

Cultural Representation Analysis in English Textbook Used in Indonesia EFL Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the representation of cultural dimensions in pictures and written texts (students' exercises and reading texts) in the English textbook *Work in Progress* (2022), based on Yuen's (2011) and Chao's (2011) theories, and to determine whether the cultural dimensions in the textbook align with intercultural competencies and the Pancasila Student Profile in the Merdeka curriculum. Cultural dimensions are crucial in language learning as they foster global awareness, intercultural understanding, and appreciation of cultural diversity. This qualitative study employs a content analysis methodology to analyze data from the English textbook *Work in Progress* (2022), designed for tenth-grade high school students and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The analysis, based on Yuen's (2011) cultural dimensions, indicates that perspectives are the most dominant dimension, followed by persons, products, and practices. Furthermore, the cultural categories based on Chao's (2011) theory are dominated by international culture, intercultural interaction, source culture, target culture, and universality across culture. The findings highlight the textbook's alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum's goals of promoting intercultural competence and global diversity. Yuen's (2011) cultural dimensions (persons, perspectives, products, and practices) and Chao's (2011) cultural categories (international culture, intercultural interaction, source culture, target culture, and universality across culture) reflect the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on understanding how cultural dimensions in textbooks support the Pancasila Student Profile's goal of recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity.

Keywords: cultural dimension, *merdeka curriculum*, *english textbook*

Submitted:

18 November 2024

Accepted:

2 May 2025

Published:

14 June 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are two interconnected and inextricably linked factors that influence one another. Language serves as a conduit for cultural values, shaping perspectives and worldviews. Koentjaraningrat, as cited in Embram (2021), highlights that culture comprises various elements, including beliefs, social structures, knowledge, language, and artistic expressions. Understanding language is key to grasping the culture it represents. However, different linguistic structures influence the way individuals express their thoughts, sometimes posing challenges in cross-cultural communication (Sapir-Whorf as cited in Banerjee & Urminsky, 2022).

Integrating cultural elements into English language instruction is crucial for enhancing proficiency and promoting intercultural competency. Weda et al. (2022) suggest that incorporating cultural elements into language curricula enhances students' communication skills and deepens their understanding of various cultures. Similarly, Masitoh et al. (2023) argue that integrating

cultural awareness in language learning not only improves linguistic proficiency but also promotes an appreciation for cultural diversity.

Textbooks play a crucial role in shaping students' cultural understanding. Textbooks are standard tools in schools, serving as vital instruments for teaching language and culture (Buckingham, as cited in Apriyani & Robiasih, 2019). Textbooks facilitate students' engagement with linguistic and cultural components, increasing motivation and participation in language activities.

The Merdeka Curriculum, a recent reform in Indonesia, places a strong emphasis on intercultural competence and global diversity, as reflected in the Pancasila student profile (Head of BSKAP Standard Number 8, 2022). One of the key learning outcomes for English language education in this curriculum is the development of intercultural competence, which includes understanding perspectives, practices, and cultural products from Indonesian and foreign cultures.

Previous studies, such as Astiandani & Purwati (2021) and Bahri & Agustina (2023), have analyzed cultural content in English textbooks, revealing a disproportionate of source, target, and international cultures. However, these studies have not yet examined the textbook 'Work in Progress' (2022) for 10th-grade students, designed under the Merdeka Curriculum. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the cultural content in 'Work in Progress' (2022) using Yuen's theory (2011) and Chao's theory (2011).

Whereas Chao's approach classifies culture into Source Culture, Target Culture, and International Culture, Yuen's framework separates cultural content into four categories: Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. This study seeks to determine whether the textbook aligns with the intercultural competence and global diversity characteristics outlined in the Pancasila student profile.

2. METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research method, employing document analysis as the primary data collection technique. The research focused on examining the cultural dimensions represented in the English textbook *Work in Progress* (2022), which is designed for tenth-grade high school students and published under the Merdeka Curriculum. This textbook was selected because it is the latest version and is widely used in Indonesian high schools, making it relevant for analyzing cultural representations in contemporary educational materials. The study analyzed six units from the textbook, focusing on various text types, including reading passages, student exercises, and images, to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultural portrayals.

