Promoting Intercultural Competences and Communication Skills through English Textbooks within Multilingual Education

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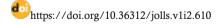*Corresponding Author e-mail: haerazi@undikma.ac.id

Abstract

In intercultural and transcultural communication contexts within multilingual education, English learners should be able to communicate and interact with other people who have a different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, intercultural content should be incorporated in EFL textbooks to promote learners' intercultural competencies and communication skills. The contents are designed to contain Anglo-American and British cultural dimensions and learners' home and foreign cultures. It is to prepare learners to become global citizens. The principal aim of this study is to investigate how teachers apply English textbooks to promote learners' intercultural competencies and intercultural communicative skills within multilingual education. It is a qualitative study consisting of three main data gathering methods: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and group discussions. Given the research data focusing on teachers' English textbook practices, researchers play a role within multiple realities. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and group discussion to gather the research data. This article showed that intercultural representations incorporated in EFL textbooks are used as useful resources for helping learners develop their intercultural competences and communication skills. Also, the ways teachers carry out their teaching in the classes are measured. This study shows that the teachers employ EFL textbooks effectively with utilizing potential teaching materials containing cultural values to promote learners' intercultural competences and communicative skills within multilingual education. This study also suggests that English teachers need reinforcement in multilingual education.

INTRODUCTION

English textbooks differ from one to another seen from its contents. Content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) encourages language learners to improve linguistic skills and cultures in a foreign language (Pérez Cañado et al., 2021; Pham & Unaldi, 2021). The design of content and language-integrated learning has the potential to build and extend learners' intercultural competences (Coyle, 2009; Czura, 2016) According to Hanesova (2014), teaching English in content-focused activities can foster learners' creative and critical thinking. Getting along with teachers' control, learners are involved in the interaction by providing various content areas (Fernández-Sanjurjo et al., 2019). It

is adapted by some English textbook developed around the world, including in Indonesia where English is taught as a foreign language.

Focusing on the instructional system in the current educational needs indicates learning-teaching as the result of the active construction of lessons on learning objects. Consequently, teachers are demanded to update their competences to meet the necessary requirement in EFL settings (Haerazi et al., 2018; Pérez Cañado, 2016). Because of this, Indonesian education is not only aimed at train learners' future professionals but also to prepare them as citizens to live in society. Labelling Indonesia has diverse cultures indicates that learners in schools interact with others in multicultural contexts. This diversity demands respect of others' cultures and languages (Bateman, 2015). Therefore, multicultural and multilingual learners have a strong influence on education (Moore, 2016). In other words, intercultural attitudes should be emerged from the teaching-learning contents.

A key debatable issue associated with English as foreign language (EFL) textbooks is multicultural contents. During 16 years, studies on EFL textbooks have been examining how cultural issues and multicultural contents are inserted in English language teaching textbooks to improve learners' intercultural competences and communicative skills (Dinh & Sharifian, 2017a; McConachy, 2018; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). In Asian countries, the EFL curricula emphases their teaching contents on intercultural communication (Aprianoto & Haerazi, 2019; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). Nevertheless, the findings indicate there is a gap curricular goals, learning objectives, and multicultural contents represented in EFL textbooks.

According to Indonesia National education, learners should be provided with educational system which is based on local wisdoms, democratic principles, and equality. Because of this, teachers should promote their learners with classroom experiences to help them develop their intercultural competences and communication skills to engage with cultural diversity in insightful and meaningful learning activities (Canale, 2016; Haerazi et al., 2018; McConachy, 2018). Incorporation of foreign cultures in ELT textbooks are in needs to stimulate and facilitate learners with intercultural understanding (Dinh & Sharifian, 2017b; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). In doing so, many teachers apply the principles of content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) in developing EFL textbooks. CLIL links language learning and intercultural development (Pham & Unaldi, 2021). It has learning principles in which intercultural communication and various cultural interaction allow learners to learn and internalize other cultures and languages. Therefore, English as a foreign language enable learners to have a broader and deep worldview.

Textbooks play an important role to place learners as the learning subjects who have intercultural competences and communicative skills in multilingual settings. Using textbooks enacted by national standards, teachers manage their teaching materials and utilize them to guide learners to learn in and out classes. Thus, the problem faced by English teachers is how the they apply the existing English textbooks to promote learners' intercultural competences and intercultural communicative skills within multilingual education. The case leads researchers to analyze how textbooks containing cultural values help learners become aware of intercultural dimensions.

