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## A Comparative Analysis of Source and Target Cultures in Indonesian 10<sup>th</sup> Grade English Textbooks

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### Abstract

This study examines cultural representation in two Indonesian grade 10 English textbooks, *Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"* and *Pathway to English*, within the context of the new Merdeka curriculum. It aims to explore differences in cultural content between the source culture (Indonesia) and the target culture (English-speaking countries) using Yuen's (2011) content analysis framework. The findings reveal that *Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"* presents a more balanced portrayal by highlighting the source culture and incorporating international elements, especially through visuals. In contrast, *Pathway to English* predominantly emphasizes the target culture, offering a limited representation of Indonesian culture. This imbalance may hinder students' cultural identity development while promoting global awareness. The study highlights the need for more balanced cultural representation in textbook design to enhance students' cultural competence and suggests further research on how such materials influence students' cultural understanding.

### Keywords

Cultural Competence, Cultural Representation, English Textbooks, Indonesian Education, Source Culture, Target Culture.

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## Introduction

It is commonly acknowledged that in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the aim is to develop students' communication skills and ensure they acquire a deep understanding of cultural aspects (Baker, 2012). According to Chlopek (2008), it is thought that having knowledge as well as awareness of different cultures is crucial to preventing humorous incidents or even more serious misunderstandings. The relationship between language and culture implicitly impacts language learning, which implies that learning a language also involves learning about culture since culture provides the necessary context for language use (Prihatiningsih et al., 2021). Therefore, there is no doubt that language and culture are intertwined. Lum (2018, p. 2) emphasizes the importance of culture in language learning by stating that "it is not just about what is being said, it is how it is said that makes the difference," highlighting that the person who learns a language without understanding cultural context risks becoming a fluent fool, underscoring the essential role of culture in meaningful language acquisition.

Achieving proficiency in the language they are studying or the target language is the main objective for language learners (Agustina & Kencana, 2023). However, the cultural factor plays a significant role in determining communication effectiveness. Culture has an important effect on forming and understanding meanings because language becomes more significant in its cultural context. Thus, developing cultural awareness is essential for success in language acquisition (Lee & Li, 2020). Understanding intercultural communication is crucial for students studying English as a foreign language in the context of English language education. A deep comprehension of both the local and native cultures is necessary for understanding intercultural communication.

With regard to intercultural communication, this effort seeks to assist students in comprehending various expressions, applications, and limitations of culture. It is believed that improving intercultural communication abilities during language learning can help language learners better negotiate the complex relationships between language and culture in a multicultural global society (Chi & Suthers, 2015). Baker (2012) emphasizes the significance of teaching students how to use their knowledge of English language communication in various cultural contexts with purpose and flexibility. Additionally, it is important to consider the region's indigenous or local culture. Therefore, the local culture plays a crucial part in deepening comprehension of traditional customs and social norms and aiding in cross-cultural communication within language education.

In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), facilitating student access to both their own and foreign cultures would enable them to appreciate the diversity of other cultures while also learning about their own (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2018). In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject at the secondary level. However, most students still struggle to learn English, even though it is sometimes taught at an earlier level—the primary level. Tran and Dang (2014) highlighted that the challenges arise from the insufficient focus on cultural and intercultural aspects in ELL (English Language Learner) classes, leading students to be unaware of the distinct ways each language expresses emotions and conveys messages. Thus, in this case, where textbooks serve as essential tools for teaching and learning languages and are recognized as the primary source of information for language instruction (Jismulatif & Putri, 2023), it should incorporate both the cultural background of learners (Shin et al., 2011) and the cultures of other countries, especially inner-circle countries, such as USA, UK,

Canada, New Zealand that use English as their first language and outer circle comprises countries, such as India, the Philippines and Nigeria where English is used as an official language in the historical context of colonization.