To systematically analyze the data, this study applied Yuen's (2011) and Chao's (2011) theories as the primary analytical frameworks. Yuen's (2011) theory was used to examine four cultural dimensions: products, practices, persons, and perspectives, while Chao's (2011) theory was utilized to classify cultural categories into Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC). A classification table based on these frameworks was developed to organize and code the cultural content identified in the textbook.

The analysis process involved coding cultural elements found in the textbook based on Chao's (2011) theory, which has been widely applied by researchers in similar studies, albeit on different textbooks. The coding process systematically identified and categorized cultural representations, ensuring consistency and alignment with the established theoretical frameworks. Through this structured approach, the study aimed to determine the extent to which the textbook reflects cultural diversity and intercultural competencies in alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile and the Merdeka Curriculum.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Cultural Dimension

This cultural dimension of the English textbook “Work in Progress” is gathered and separated into two sections: cultural dimension and cultural categories. The study examined the image, reading texts, and exercises. Great Athletes, Sports and Health, Healthy Foods, Graffiti, and Fractured Stories are the six themes that are covered in the six chapters of the textbook. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 cultural dimension based on Yuen

Chapter	Unit	Cultural Dimension				Total
		Products	Practices	Perspectives	Persons	
1	Great Athletes			3	20	23
2	Sports Events		17	1		18
3	Sports and Health		18	5		23
4	Healthy Foods	10	5	1		16
5	Graffiti	10		9		19
6	Fractured Stories	15				15
Total		35	40	19	20	114

In Unit 1, the cultural dimensions found in the 'Work in Progress' (2022) English textbook are dimensions of persons (20 times) and perspectives (3 times). This unit focuses on great athletes worldwide, with the most dominant content being about Cristiano Ronaldo. Additionally, there are mentions of other local and international athletes, but they appear less frequently than Cristiano Ronaldo. The person dimension in Unit 1 is found in images, reading texts, student exercises, and info graphics, while the perspective dimension is found in student exercises. In Unit 2, the dimensions found are perspectives (1 time) and practices (17 times). Unit 2 focuses on sports, such as watching sports events and the Olympics. The perspectives dimension in Unit 2 is found in student exercises, while the practices dimension is found in images and reading texts. In Unit 3, the cultural dimensions are perspectives (5 times) and practices (18 times). Unit 3 explores the connection between sports and health by showcasing a variety of physical activities and health lifestyle and choices through the images, student exercises, and reading texts. In Unit 4, the cultural dimensions encountered are perspectives (1 time), practices (5 times), and products (10 times). Unit 4 is features a variety of traditional cuisines. The perspective dimension in Unit 4 is found in reading texts, the practice dimension is found in reading texts and student exercises, and the product dimension is found in pictures and student exercises. In Unit 5, the dimensions are perspectives (9 times) and products (10 times). The subject of graffiti trends in Indonesia and the world is covered in unit 5. Here, the product dimension is found in images and student exercises, while the perspective dimension is found in reading text and student exercises. In unit 6, the dimension found is the product dimension (15 times). The product dimension in Unit 6 is found in pictures, student exercises, and reading texts.

