

Understanding Culture through Textbooks: A Study on Teacher Cognition and Cultural Representation in Indonesian EFL Classrooms

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: <i>cultural representation; teacher cognition; EFL textbooks; intercultural competence; Indonesian EFL classrooms</i> DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22437/langue.v4i2.55235 Received: May 07, 2026 Reviewed: June 20, 2026 Accepted: June 30, 2026	<i>This study investigates how cultural representation is constructed in Indonesian EFL textbooks and mediated through teacher cognition in classroom practice. Using a qualitative case study design, the research analyzed five selected chapters from the Grade 10 English textbook Work in Progress and conducted semi-structured interviews with three EFL teachers in Gresik, East Java. The study employed qualitative content analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and teacher cognition theory to examine textual, visual, and pedagogical dimensions of culture. The findings indicate that globalized or modernized culture dominates textbook representation, while Indonesian culture is embedded implicitly through collaborative classroom practices and native-speaker culture receives limited representation. The study also reveals that teachers play an important mediating role in interpreting cultural content. However, classroom practices tend to prioritize communicative competence over explicit intercultural reflection due to curriculum demands, assessment orientation, and time constraints. Consequently, cultural learning remains largely implicit and less critically developed. The findings suggest that cultural representation in EFL classrooms emerges dynamically through the interaction between materials, pedagogy, and teacher cognition. This study highlights the importance of explicit intercultural pedagogy and teacher preparation in supporting intercultural competence development in Indonesian EFL contexts.</i>

1. Introduction

The integration of culture into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education has undergone a significant shift from a static and essentialist orientation toward a more dynamic and contextual perspective. In earlier English Language Teaching (ELT) traditions, culture was commonly associated with native-speaker norms, particularly those related to Anglo-American societies, and was treated as a fixed body of knowledge to be transmitted to learners (Kramsch, 2013; Liddicoat, 2005). However, the global expansion of English and increasing linguistic diversity have challenged the assumption that English belongs exclusively to particular cultural groups. The emergence of English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has repositioned English as a pluricentric communicative resource shaped by multilingual users across different contexts (Baker, 2018; McKay, 2018b; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

This transformation has important implications for language education, particularly in relation to intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Contemporary approaches to language learning increasingly emphasize learners' ability not only to communicate effectively but also to interpret, negotiate, and critically reflect on cultural meanings in intercultural interaction (Porto & Houghton, 2021). Nevertheless, the implementation of ICC in classroom practice remains contested. While some studies suggest that intercultural approaches can enhance learners' intercultural awareness and global readiness (Sercu, 2020; Tran & Duong, 2022), others argue that cultural learning in EFL classrooms often remains superficial and limited to factual exposure rather than critical engagement (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). This issue highlights the need to examine how cultural meanings are represented in instructional materials and enacted in classroom practice.

Within this context, textbooks continue to play a central role in EFL classrooms, particularly in centralized educational systems such as Indonesia. Government-issued textbooks function not only as instructional resources but also as policy instruments that reflect curriculum priorities and ideological orientations (Widodo, 2020). Recent scholarship has emphasized that textbooks are not neutral materials; instead, they actively construct cultural meanings through selective representation and discursive framing (Curdts-Christiansen & Weninger, 2022). At the same time, contemporary ELT materials increasingly integrate culture implicitly through communicative tasks, multimodal texts, and interactional activities rather than through explicit cultural explanation (Richards, 2019). Although this approach supports authentic communication, it may also limit opportunities for critical intercultural reflection because learners are not always guided to analyze cultural meanings explicitly (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

The Indonesian EFL context provides an important setting for investigating these issues due to its linguistic and cultural diversity. English in Indonesia is positioned simultaneously as a global language and a foreign language associated with education, mobility, and international communication (Zein, 2021). Consequently, EFL classrooms often face tensions between promoting local cultural identity and preparing learners for global communication. Recent curriculum reforms, including the Merdeka Curriculum, have attempted to integrate communicative competence, student-centered learning, and cultural education into classroom practice. However, previous studies indicate that cultural content in textbooks is frequently

presented descriptively rather than critically, limiting the development of deeper intercultural understanding (Pratama, 2022; Widodo, 2020).