Kusumaningrum et al. (2023) said that textbooks are seen as a medium for presenting language and culture. In line with that, Agustina and Kencana (2023) state that, in language education, the common belief is that textbooks are the main source of instruction for language classes. Nonetheless, textbooks are "cultural products" as well as language samples, and it is important to evaluate whether or not the cultural contents are appropriate for the intended audience and serve as a way to introduce students to different cultures (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 31-46). This aligns with Kramsch (2014), who stated that besides helping students further build their cultural discourse, textbooks should allow them to interact with other cultural discourses or target cultures. Thus, textbooks must balance cultural content to prevent students from passing judgment on others and help them form their own (Putra et al., 2020).

Considering the significance of cultural elements in language textbooks, several studies have investigated the representation of cultural content in Indonesian English textbooks across different educational levels, revealing a trend of limited cultural diversity. Putra et al. (2020) examined twelfth-grade textbooks from major publishers, finding a dominance of English-speaking and Indonesian cultures with insufficient broader cultural representation. Similarly, Kusumaningrum et al. (2023) analyzed senior high school textbooks for grades X and XI, highlighting an imbalance in depicting non-English speaking, British/American, and Indonesian cultures. Agustina and Kencana (2023) compared local and global textbooks, discovering that global textbooks emphasize target cultures (mainly English-speaking countries) while local ones focus on Indonesian culture, neglecting international cultures. For seventh graders, studies on junior high school textbooks by Prihatiningsih et al. (2021) and Astrid et al. (2023) reported similar issues of inadequate cultural diversity. Additionally, Silvia (2015) explored teachers' attitudes toward the cultural content of English textbooks, providing insights into educators' perceptions.

Although there has been extensive discussion about cultural content in high school English textbooks in Indonesia, very few have analyzed textbooks aligned with the new curriculum, namely the Merdeka (free-to-learn) curriculum. Previous studies predominantly relied on the old curriculum, the 2013 curriculum, which is no longer relevant to the current context. Additionally, previous research mainly focused on analyzing textbooks published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, with very little attention given to textbooks from other publishers. Furthermore, research on cultural content analysis of English senior high school textbooks that use the Merdeka curriculum—the present curriculum used in Indonesia—is little to none.

Thus, in this research, the writers are interested in conducting a study that aims at analyzing and comparing the presentation of cultural content (source culture vs. target culture) integrated into English textbooks for 10th graders senior high school students who have already implemented the Merdeka or free-to-learn curriculum from 2 different publishers, namely Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress" by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and "Pathway to English (K-Merdeka)" by Erlangga Publisher. This decision was made because, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has been little to no discussion over the cultural content of either of the two textbooks since they were published in 2022. It is important to highlight that Yuen's (2011) study primarily focused on representing foreign cultures, specifically categorized into target cultures (British and American) and international cultures

(excluding Hong Kong). To address this limitation, the present study adds an area—the source culture or the learners' own culture, which is the culture of Indonesia.

Furthermore, comparing textbooks from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and a private publisher such as Erlangga serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it allows for evaluating the effectiveness of different publishing sources in delivering culturally relevant content. Secondly, it facilitates assessing whether one type of textbook, from a governmental or private entity, presents cultural content more effectively, considering aspects such as source culture versus target culture emphasis and its impact on student comprehension and engagement. Through this comparison, the writers hope insights can be gained into which type of textbook better addresses cultural content, aiding educators and policymakers in making informed decisions about instructional materials.

Implementing the Merdeka curriculum in English language textbooks for secondary schools in Indonesia, particularly for 10th-grade students, regarding cultural content, presents a significant shift. Previous studies typically evaluated cultural aspects within these textbooks alongside the previous curriculum. However, with the adoption of the Merdeka curriculum, there arises a necessity to reevaluate these textbooks' cultural elements. This curriculum emphasizes a more comprehensive integration of cultural knowledge, necessitating a thorough examination of how cultural themes are addressed within the textbooks aligned with this new framework. Therefore, researchers must explore and assess how cultural contents are incorporated into English language textbooks published under the Merdeka curriculum to ensure their relevance and efficacy in fostering cultural awareness and comprehension among students.