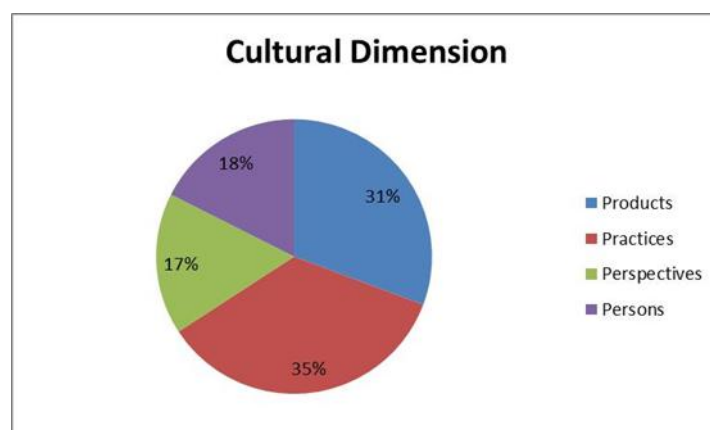


Figure 1 The percentage of cultural dimension

Based on the cultural dimensions from Yuen's theory (2011), the most frequently appearing cultural dimension in the English textbook 'Work in Progress' (2022) is the dimension of practice (35%), see Figure 1. The practice dimension within the textbook relates to sports, healthy eating, and daily activities for a healthy life. The practice dimension found in the pictures includes watching sports matches, Pencak Silat, rowing, volleyball, rock climbing, swimming, running, high jumping, surfing, basketball, badminton, hockey, cycling, Paralympics, exercising, slouching on the couch, working in front of computers, eating healthy food, eating junk food, playing games, brushing teeth, sleeping, weighing oneself, and listening to music. Additionally, the practice dimension in the written content features the Indonesian youth mental health report, along with tasks for writing of procedural texts on maintaining physical or mental health as well as healthy eating activities. The research findings indicate that the practice dimension is the most dominant in the textbook, aligning with Yuen's (2011) theory, which includes rituals, daily activities, and community engagement. These findings are also consistent with Goyal et al. (2020), who state that culture encompasses patterns of human behavior, including language, habits, and beliefs. However, unlike the study by Masturah et al. (2021), which found product to be the dominant dimension, this study identifies practice as the more frequently occurring dimension. The lower presence of the perspective dimension compared to product and practice may limit students' understanding of cultural values and ways of thinking. Therefore, additional strategies, such as classroom discussions, are necessary to enhance students' cultural understanding.

The product dimension is the second most common dimension (31%). The product dimension in the textbook in the pictures includes traditional food, graffiti, and the stories of Malin Kundang and Little Red Riding Hood. Additionally, the product dimension in the written content includes a dialogue about Cireng, a catalog of foods and drinks, a story of Little Red Riding Hood, the Shrek Movie, a set of movie recommendations, and a task to write a fragmented narrative. The research findings indicate that many cultural elements in the textbook Work in Progress (2022) fall under the product dimension, according to Yuen's (2011) theory, which includes films, TV shows, food, cultural products, books, novels, comics, popular locations, music, fashion, and literary forms. The dominance of the product dimension supports Kramsch's theory, as cited in Liska Afriani et al. (2019), which states that culture can be understood like a two-sided coin—one side involving the representation of social groups through the production of art, literature, or everyday artifacts. The presence of cultural products in this textbook helps students understand how culture is

represented through media and tangible artifacts. However, the limited representation of other cultural aspects, such as perspective and practice, highlights the need for a more balanced teaching approach, ensuring that students not only recognize culture through its products but also understand the values and ways of thinking behind them.

Furthermore, the person dimension is the third most frequent (18%). The person dimension found in the textbook in the pictures includes several athletes such as Anthony Sinisuka Ginting, a badminton player; Aries Susanti Rahayu, a rock climber; Windy Cantika Aisah, a weightlifter; Boaz Solossa, a football player; and Cristiano Ronaldo, a football player. Additionally, the person dimension found in the written content includes a table of several athletes such as Mohamed Salah, a football player; Greysia Polii, a badminton player; Valentino Rossi, a racer; Lalu Muhammad Zohri, a sprinter; Lionel Messi, a football player; LeBron James, a basketball player; Jonathan Christie, a badminton player; Muhammad Ali, a boxer; and Michael Jordan, a basketball player. It also includes a profile table of LeBron James, an infographic of Greysia Polii, a badminton player, and a reading text about Leani Oktilla Ratri, a Paralympic hero. These findings indicate that many elements in the textbook *Work in Progress* (2022) fall under the person dimension, according to Yuen's (2011) theory, which includes prominent figures such as musicians, poets, writers, national figures, artists, and athletes. The presence of these individuals provides students with insights into the role of individuals in shaping and representing culture while also enriching their understanding of broader social and historical contexts.

The perspective dimension is the least frequent (17%). The perspective dimension is found in written content, such as views on the most important traits of a great athlete, the most and least popular athletes, the most important ethics for being a good spectator, healthy living activities, healthy eating patterns, and views on graffiti. All these aspects fall under the perspective dimension according to Yuen's theory (2011), which includes perceptions, values, and global viewpoints. The perspectives found in the English textbook '*Work in Progress*' (2022) encompass ways of thinking, ethics, diverse individual viewpoints, and student habits.