Despite the growing body of research on cultural representation in EFL textbooks, most previous studies have focused primarily on textbook content analysis without examining how cultural meanings are interpreted and enacted by teachers in classroom practice. Similarly, studies on teacher cognition often explore teachers' beliefs about intercultural learning but pay limited attention to the relationship between teacher cognition and textbook representation. As a result, the interaction between instructional materials and pedagogical mediation remains underexplored, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts.

This gap is important because textbooks do not function independently in shaping intercultural learning. Cultural meanings presented in textbooks are actively interpreted, adapted, and transformed through classroom interaction and teacher decision-making. Therefore, understanding intercultural learning requires an integrated analysis that connects textbook representation with teacher cognition.

To address this gap, the present study investigates both the representation of culture in Indonesian EFL textbooks and the ways teachers mediate such representation in classroom practice. Specifically, the study seeks to answer two research questions:

1. Which cultures are represented in the selected textbook chapters?
2. How are these cultures constructed through textual and multimodal features?

By combining textbook analysis with teacher cognition, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how intercultural learning is constructed in Indonesian EFL classrooms. The findings are expected to contribute to research on intercultural communicative competence, textbook studies, and teacher cognition while also providing practical implications for culturally responsive EFL pedagogy in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Culture and Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL

The concept of culture in EFL education has evolved significantly alongside changes in the global status of English. Traditional ELT approaches frequently associated English with native-speaker cultures, especially British and American cultural norms, positioning learners as recipients of fixed cultural knowledge (Kramsch, 2013). However, the development of EIL and ELF perspectives has challenged this assumption by recognizing English as a global means of communication used by multilingual speakers across diverse sociocultural contexts (Baker, 2018; McKay, 2018b).

This shift has influenced the emergence of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as an important objective in language education. ICC emphasizes learners' ability to communicate effectively while understanding, interpreting, and negotiating cultural differences during interaction (Porto & Houghton, 2021). Rather than memorizing cultural facts, learners are expected to develop intercultural awareness, critical reflection, and sensitivity toward cultural diversity.

Nevertheless, previous studies indicate that the implementation of ICC in EFL classrooms remains inconsistent. Sercu (2020) and Tran and Duong (2022) argue that intercultural approaches can improve learners' global awareness and intercultural sensitivity. In contrast, Setyono and Widodo (2019) note that cultural learning in many EFL contexts still focuses on surface-level exposure without encouraging deeper critical engagement. These contrasting findings suggest that intercultural competence depends not only on theoretical curriculum goals but also on how culture is represented and taught in practice.

2.2 Cultural Representation in EFL Textbooks

Textbooks remain one of the most influential components of EFL instruction, especially in centralized educational systems. In Indonesia, government-issued textbooks serve not only as teaching materials but also as representations of curriculum policy and educational ideology (Widodo, 2020). Consequently, textbooks play a significant role in shaping learners' cultural understanding and classroom interaction.

Recent studies emphasize that textbooks are not neutral resources because they selectively construct cultural meanings through language, images, and discourse (Curdts-Christiansen & Weninger, 2022). Traditional EFL textbooks often represented culture explicitly through factual descriptions of native-speaker societies, including customs, traditions, and daily life. However, contemporary ELT materials increasingly embed culture implicitly within communicative activities, multimodal texts, and collaborative tasks (Richards, 2019).

Although implicit cultural integration may support authentic communication and task-based learning, it may also reduce opportunities for explicit intercultural reflection (Rose & Galloway, 2019). Learners may encounter cultural references without critically analyzing their meanings or sociocultural implications. Previous Indonesian studies similarly indicate that cultural representation in textbooks frequently remains descriptive and insufficiently analytical (Pratama, 2022; Widodo, 2020).

The Indonesian context presents additional complexity because English functions simultaneously as a global language and a foreign language associated with educational mobility and international communication (Zein, 2021). As a result, EFL materials often attempt to balance local cultural identity with global communicative orientation. This tension makes Indonesian EFL textbooks an important site for examining how culture is represented and negotiated.