## Methods

### Textbook Corpus

This study examines two English textbooks created for Indonesian 10th-grade students, each published by different Indonesian publishers. In Indonesia, textbooks fall into two categories: compulsory and supplementary, which align with the current curriculum. The government publishes compulsory textbooks, while private publishers release supplementary or optional textbooks. Among the two textbooks analyzed, one is a compulsory textbook titled *Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"* (Hermawan et al., 2022), and the other is *Pathway to English* (Sudarwati & Grace, 2022), published by Erlangga. Local experts write them, and they are widely used in Indonesia.

**TABLE 1. The Examined Textbooks**

Title	Authors	Publisher	Number of Units	Year
Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"	Budi Hermawan Dwi Haryanti Nining Suryaningsih	Government	6	2022
Pathway to English	Th. M. Sudarwati Eudia Grace	Erlangga	6	2022

*The Framework of Data Analysis*

*Cultural Representation*

A content analysis approach will be utilized to systematically investigate the representation of cultural content in the selected textbooks. Following a well-established framework by Yuen (2011), this analysis will identify and categorize cultural references, including customs, traditions, beliefs, and practices from different cultural backgrounds. Each instance of cultural representation will be coded. Yuen (2011) divided culture into four categories: products, practices, perspectives, and persons. Products associated with civilization include food, tourism centers, films, literature (poems, stories), etc. A group of people's customs, way of life, and social interactions are examples of their daily behavior, which is referred to as their practices. Perspectives include the values and beliefs that people of society uphold as part of their worldview. It is broken down into several categories: worldviews, mythologies, and inspirations (equality).

Last but not least, the term "person" includes both actual, well-known people and unknown individuals. The first step in analyzing the textbooks involved examining their cultural representation, including cultural regions and aspects. Cultural elements were identified across all texts and images in the textbooks. These elements were classified by their region of origin (Indonesia, non-English-speaking countries, Asia, Africa, or English-speaking countries) and by cultural aspects (products, practices, perspectives, and person). Next, it examines how different cultures are portrayed across various textbook elements. This analysis considers the frequency and nature of cultural content, specifically focusing on the source culture (Indonesia), target culture (English-speaking countries), and international culture. By evaluating these elements, the study aims to understand how balanced and diverse the cultural representation is within the educational material.

**TABLE 2. Data extract from Bahasa Inggris “Work in Progress.”**

Theme	Page	Section	Cultural aspect (Regions: number of items)	Abstract (Region: aspect)	Cultural
Chapter 6: Fractured Stories	131	Task 1 (Let's Ponder)	Product (Indonesia: 1)	What would happen if Malin Kundang's mother forgave him? (Indonesia: product)	
	132	Task 1 (Listen and Confirm)	Product (Indonesia: 6)	Picture 6.2 Malin Kundang (A). (Indonesia: product)	
				Picture 6.3 Malin Kundang (B). (Indonesia: product)	
				Picture 6.4 Malin Kundang (C). (Indonesia: product)	

Theme	Page	Section	Cultural aspect (Regions: number of items)	Abstract (Region: aspect)	Cultural
				Picture 6.5 Malin Kundang (D). (Indonesia: product)	
				Picture 6.6 Malin Kundang (E). (Indonesia: product)	
				Picture 6.7 Malin Kundang (F). (Indonesia: product)	
	134	Task 2 (Let's Play)	Product (Non-Eng speaking country: 1)	Cinderella wants to go to the ball, but her stepsisters prevent her from going (Non-Eng speaking country: product)	
	135	Task 3 (Read and Answer part 1 & 2)	Product (Non-Eng speaking country: 3)	Little Red Riding Hood (traditional version and a fractured fairy tale) (Non-Eng speaking country: product) Picture 6.9 Red Riding Hood (traditional version) (Non-Eng speaking country: product) Picture 6.10 Red Riding Hood (a fractured fairy tale) (Non-Eng speaking country: product)	

(Source: Hermawan et al., 2022)

This investigation encompasses all materials, including texts and images, that explicitly relate to the target, source, and international cultures. For example, a cultural *product* of Indonesia is counted in Task 1 (Let's Ponder) section in the textbook *Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"* since it mentions a specific *story* ("..... if Malin Kundang's mother forgave him?") (see Table 2 for more detail information). Any cultural aspect that appears more than once in different sections was counted multiple times.