METHOD

This article is a part of research focusing on exploring English teachers' practices of employing English textbooks to promote learners' intercultural competences and intercultural communicative skills within the multilingual educational context of Indonesia. It is a qualitative study consisting of three main data gathering methods: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and group discussions. Given the research

data focusing on teachers' English textbook practices, researchers play a role within multiple realities whereby researchers assume as the relativist ontology, respondent and informant co-create understanding (a researcher as a subjectivist epistemology), and naturalistic set of research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In applying an interpretive paradigm, researchers focused on enquires of meaning-making, sense-making, and attributional research activities that grasp action. It was done by utilizing the lens of teachers and researchers' interpretation and sense-making of what has been declared by teachers.

Research Data Collection

This study employed semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and group discussion to gather the research data. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with 9 English teachers who have an English master degree qualification and certified teachers. Teachers were selected purposively from 158 possible respondents to delve their English textbook practices. The interview teachers share relatively homogenous educational qualifications and background. The average ages ranged in 29-32 years old. The interview session lasted for an average of 45-60 minutes. The data obtained are triangulated with data from group discussions. The group discussions were done after the interview phase was carried out. The interview and group discussion questions and processes were conducted in interviewees' local language (Bahasa Indonesia). It is prepared to help interviewees address their opinions of teaching and learning practices in detailed and proper ways. Meanwhile, the classroom observation was conducted along with the interview phase, to see real English textbook practices. The snowball sampling technique was applied to select teachers who firmly confirm their preparation to be observed in classes.

Research Data Analysis

The research data are analyzed with utilizing content analysis. It initially consists of coding data and then prepare it for data analysis. The coded data are grouped into categories, to explore the relationship between the codes and categories (Cresswell, 2012). All categories are thematically clustered in line with the theoretical codes. The codes could underlie logical reasons found in pre-existing theoretical frames (Thorberg & Charmaz, 2014). Further, when the data analysis process is carried out, researchers also are collecting data for other information previously collected, searching for mayor ideas. Thus, the categories and codes are computed into percentages indicating the frequency of the codes and categories occurring in transcripts. However, it was neither precise nor applicable in the group discussion data because different participants in interactive nature are allowed to utter and express one idea several times. Therefore, the analysis focus of the group discussion is thematic in the form of interactive dialog or conversation among the group members.

The analysis of transcripts reveals interesting research findings of teachers' English textbook practices. The semi-structured interview and group discussion results indicate essential findings of teachers' textbook practices. However, teachers' cultural-linguistic competences are beyond the focus of the present study, which rather addresses findings relating to teachers' English practices to promote learners' intercultural competences and communication skills. The current study identified some teachers' practices of applying the English textbooks reported by individual and group interviewees, including multicultural values represented in the English Textbooks enacted by Indonesian Culture and Education Ministry, English textbooks provided for learners with chances to promote cultural awareness, teachers' practices of English textbooks endorsed by Indonesian

Culture and Education Ministry, and teachers' experiences with the implementation of Curriculum 13 (K13). The findings presented in this article deal with teachers' practices of English textbooks endorsed by the Indonesian Culture and Education Ministry, one of the emerging categories and codes in the group discussion and interview phase.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Multicultural Values in ELT Materials

The multicultural values derive from pluralistic ideology relating to the cultural differences of peoples from different cultural backgrounds. Multicultural in teacher education has been applied in the form of multicultural teacher education (MTE) courses. It prepares teachers to facilitate marginalized learners to conform to mainstream cultures and its existing values (Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Krummel, 2013). In the English language teaching (ELT) context, multicultural happens at the same time with the goals of ELT issues as a lingua franca. In this study, multicultural values are defined as learners' cultures coming from different sociocultural backgrounds.

English textbooks in Indonesia contain various texts selected purposefully to fit the policymakers' intention in line with curriculum goals. In developing tasks, materials of English textbooks are heavily affected by a curriculum ideology (Awayed-Bishara, 2015; Haerazi et al., 2018). Because of this, textbooks present ideologies embedded in an official curriculum, transfer ideas and values to grasp learners' identities, and instill community-specific values in learners (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Therefore, ELT textbooks teach both language and various hidden cultural issues and values.

The question distributed to English teachers is how the teachers define multiculturalism. Most teachers' answers answered around three connected categories; (1) cultures involve a number of groups, (2) cultures are related to demographics, and (3) cultures mirrored habits, beliefs, traditions, religiosities, ethnicity, and languages. These findings were confirmed by Burgin and Daniel (2020) in examining teachers' perspectives on multiculturalism issues in Ecuadorian schools. Teachers in Ecuador schools responded that the multiculturalism happen when a number of groups and cultures are connected. The diversity of cultures indicates multiculturalism bring different members of groups together. The same respond occurs from Indonesian English teachers in which the set of diverse cultures enable them to insert cultures in ELT textbooks although the endorsed textbooks by National government presented sort of local cultures. Multicultural values are subjected to improve learners' intercultural dimensions and communication skills, as an appreciation for diversity (Portera, 2020; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). According to teachers' perspective of multiculturalism, they define cultures can reflect its own language, habits, and nationalities. Therefore, they should respect the diverse cultures in multilingual education.

