Nonetheless, the outcomes indicated that the English textbooks have not been ideal for helping students to achieve English learning objectives based on Independent Curriculum (intercultural communicative competences, critical and creative thinking) since the English textbooks are lack of other cultural forms or dimensions. Additionally, the research outcome of Sofiah (2024) also showed the imbalanced representation of cultural dimensions.

Gender Representation in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English Textbooks for 3rd Grade of Senior High School

Gender representation is portrayal of man and woman (male and female) that is shaped by social systems and culture, for example the portrayal of man and woman regarding professions, involvement and inclusions, even in the use of language that is attached. The framework of Porreca (1984) was used to describe gender representation in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks for 3rd grade of senior high school. As shown in Table 3 that the representation of male in "Life Today" is in 191 data, while the representation of female in 100 data. On the other side, male is represented in 508 data, while female represented in 394 data in "Pathway to English".

Table 3
Research Outcomes of Gender Representations

Gender Representation	Life Today English Textbook				Pathway to English English Textbook			
	Total (M)	% (M)	Total (FM)	% (FM)	Total (M)	% (M)	Total (FM)	% (FM)
Omission	83	29%	46	16%	175	19%	130	14%
Firstness	5	2%	0	0%	6	1%	11	1%
Occupational Roles	73	25%	48	16%	141	16%	91	10%
Nouns	16	6%	2	1%	132	15%	106	12%
Masculine Generic Constructions	1	0%	0	0%	12	1%	0	0%
Adjectives	13	4%	4	1%	42	5%	56	6%
TOTAL DATA	191	100%	100	100%	508	100%	394	100%

Omission

Based on Porreca (1984), omission means the frequency appearance of male and female included in the learning materials. The figure 9 and figure 10 are included into omission in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" as it can be seen that they shows the appearance of male and female.

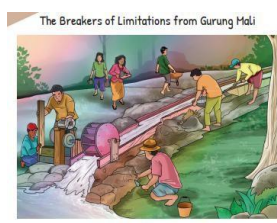


Figure 9 Omission in "Life Today"

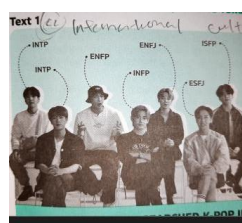


Figure 10 Omission in "Pathway to English"

Firstness

Firstness is the order of appearance of male and female (Porreca, 1984). A man named Ilyas start a dialogue of electrical power which shows firstness example of male representation in "Life Today". Meanwhile, A woman named Anggun start a dialogue of posting picture in social media which shows firstness example of female representation in "Pathway to English"

Occupational Role

Porreca (1984) defined occupational role representation as the range of kind of occupations or professions associated with male and female. The figure 11 and figure 12 showed representation of males and females doing transactions as sellers and customers which examples occupational role.



Figure 11
Occupational Role in "Life Today"



Figure 12
Occupational Role in "Pathway to English"

Nouns

Nouns mean noun words used for male and female, and the meaning entailed behind them (Porreca, 1984). The word "mother" in a dialogue of electrical blackout in "Life Today", and "son" in a dialogue of the flaw in the Plan in "Pathway to English" showed the representations of nouns for female and male.

Masculine Generic Constructions

According to Porreca (1984), masculine generic constructions mean the words that are considered masculine are also mean something that should be genderless, like the word "man" means man/boy, but also means human. The word "man" in a dialogue of the boy who harnessed the wind in "Life Today" and in a dialogue Dorothy Aldis in "Pathway to English" showed masculine generic constructions because the word refers to person in general regardless the gender.

Adjectives

Porreca (1984) stated that adjectives are the words used to describe male and female, and also the meaning entailed behind them. The word "eager" was used to describe men and women in a reading text of the breakers of limitations from Gurung Mali in "Life Today". Meanwhile, the words "brilliant" and "smart" used to describe male and female in a dialogue of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows movie in "Pathway to English"

The research outcomes of gender representation in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks are dominated by male representations which indicated that the English textbooks contain gender bias. Therefore, the English textbooks might not sufficient enough to be references since they do not fulfill the requirement which stated that textbooks should not contain gender bias (PERMENDIKBUD No 8 Tahun 2016 Pasal 2 Ayat 2). Further, the imbalanced gender representation will be more concerning for young learners since their critical thinking might have not developed yet which they might immediately believe what they see and read in the textbooks (Porreca, 1984). This research outcome is in line with the outcome of Paramitha et al (2023) in which it also showed the imbalanced gender representation.

The Representation of Cultural Categories, Cultural Dimensions, and Gender in "Life Today" Compared to "Pathway to English" English Textbooks for 3rd Grade of Senior High School

The research outcomes and the results of comparison of "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks showed that the English textbooks have same but also contrast aim of representing the cultural content and gender representation. It showed in the domination of universality across culture in the English textbooks might because the English textbooks aim to help students understand more of general knowledge or issue regardless the culture. In addition, the different results of cultural dimensions showed the English textbook might have different aim to emphasize for students to learn. Further, "Life Today" represented culture more in practices to provide culture through how people acts and interacts with each other, while "Pathway to English" represented culture in products a lot might want to provide culture through what are produced and used by people to be culture. Lastly, the representation of gender in "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks are dominated by male representation which indicated that the English textbooks still contain gender bias.

CONCLUSIONS

From the explanation of result and discussion, it can be concluded that "Life Today" and "Pathway to English" English textbooks have not been sufficient enough to help students to achieve the English learning objectives based on Independent Curriculum, such as intercultural communicative competences, and critical and creative thinking, since the English textbooks are still lack of cultural information of intercultural, and even of source culture and target culture. Additionally, the English textbooks are also lack of cultural forms of dimensions to be included in the learning materials. Further, the English textbooks also failed in fulfilling the textbook requirement set in the government regulations

since the English textbooks still represent imbalanced gender representations. Therefore, the improvement of the learning materials is needed by ensuring the balance inclusions of culture and gender representations, so the English textbook can be resources that support students in fostering the socio-cultural awareness including intercultural communicative competences, and in shaping their ways of thinking toward issues of world.

This research can be references for curriculum and textbook developer to understand the need to improve cultural content and gender representation in learning materials of textbook. In addition, schools and educators are able to understand that they have to be more selective in choosing textbooks as the learning resources through this research. Furthermore, it is highly expected for future researchers are able to deepen and broaden the investigations of the similar topic into different English textbooks to provide more insights of the reliable English textbook that can be used in the learning activities.

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