### ***Presentation of Cultural Values Through Texts, Images, and Activities***

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of cultural balance in the English language textbook for 10th-grade students, this research also examines the differences in how cultural values are presented through three key elements: texts, images, and activities. These elements are crucial in conveying cultural information to students and can significantly influence how they understand and appreciate different cultures. **Texts** in the textbook are the primary



source of written information, presenting stories, dialogues, and articles that depict cultural aspects. Through text analysis, this research aims to assess whether the source culture (Indonesian culture) or the target culture (cultures of English-speaking countries) is more dominant in the narratives and descriptions provided to students. **Images** accompanying the texts represent cultural values that might not be fully captured through words alone. By analyzing images, we can determine whether the visuals in the textbook predominantly depict the source culture or the target culture and how these images either reinforce or contrast with the information presented in the texts. **Activities** designed for students, such as assignments, projects, or discussions, allow students to engage directly with cultural material. The analysis of these activities focuses on how they encourage students to explore and understand the source or target culture and whether these activities offer balanced opportunities for students to develop an understanding of both cultures. This research identifies which culture is more dominant by examining these three elements—texts, images, and activities. It evaluates how the balance or imbalance in cultural presentation may influence students' perceptions and understanding. The findings from this analysis will provide a more holistic view of how the textbook presents cultural values and its impact on cultural education in schools.

## Findings

### Cultural Representation

The analysis of cultural representation, including cultural regions and aspects, results in the information presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. The Cultural Representation in Bahasa Inggris “Work in Progress”**

Aspects	Indonesia	Non-English-speaking country	Asia	Africa	English-speaking country
Products	15	7	2	1	27
Practices	5	6	3	-	8
Perspectives	1	-	-	-	-
Person	9	7	-	1	5
Total	30	20	5	2	40
%	31%	21%	5%	2%	41%

Table 3 presents the cultural representation in the textbook *Bahasa Inggris, "Work in Progress,"* showing the distribution of cultural aspects across different regions. English-speaking countries are the most prominently represented, accounting for 41% of the total cultural content. This includes 27 mentions of products, mainly stories and films such as *Harry Potter*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Tangled*. Additionally, English-speaking countries have significant mentions in the person category, including figures like LeBron James. Indonesia follows with 31% representation, where 15 instances relate to products, predominantly traditional foods such as Gado-Gado, Rujak, Cendol, and Pempek (Figure 1). The person category also features prominently, mentioning athletes like Greysia Polii. (Figure 2).

Figure 1

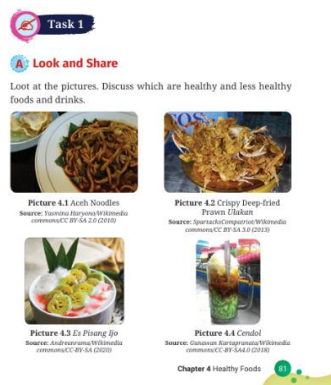
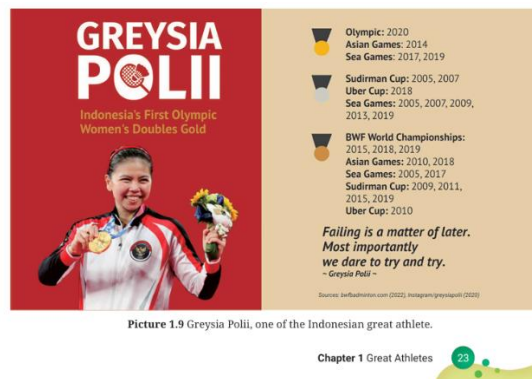