This aligns with Kramsch's view, as cited in Liska Afriani et al. (2011), which suggests that culture can be understood like a coin with two sides. One side refers to fundamental meanings such as ethics, attitudes, ways of thinking, behavior, and shared memories. This is reflected in the perspective dimension in the textbook, where cultural perspectives are conveyed through the views, values, and ideologies represented by different social and cultural groups. By integrating these elements, the textbook provides students with the opportunity to understand not just cultural products, but the deeper, underlying attitudes and worldviews that shape them.

3.2. Cultural Categories

The cultural categories presented in the textbook were analyzed using Chao's (2011) classification, which divides culture into five types: source culture (SC), target culture (TC), international culture (IC), intercultural interaction (ICI), and universality across culture (UC). These cultural categories are explained Table 2.

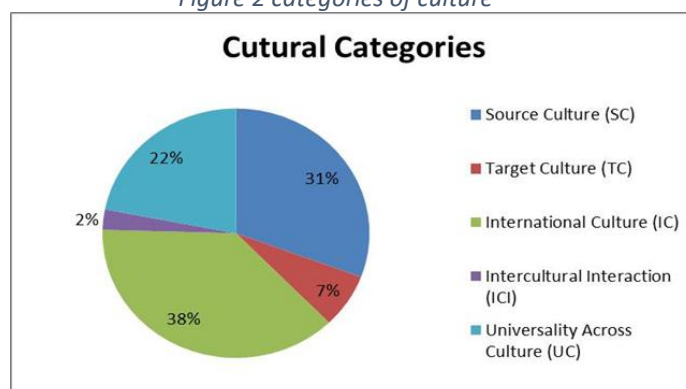
Table 2 The cultural categories based on Chao

Chapter	Unit	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC	Total
1	Great Athletes	9	0	11	2	1	23
2	Sports Events	1	1	11	1	4	18

Chapter	Unit	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC	Total
3	Sports and Health	1	0	8	0	14	23
4	Healthy Foods	10	0	1	0	5	16
5	Graffiti	8	5	6	0	0	19
6	Fractured Stories	6	2	6	0	1	15
Total		35	8	43	3	25	114

Based on Table 2, the textbook addresses all cultural categories, though not in equal proportions. In Unit 1, the cultural categories found are source culture (9 times), international culture (11 times), intercultural interaction (2 times), and universality across culture (1 time), which can be found in both pictures and written content. In Unit 2, the cultural categories found are source culture (1 time), target culture (1 time), international culture (11 times), intercultural interaction (1 time), and universality across culture (4 times), which can be found in both pictures and written content. In Unit 3, the cultural categories found are target culture (1 time), international culture (8 times), and universality across culture (8 times), which can be found in both pictures and written content. In Unit 4, the cultural categories found are source culture (10 times), international culture (1 time), and universality across culture (5 times), which can be found in both pictures and written content. In Unit 5, the cultural categories found are source culture (8 times), target culture (5 times), and international culture (6 times). In Unit 6, the cultural categories found are source culture (6 times), target culture (2 times), and international culture (6 times). There is an apparent imbalance in the number of occurrences in each cultural category. This aligns with the findings of Prihatiningsih et al. (2021) which shows that the cultural categories found are not balanced.

Figure 2 categories of culture



Based on the cultural categories based on Chao's theory (2011), see Figure 2, which includes source culture, target culture, international culture, intercultural interaction, and universality across culture, the most frequently represented category in the English textbook 'Work in Progress' (2022) is international culture, with a total of 43. The international culture category includes international athletes (Cristiano Ronaldo, Mohamed Salah, Valentino Rossi, Lionel Messi, LeBron James, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan), sports (rowing, volleyball, rock climbing, swimming,

running race, high jump, badminton, hockey, cycling, Paralympics), graffiti, the story of the hare race, the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood, and the story of Cinderella. All these are included in the international category according to Chao's theory (2011) because they are well-known worldwide. This contrasts with the research by Lestari et al. (2022), where the source culture emerged as the most dominant.