2.3 Teacher Cognition and Cultural Mediation

Beyond textbooks themselves, teachers play a central role in mediating cultural learning within classroom contexts. Teacher cognition refers to teachers' beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making processes that shape instructional practices (Borg, 2019; Li, 2020). In intercultural learning, teacher cognition influences how cultural content is interpreted, adapted, and implemented during classroom interaction.

Previous studies suggest that teachers demonstrate varying orientations toward intercultural pedagogy. Some educators attempt to integrate intercultural perspectives into communicative

activities, while others prioritize linguistic competence due to curriculum pressures, assessment systems, and limited instructional time (Rahmawati, 2023; Zein, 2021). Consequently, the same textbook may produce different classroom experiences depending on how teachers mediate its content.

Existing research often treats textbook representation and teacher cognition as separate areas of investigation. Studies on EFL textbooks in Indonesia have primarily focused on analyzing cultural, social, and ideological representations within textbook content, while research on teacher cognition has mainly examined teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and instructional decision-making independently of textbook analysis (Agustin, 2023). Similarly, studies investigating textbook use have generally explored teachers' perceptions and evaluations of instructional materials without examining how textbook representations shape teachers' pedagogical interpretations and classroom practices (Mufidah et al., 2022; Septiana et al., 2020). Although recent research has highlighted the relationship between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and instructional material use (Almunawaroh et al., 2024), limited research has examined how textbook representation and teacher cognition interact dynamically within Indonesian EFL classrooms. This gap indicates the need for research that investigates how teachers interpret, negotiate, and enact textbook representations during classroom instruction.

Therefore, this study adopts an integrated perspective by examining both cultural representation in textbooks and the ways teachers mediate such representation in classroom practice. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a more contextually grounded understanding of intercultural learning in Indonesian EFL education.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative multi-chapter case study design to investigate how cultural representation is constructed in Indonesian EFL textbooks and how it is mediated through teacher cognition in classroom contexts. A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate because culture is not a fixed or quantifiable variable but a socially constructed phenomenon embedded in discourse, interaction, and interpretation. Cultural meanings in textbooks are often implicit, layered, and context-dependent, requiring interpretive analysis rather than statistical measurement. Qualitative content analysis enables the systematic examination of both explicit and implicit meanings within texts, allowing researchers to uncover underlying cultural assumptions, values, and ideologies (Krippendorff, 2019; Schreier, 2018).

Unlike conventional textbook studies that focus on isolated units or single chapters, this research employs a cross-chapter analytical design. This approach allows the identification of recurring patterns, thematic continuities, and shifts in cultural representation across instructional sequences. The design is informed by constructivist grounded theory, which emphasizes iterative analysis, constant comparison, and the emergence of categories from data rather than the imposition of predefined frameworks (Charmaz, 2019). In EFL textbooks, culture is not presented as isolated content but distributed across narratives, tasks, visuals, and pedagogical instructions. By examining multiple chapters across different thematic domains, the study captures the dynamic and cumulative nature of cultural representation.

In addition, the study integrates teacher cognition as a central analytical dimension. Teacher cognition refers to the system of beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making processes that shape instructional practices (Borg, 2019; Li, 2020). In EFL contexts, where cultural meanings are frequently implicit, teacher cognition becomes a key mediating factor influencing whether and how cultural content becomes visible to learners. Incorporating teacher cognition into the research design therefore allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between instructional materials and pedagogical practice.

3.2 Data Sources and Sampling

The primary data source for this study is the textbook *Buku Panduan Guru Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress* by Hermawan, Haryanti, and Suryaningsih (2022), developed for Grade 10 students in SMK/MA/SMA and officially published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. The textbook was selected because of its nationwide implementation and alignment with current curriculum reforms emphasizing communicative competence, multimodal literacy, and contextual learning (Ministry of Education Research, and Technology, 2022; Widodo, 2020). As a government-issued resource, the textbook represents the intended curriculum and provides a standardized pedagogical framework for EFL instruction across Indonesia.