Figure 2



(Source: Hermawan et al., 2022)

Furthermore, non-English-speaking countries rank third, contributing 21% of the content, focusing on products and people in their cultural aspects. Meanwhile, cultural practices of English-speaking countries (e.g., Picture 5.7 Graffiti is always vandalism) and Indonesia (e.g., Indonesia consumes inadequate amounts of protein, fruits, and vegetables, and excessive amounts of Na and Western fast food) appeared eight and five times, respectively. However, the perspective aspect is notably underrepresented, appearing only once in the textbook discussing people's thoughts on graffiti from Indonesia. Asia and Africa are particularly underrepresented, contributing only 5% and 2% of the content, respectively. This detailed analysis strongly emphasizes English-speaking countries and Indonesia, while other regions and certain cultural aspects, like perspectives, receive minimal attention.

TABLE 4. The Cultural Representation in Pathway to English

Aspects	Indonesia	Non-English-speaking country	Asia	Africa	English-speaking country
Products	10	7	14	4	18
Practices	1	-	-	-	-
Perspectives	2	-	-	-	2
Person	7	8	3	-	18
Total	20	15	17	4	38
%	21%	16%	18%	4%	40%

Table 4 provides a detailed look at the cultural representation in the textbook *Pathway to English*, highlighting the distribution of cultural aspects across various regions. English-speaking countries dominate the content, making up 40% of the total, focusing significantly on products and people. Specific examples include the mention of cities like New York and Southampton and characters like Peter Parker from *Spider-Man*. Similarly, Indonesia, which contributes 21% of the content, is heavily focused on products and people, referencing cultural landmarks like Candi Prambanan and historical figures such as Mpu Gandring. Asia, ranking



third with 18% representation, is predominantly featured through products, specifically tourist attractions like The Fish Building and The Giant Glass Slipper Building. Unlike the first textbook, where the perspective aspect is almost non-existent, *Pathway to English* presents perspectives four times—twice for Indonesia and twice for English-speaking countries. However, the aspect of the practices is nearly absent in this textbook, with only one mention found in the context of Indonesia, specifically related to the Indonesia Inventors Day event. When comparing the two textbooks, *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* and *Pathway to English*, it is evident that both prioritize the representation of English-speaking countries and Indonesia, particularly in the products and people categories. However, while *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* largely neglects perspectives, *Pathway to English* compensates for this by including them more frequently. On the other hand, practices are underrepresented in both books, especially in *Pathway to English*, where they are mentioned just once. This comparison underscores a consistent emphasis on specific regions and cultural aspects, while other regions, particularly Africa and Asia, along with certain aspects like practices and perspectives, remain underexplored.

***Presentation of Cultural Values Through Texts, Images, and Activities***

The analysis of cultural representation through texts, images, and activities results in the following information presented in Table 5.

**TABLE 5. Cultural Representation of texts, images, and activities in Bahasa Inggris “Work in Progress.”**

Elements	Source Culture: Indonesia	Target Culture:	
		English-speaking country	International Culture
Texts	9	7	14
Images	22	9	11
Activities	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>42,67</b>	<b>22.66</b>	<b>34.66</b>

Table 5 presents the breakdown of cultural representation in texts, images, and activities of the first textbook, *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress."* The data reveals that Indonesia's source culture is most prominently featured, making up 42.67% of the total cultural content. This includes nine instances in texts, 22 in images, and 1 activity.