The second most frequently found cultural category in the English textbook 'Work in Progress' (2022) is the source culture category, with a total of 35. The source culture dimensions found include famous Indonesian athletes (Anthony Sinisuka Ginting, Aries Susanti Rahayu, Windy Cantika Aisah, Boaz Solossa, Lalu Muhammad Zohri, Greysia Polii, Jonathan Christie, Leani Oktilla Ratri), sports (pencak silat), food and drinks (Mie Aceh, crispy fried shrimp, es pisang ijo, cendol, gado-gado, tinutuan, rujak, cireng, pempek), Indonesian graffiti, and the story of Malin Kundang. All of these are classified under the source culture category according to Chao's theory (2011), as source culture pertains to the culture of the country where English is not used as a second language nor as the native language of the students learning the foreign language, in this case, Indonesia.

The third most frequently found cultural category in the English textbook 'Work in Progress' (2022) is the universality across culture category, with a total of 25. According to Chao's theory (2011), universality across culture includes broadly understandings that are not confined to any defined country or culture. The universality across culture category identified includes important qualities or values that make great athletes, ethics as spectators, and activities related to maintaining general health. All these falls under the universality across culture category because they are not associated to any specific culture or country.

The fourth most commonly represented cultural category in the English textbook Work in Progress (2022) is the target culture category, with a total of 8 occurrences. According to Chao's theory (2011), target culture refers to the culture of countries where English is spoken as a native language. In this study, the target culture includes countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and other nations where English is the first language. The identified target culture examples are basketball, graffiti originating from English-speaking countries, the film Shrek, and a list of recommended films from English-speaking countries.

The cultural category found least frequently is intercultural interaction, with a total of 3 occurrences. According to Chao's theory (2011), intercultural interaction involves comparing, reflecting on, and recognizing the similarities and differences between the source culture and international culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving, and role-playing. The examples of intercultural interaction identified include comparisons between local and international athletes, important values upheld by athletes, and the similarities between local and international soccer teams.

4. CONCLUSION

The cultural dimensions in the English textbook Work in Progress (2022) for tenth-grade students were analyzed based on Yuen's (2011) and Chao's (2011) theories. According to Yuen's framework, the textbook includes all four cultural dimensions—practices (40 instances, 35%), products (35 instances, 31%), persons (20 instances, 18%), and perspectives (19 instances, 17%)—but these are represented unevenly. The practice dimension is the most prominent, indicating that the textbook emphasizes cultural norms, behaviors, and social customs over other aspects of culture.

Similarly, based on Chao's (2011) theory, the textbook incorporates five cultural categories: international culture (43 instances, 38%), source culture (35 instances, 31%), universality across cultures (25 instances, 22%), target culture (8 instances, 7%), and intercultural interaction (3 instances, 2%). The dominance of international culture suggests that the textbook primarily aims to expose students to a global cultural perspective, while target culture (native English-speaking countries) and intercultural interaction receive minimal representation.

These findings align with the Pancasila Student Profile and the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasize intercultural competence and global diversity. The strong focus on practices and international culture suggests that the textbook encourages students to understand cultural behaviors and engage with global perspectives, which is essential for language learning. Additionally, the persons dimension introduces students to well-known figures, providing real-life cultural contexts, while the universality across cultures category highlights shared cultural values across different societies.

The researcher offers several recommendations for teachers, textbook authors, and future researchers. English teachers are encouraged to use textbooks as essential resources to enhance teaching and learning. They should emphasize the cultural content in textbooks to help students understand that learning English also involves understanding different cultures. With the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, teachers are recommended to use the Work in Progress textbook for 10th-grade students, as it aligns well with the intercultural competence and diversity goals in the Pancasila student profile. For textbook authors, it is suggested to create a better balance of cultural content in English textbooks, as culture plays a crucial role in language learning. This would allow students and teachers to engage more effectively with cultural topics. Lastly, future researchers interested in analyzing cultural dimensions in English textbooks are encouraged to explore gaps in this study. They can use the same textbook or other textbooks, applying Yuen's and Chao's frameworks or other approaches to provide further insights into cultural representation in language education.

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