This study focuses on a single textbook as a bounded case to ensure contextual coherence and analytical depth. Within this textbook, five chapters were purposively selected based on thematic variation across two semesters:

Semester 1 (Sports Theme)

- Chapter 1: *Great Athletes*
- Chapter 2: *Sports Events*
- Chapter 3: *Sports and Health*

Semester 2 (Arts Theme)

- Chapter 5: *Graffiti*
- Chapter 6: *Fractured Stories*

The selection reflects maximum variation within one instructional resource by capturing two contrasting domains of cultural representation: physical or global culture and creative or expressive culture (Patton, 2015). This approach allows the identification of both consistency and variation in cultural construction across thematic units while maintaining analytical focus within one coherent curricular artifact.

The dataset consists of multiple textual and multimodal elements, including reading passages, listening transcripts, classroom instructions, pedagogical scaffolding, student tasks, project-based activities, and visual representations. This comprehensive data selection reflects the multimodal nature of contemporary textbooks, where meaning is constructed not only through language but also through images, layout, and interactional design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). Data were systematically extracted, organized, and cleaned prior to analysis. Procedural

instructions that did not contain cultural elements were excluded to maintain analytical relevance.

To enhance clarity and transparency, the data sources are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Data Sources Overview

Data Source	Description	Purpose
Textbook (<i>Work in Progress</i> , 2022)	One Grade 10 textbook with five selected chapters (Sports & Arts themes)	Analyze cultural representation within a bounded curricular context
Textual data	Dialogues, narratives, and instructions within selected chapters	Identify cultural values and practices
Multimodal data	Images, layout, and task design	Examine visual and interactional construction of culture
Teacher interviews (n=3)	SMK Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik	Explore teacher cognition in mediating textbook content

To complement textbook analysis and enhance empirical validity, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three EFL teachers from SMK Sunanul Muhtadin, a vocational secondary school in Gresik, East Java, Indonesia. The participants were selected purposively because they actively used the *Work in Progress* textbook in classroom instruction and had direct experience implementing the curriculum. The three teachers varied in teaching experience, ranging from early-career to senior educators, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of teacher cognition across professional trajectories.

The selection of three teachers reflects an intensive qualitative case study approach that prioritizes depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization. The participants were considered information-rich cases because of their sustained engagement with the textbook in classroom practice (Patton, 2015). Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, where no substantially new themes emerged from the interviews. Although the number of participants is limited, qualitative case study research emphasizes analytical depth, contextual richness, and interpretive insight rather than numerical representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the findings are intended to provide transferable insights into similar Indonesian EFL contexts.

Each interview lasted approximately 40-60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face within the school setting to capture authentic contextual insights. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian to ensure participant comfort and elicit richer responses. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis was grounded in qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019), integrated with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2015), multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), and teacher cognition theory (Borg, 2019). The study examined both cultural representation in EFL textbooks and teachers' interpretations of those representations in classroom practice.

Initially, cultural representation was analyzed using McKay's (2018) tripartite model, which classifies cultural content into source culture, target culture, and international culture. Source

culture refers to cultural elements originating from learners' own sociocultural context. In the present study, source culture was operationalized as Indonesian Culture, while target culture was operationalized as Native-Speakers' Culture.

Indonesian Culture refers to cultural representations reflecting local identities, social values, community practices, and sociocultural norms commonly associated with Indonesian society. This category included explicit references to Indonesian traditions, local wisdom, historical figures, national celebrations, traditional arts, local tourism, and everyday social practices. In addition, Indonesian Culture also encompassed implicit cultural values embedded within learning activities, particularly those reflecting *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (collective deliberation), reciprocity, communal participation, and social harmony (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Consequently, classroom activities emphasizing collaborative decision-making, shared responsibility, and consensus-building were analyzed as manifestations of Indonesian cultural values when such interactional patterns reflected broader sociocultural norms characteristic of Indonesian society.

Native-Speakers' Culture refers to cultural representations associated with countries where English functions as a first language, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. This category included cultural products, institutions, traditions, lifestyles, communicative practices, and social norms originating from these contexts.

Initially, McKay's (2018) category of International Culture was adopted to identify cultural representations that transcend national boundaries and reflect intercultural communication in global contexts. However, during the coding process, a substantial number of cultural representations did not primarily emphasize intercultural encounters between different national cultures. Instead, they reflected contemporary transnational practices associated with globalization, digital communication, multimodal literacy, learner autonomy, creativity, project-based learning, social media engagement, and technological participation.

