

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview about the research, which embodies the background of the study, research question, aims of study, significances of the study, and scope of study. Those discussions are divided into some parts.

1.1 Background of Study

English has become a dominant language in today's globalized world, often functioning as a lingua franca between speakers of different native languages, transcending borders and cultures. It is continually used to simplify communication among people from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Chew, 2013). Its widespread use, both spoken and written, has profound implications across various domains, including education, economics, politics, and culture. Approximately 1.5 billion people use English worldwide, embracing a vast array of variations (Crystal, 2013). Furthermore, Graddol (1997) has predicted English continued evolution and even greater diversification in the future. In the educational field, English language learning plays a crucial role, opening doors to global communication and opportunities. Success in many facets of life, including securing desired jobs, often depends on the ability to communicate in English (Handayani, 2018). Effective English language learning should not only involve grammar and vocabulary but also foster cultural awareness and understanding.

Language and culture are intertwined, as English facilitates communication between individuals from diverse national and cultural backgrounds. When

language and culture are considered together, their prominent elements are preserved; if separated, these elements would disappear (Brown, 2000). It is nearly impossible to dissociate language from culture because the use of language is closely linked to other cultural and societal practices in the global community (Risager, 2014). As a result, English is used to communicate with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds worldwide. In fact, several governments now include English as a required subject in their curricula. Thus, as the world changes quickly, learners will be prepared for the workplace in the future, where they will have to respect cultural diversity in addition to interacting with people from different backgrounds.

English has become the primary language for communication between people from different cultures all over the world. Many governments now include English as a mandatory subject in their school systems. This prepares students for the future global workforce, where they will interact with people from diverse backgrounds and need to be respectful of cultural differences. By learning English, students can better understand different cultures and connect with the global community. To fully master the English language, it is essential to also understand its cultural elements. In foreign language education, culture is integrated into the learning process and the practical use of language for communication. Understanding these cultural aspects reflects the perspectives of a community (Moran, 2001).

Since language and culture are closely linked, incorporating cultural content into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning materials is crucial. This approach helps learners understand the language better and avoid

misunderstandings. Familiarizing students with different cultures also increase their cultural awareness, helping them cope with culture shock (Giyatmi, 2021). Additionally, incorporating cultural aspects into learning materials can make English more interesting and motivating for students (Mckay, 2002).

As a result, teaching English effectively should involve teaching both the language itself and the cultures associated with it. EFL students should be aware of their own cultures and those embedded in the languages they are learning. This is why cultural content is essential in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning materials, especially in main learning resources, which is textbook.

Furthermore, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) established an effort to incorporate cultural values into all learning and teaching activities including textbook by regulation No. 79 of 2014. This initiative aimed to help students identify with and appreciate their environmental, cultural, social, and spiritual values. Additionally, the ministry sought to preserve and develop local wisdom, thereby strengthening students' sense of national identity (Kemendikbud, 2022). The current curriculum, known as the Merdeka Curriculum, emphasizes six core characteristics for students, referred to as the "Profil Pelajar Pancasila". One of these key characteristics is global diversity, which encourages students to maintain their own culture, be open and respectful towards different cultures, develop knowledge and respect for various cultures, enhancing student communication skills for intercultural interaction, and a sense of responsibility for diversity (Dwi et al., 2022).

To foster global diversity and align with the new curriculum requirements, the Ministry of Education and Culture introduced the "English for Nusantara" textbook for eight graders. This textbook incorporates a variety of cultures in its content, including diverse cultural representations, which contains and cover types or cultural content that align with theory about the types of cultural contents theory proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). They classified the cultural categories into; source cultures, (students' native language), target cultures (English speaking cultures), and international cultures (global perspective). The cultural content is presented through various mediums, including audio, conversations, pictures, and other elements showcasing cultural aspects that align with five cultural dimensions proposed by Moran (2011): (1) products, such as movies, food, television programs, music, geographic locations, travel destinations; (2) person, which representing individuals different cultures (identified by their names or physical features); (3) practices, including traditions, festivals, customs, and interpersonal relationships; (4) perspectives, including values, beliefs, myths, and human worldviews; and also (5) communities like the national cultures such as ceremony of religion, or group activities that implement practices like a tradition or culture.

Several prior studies have examined the cultural contents of English materials. For instance, Syahri and Susanti (2016) analyzed nine English textbooks for senior high school in Palembang focusing on the integration of source and target cultures. They revealed a higher proportion of local culture in five of the textbooks, while six primarily presented the target culture, based on image analysis. Maturah (2019) investigated the representation of the cultural content underlying an English

textbook at the senior high school level in Indonesia, revealing that the Product dimension frequently emerged and the cultural category primarily focused on the target culture. Rahmawati (2020) analyzed cultural content in a senior high school English textbook, showing that the source culture category dominated and there was a lack of intercultural. Angelina, et al (2022) examined the cultural contents of digital authentic greeting cards for junior high school, finding that cultural content primarily represented universality across cultures through the practice dimension, such as activities and language expressions. Finally, Maulidya, et al (2023) examined the cultural contents available in digital learning platform MyEnglishStep (MES) for Junior High School by using frameworks by Chao (2011) and Moran (2001). The researcher found 1472 instances of cultural content across all grades in the form of texts, dialogues, pictures, audio, videos, and activities. Universality across cultures had the highest percentage, and the Products dimension dominated the data among the cultural dimensions. Cultural Dimensions were also cover all cultural contents found in the reading passages, dialogues, pictures, audio, videos, or activities represented in each chapter and each grade on the MES platform. The Products dimension dominated the data among the other dimensions.

There are two fundamental reasons why the researcher wants to analyze the cultural contents in English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders. First to examine the types and dimensions of cultural content provided in English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders to foster students’ cultural awareness. Second, previous research on the cultural content analysis of English textbooks, particularly for junior high school, is still scarce, with most studies

focusing on digital materials and textbooks for senior high school students. Thus, this study is expected to fill the gaps mentioned above. Analyzing English textbook “English for Nusantara” for grade VIII is valuable since language learning cannot be separated from cultures. The present research analysis is based on three categories of culture from Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and five dimensions of culture proposed by Moran (2001).

1.2 Research Questions

1. What categories of cultural content are represented in English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders?
2. What cultural dimensions are represented in English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders?

1.3 Aims of Study

1. To examine the types of cultural content on English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders
2. To examine the cultural dimensions on English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight graders

1.4 Significances of Study

This research aims to provide valuable insight into the cultural content of the English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eight grades. The researcher hopes the findings can contribute to:

1. Critical tools for educators, especially teachers: Equipping educators with critical tools to analyze and knowledge of the cultural content of textbooks and also promote effective intercultural learning.

2. Wider discussions on cultural understanding, especially for researchers:
Contributing to broader conversations about the role of education in fostering cultural awareness and respect in a diverse society.

By critically examining the cultural content of the "English for Nusantara" textbook, this study hopes to contribute to promoting inclusive and accurate representations of cultures within English language learning for Junior High School students.

1.5 Scope of Study

This study delves into the English textbook "English for Nusantara" for eight graders to examine cultural content by according to the framework proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) which contains categories of culture, as well as the cultural framework regarding dimensions of culture proposed by Moran (2001).