Figure 3 (Example of images in Bahasa Inggris “Work in Progress”)



(Source: Hermawan et al., 2022)

The target culture, representing English-speaking countries, accounts for 22.66% of the content, with 7 mentions in texts, 9 in images, and 1 in activities. International culture is also significantly represented, contributing 34.66% to the overall content, with 14 instances in texts, 11 in images, and 1 in activities. This distribution suggests that while there is a strong focus on Indonesia, the textbook also provides a considerable amount of content related to international culture, ensuring a more global perspective. However, the representation of English-speaking countries, although present, is less emphasized compared to the other two cultural categories. The inclusion of cultural elements in activities is notably low across all cultures, indicating a potential area for enhancement in terms of engaging students with diverse cultural practices through interactive learning.

TABLE 6. Cultural Representation of texts, images, and activities in Pathway to English

Elements	Source Culture: Indonesia	Target Culture: English-speaking country	International Culture
Texts	2	9	2
Images	2	12	11
Activities	-	5	2
Total	4	26	15
%	9%	58%	33%

A starkly different pattern emerges when we turn to Table 6, which examines Pathway to English. The target culture dominates, making up 58% of the total cultural content. This dominance is particularly evident in images and activities where English-speaking countries are heavily featured. Indonesia's source culture is significantly underrepresented, accounting for just 9% of the content, with very few mentions in texts and images and none in activities. International culture holds 33% of the content, primarily through images and a few activities.

Connecting these findings, it is clear that while *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* strongly emphasizes representing Indonesian culture, *Pathway to English* shifts the focus toward

English-speaking countries, with minimal representation of the source culture. This contrast highlights the different approaches to cultural representation in the two textbooks. *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* offers a more balanced inclusion of local and international cultures. In contrast, *Pathway to English* heavily prioritizes the target culture, potentially limiting students' exposure to their own and other global cultures in a well-rounded manner.

## Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several important points regarding the representation of culture in two English textbooks used in Indonesian high schools. First, there is a clear imbalance in how cultural aspects are portrayed in *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* and *Pathway to English*, with the target culture (English-speaking countries) dominating both books. This aligns with previous studies like Yuen (2011), who noted that English textbooks often focus heavily on the target culture, especially from English-speaking countries, due to their global influence on language learning. In contrast with earlier research by Putra et al. (2020), Agustina and Kencana (2023), and Kusumaningrum et al. (2023), which found source culture (Indonesia) to be more prominent in their analyses, this study reveals that target culture is overwhelmingly represented, particularly in *Pathway to English*, where it takes up 50% of the content, while source culture only accounts for 9%. This disparity likely stems from variations in curriculum and the differing goals of government-published versus privately-published textbooks. According to Casper, S. E. (Ed.) (2014), textbooks often reflect the cultural agenda of their publishers, which can explain why government-published books like *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* maintain a stronger focus on local culture than those published by private companies. The overrepresentation of the target culture in *Pathway to English* is problematic because it risks alienating students from their cultural identity and creating a one-sided view of the world. Risager (2007) emphasizes that language textbooks should aim for a balance between local and global cultures to foster intercultural competence among students. When the source culture is underrepresented in this study, students may not gain the necessary awareness and pride in their cultural background, potentially leading to a cultural inferiority complex (Byram & Kramsch, 2008).

Moreover, a commonality between this study and previous ones lies in the overrepresentation of products as the dominant cultural aspect across both textbooks. Both books focus heavily on tangible cultural items, such as food, places, films, and notable figures. As Lee (2009) noted, this is common in language textbooks because products are easier to depict and more immediately recognizable to students. This also aligns with Yuen (2011, p. 464), who said, "Students' interest may be more easily aroused by popular products such as places, travel, and food than more abstract perspectives such as equality." However, perspectives and practices that provide deeper insights into cultural beliefs and behaviors are often neglected. This lack of focus on more abstract cultural elements is concerning, as it may lead to a superficial understanding of culture. Byram (1997) emphasizes that understanding another culture involves more than just acquiring factual knowledge; it requires gaining insight into the reasons behind people's behaviors and the cultural context that shapes them. This skewed representation risks leading students to view culture as a series of static products and famous figures rather than a living, evolving system of beliefs and behaviors. The failure to adequately represent these textbooks' perspectives and practices could also limit students' ability to engage with cultural differences critically.