The question relating to how teachers create a multicultural classroom was distributed to them, to explore teachers' perspective of cultural diversities. Five teachers from nine shared their ideas in which they create multicultural classroom by analyzing the enacted curriculum and learning activities showing diversity. One teacher argued that 'I consider learners' religion, culture, and demographic background when learning is affected by fundamental cases in learning activities.' Another teacher also stated 'learners in one class consists of different habits, tradition, language expression, and religion and because of this, I should care with cultural diversity in my class'. To help students effective learning, some teachers adopted pedagogical aspects prioritizing learners' background to interact with others. Students are asked to create some small groups and carry out "collaborative learning". It is in line with Nieto (2017) and Kumar and Lauerman (2018)

who depicted that collaborative opportunities between stereotype beliefs and discomfort with learners' diversity can be integrated in multicultural goals to inform proximal cultural intentions and instructional practices.

Teachers' Practices of ELT Textbooks

Studies of cultures of inner circle countries (USA and British cultures) are predominantly denoted in ELT textbooks. Meanwhile, the cultures reflecting the outer circle countries (can be international or national cultures) are scantily represented and exposed in ELT textbooks (Haerazi et al., 2018; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). In Indonesia, outer circle cultures in ELT textbooks are more dominant than the exposure to home cultures. In the current study, researchers investigate teachers' practices of implementing the ELT textbooks. The ELT textbooks are authored by a team of ELT textbooks. They are considered as familiar with ELT practices in Indonesia. Thus, the ELT textbooks are nationally and massively utilized and used.

Because Indonesian learners have had multilingual students, who have L1 and L2, and L3 speakers, teachers feel easy to teach other cultures. In practice, teachers divided into some topics in line with the textbook themes. For instance, in the teaching of writing skills, they exposure local cultures such as wedding ceremony (Czura, 2016; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Students are asked to read first issues related to wedding ceremonies. Afterwards, students are led to internalize the contents, and then they practice writing. It is aimed at internalizing local cultures before going to the target cultures. In this case, teachers always refer to contents confirmed in the textbook. Besides, some teachers did improvisation in implementing ELT textbooks. An English teacher exposure the target cultures without confirming with the local cultures. Students are asked to understand most target cultures. It aims to comprehend how the native speakers exhibit their cultures into the world.

Compared to textbook practices in Indonesia, English textbooks in Hongkong and Korea represented foreign cultures dominantly in their secondary schools (Su, 2016; Yuen, 2011). The presentation of the cultures was depicted through the presence of tasks, images, and texts. In this study, the practices of ELT textbooks in secondary schools in Indonesia are depicted in texts such as passages about famous people, tales, characters, and etc. although factual cultural lessons are addressed, those are not enough because those do not prompt students to internalize cultural values.

CONCLUSION

English textbooks in Indonesia contain various texts selected purposefully to fit the policymakers' intention in line with curriculum goals. In developing tasks, materials of English textbooks are heavily affected by a curriculum ideology. Because of this, textbooks present ideologies embedded in an official curriculum, transfer ideas and values to grasp learners' identities, and instill community-specific values in learners. Therefore, ELT textbooks teach both language and various hidden cultural issues and values.

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set of diverse cultures enable them to insert cultures in ELT textbooks although the endorsed textbooks by National government presented sort of local cultures. Multicultural values are subjected to improve learners' intercultural dimensions and communication skills, as an appreciation for diversity. According to teachers' perspective of multiculturalism, they define cultures can reflect its own language, habits, and nationalities. Therefore, they should respect the diverse cultures in multilingual education.

RECOMMENDATION

This study investigates efforts of how teachers apply English textbooks to promote learners' intercultural competencies and intercultural communicative skills within multilingual education. This article found that intercultural representations incorporated in EFL textbooks are used as useful resources for helping learners develop their intercultural competences and communication skills. This study is only focused on designs of English textbooks representing target cultures and local cultures. For further researchers, metacognitive and language awareness should be reflected in English textbooks. Also, the ways teachers carry out their teaching in the classes are measured. This study shows that the teachers employ EFL textbooks effectively with utilizing potential teaching materials containing cultural values to promote learners' intercultural competences and communicative skills within multilingual education. This study also recommend that English teachers need reinforcement in multilingual education.

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