Another issue identified in *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* is gender bias, with male figures dominating the illustrations and images. This supports findings from Sunderland (2000), who notes that textbooks frequently exhibit gender bias, often portraying men in more active and authoritative roles. The predominance of male figures in leadership positions may reinforce outdated stereotypes about gender roles and limit the representation of women in influential societal positions. This imbalance in representation could affect how students perceive gender roles, especially in more conservative cultures where textbooks are a major source of information. To counter this, Sunderland recommends deliberately presenting more diverse and equitable gender portrayals in educational materials.

Furthermore, the way cultural content is distributed across texts, images, and activities further reflects the educational strategies employed by each textbook. However, the representation of culture through activities is alarmingly low in both textbooks. Cultural activities are vital in engaging students with the material in interactive and practical ways. However, both books feature few activities that emphasize culture. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) propose that students can better internalize cultural knowledge and enhance their critical intercultural skills by engaging with cultural materials through interactive activities. The limited representation of activities related to the source and international cultures suggests a missed opportunity to engage students in exploring and reflecting on a wider range of cultural practices. If this trend continues, it could result in students lacking the cultural awareness to navigate a globalized world effectively.

Overall, the analysis of these two variables—cultural representation across regions and through different educational elements—reveals a complex interplay between the need to maintain cultural identity and the goal of exposing students to global cultures. The differences between the two textbooks highlight the varying priorities in curriculum design, with each approach offering distinct strengths and challenges in fostering cultural understanding in the classroom. To address these issues, it is crucial for textbook authors to achieve a more balanced representation of cultural aspects and include a broader range of perspectives and practices alongside the dominant focus on products and persons. Incorporating more culture-related activities would also enable students to apply their knowledge in practical, interactive ways, fostering intercultural competence and critical thinking. Addressing gender bias in textbooks is equally important to ensure equitable gender representation. Future research should explore these issues further, investigating how cultural and gender representations evolve about curriculum changes and societal shifts.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reveals that both English textbooks analyzed—*Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress"* and *Pathway to English*—primarily emphasize the target culture (English-speaking countries), with the source culture (Indonesia) and international cultures receiving less representation. While the government-published *Bahasa Inggris "Work in Progress"* shows a more balanced approach, *Pathway to English* from a private publisher has a significant gap, with only 9% representing the source culture. This imbalance in cultural representation, especially the dominance of products over more meaningful aspects like perspectives and practices, may limit students' cultural understanding and awareness. Additionally, gender bias was evident in *Bahasa Inggris's "Work in Progress,"* where male figures dominated the illustrations. This reflects ongoing issues with traditional gender stereotypes in education, which could shape students'

views on gender roles. Moreover, both textbooks lack sufficient culture-related activities, which could hinder the development of students' intercultural competence.

These findings underscore the critical need for a balanced approach to cultural representation in educational materials. A well-rounded textbook should introduce students to a wide array of global cultures and ensure their cultural identity is prominently and meaningfully represented. This approach is essential for fostering students who are culturally competent, globally aware, and confident in their own cultural identity. Such an educational strategy is crucial for preparing students to navigate the complexities of an increasingly interconnected world, where understanding and appreciating cultural diversity is key to personal and societal success. Authors should focus on balancing cultural aspects beyond products to improve future textbooks, incorporating perspectives and practices for deeper engagement. More emphasis on activities promoting cultural understanding and eliminating gender bias would create more inclusive and comprehensive educational resources.

As a follow-up to these findings, a suggested area for future research could involve a comparative study on how cultural competence is developed in students using these textbooks. The next article could explore the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches in cultivating students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and ability to engage with diverse cultures. By investigating student engagement, pedagogical strategies, the role of teachers, and the longitudinal impact of cultural education, this research could provide valuable insights into how educational materials shape cultural competence and prepare students for a globalized world.

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