Through iterative coding and constant comparison, these recurring patterns were grouped into a refined category labelled Modernized Culture. This category emerged inductively from the data and represents hybrid cultural practices commonly associated with contemporary global society rather than specific national cultural traditions. The category is theoretically informed by Global Englishes scholarship, which conceptualizes English as a resource for participation in global networks characterized by mobility, digital communication, and intercultural interaction (Baker, 2021; Porto & Houghton, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Examples included online learning activities, digital communication platforms, multimedia projects, global environmental campaigns, entrepreneurship tasks, and technology-mediated social interaction.

To ensure systematic coding, the basic unit of analysis was defined as a cultural unit. A cultural unit refers to any textual or multimodal element containing identifiable cultural meaning, including reading passages, dialogues, listening transcripts, visual images, instructional tasks, project-based activities, classroom interaction prompts, and pedagogical scaffolding. Each cultural unit was coded according to the dominant cultural representation it reflected.

Table 2. Presents the Analytical Framework Used in this Study.

Analytical Stage	Focus of Analysis	Analytical Categories	Framework
Textual Analysis	Cultural values, beliefs, practices, identities, and social relations represented in written texts	Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, Modernized Culture	Krippendorff (2019); Fairclough (2015); McKay (2018)
Multimodal Analysis	Visual representation, image-text relations, layout, salience, and interaction	Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, Modernized Culture	Kress & van Leeuwen (2021)
Teacher Cognition Analysis	Teachers' perceptions, beliefs, interpretations, and classroom mediation of cultural content	Perceptions of cultural representation, instructional decisions, challenges, and mediation strategies	Borg (2019); Braun & Clarke (2021)

The analytical process was conducted in three interconnected stages. First, textual analysis examined cultural meanings embedded in dialogues, narratives, reading passages, instructions, and classroom activities. Second, multimodal analysis investigated how cultural meanings were visually constructed through images, layout, composition, salience, and image-text relationships. Third, teacher cognition analysis employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to explore how teachers interpreted, adapted, and mediated cultural content in classroom practice.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure methodological rigor, several strategies were employed. Data triangulation was conducted by integrating textbook analysis and teacher interview data, allowing cross-validation of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2020). In addition, inter-coder reliability was established during the textbook analysis stage to enhance coding consistency and reduce subjective bias.

An independent coder, a lecturer in English Language Education with expertise in EFL materials evaluation and qualitative research, was invited to independently code a subset of the data. Approximately 25% of the dataset, comprising 120 cultural units extracted from the five selected textbook chapters, was coded separately using the cultural representation framework consisting of Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, and Modernized Culture. Cultural units included textual segments, dialogues, listening transcripts, visual representations, classroom activities, project tasks, and instructional materials containing identifiable cultural meanings.

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's Kappa coefficient to determine the degree of agreement between the researcher and the independent coder. The analysis resulted in a Cohen's Kappa value of 0.851 ($p < .001$), indicating a very high level of agreement and demonstrating that the coding categories were applied consistently across the dataset. According to Landis and Koch (1977), a Kappa coefficient above 0.80 represents almost perfect agreement.

Following the reliability assessment, coding discrepancies were reviewed and resolved through iterative discussion until consensus was achieved. Member checking was conducted by sharing summarized interview findings with participants to confirm interpretive accuracy. Furthermore, iterative coding and constant comparison were employed throughout the analytical process to enhance credibility, consistency, and analytical depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Participation in teacher interviews was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by assigning pseudonyms and removing identifying information from all records. Data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely in accordance with established ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018).

3.6 Methodological Contribution

This study contributes methodologically by integrating textbook representation and teacher cognition within a single analytical framework. Unlike studies that focus exclusively on textbook content or teacher beliefs separately, this research combines cross-chapter textbook analysis with teacher perspectives from authentic classroom contexts. This integrated approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural meanings are constructed, interpreted, and enacted in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

4. Findings

4.1 Overall Cultural Distribution

The analysis identified three categories of cultural representation within the five selected chapters of *Work in Progress*: Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, and Modernized Culture. These categories emerged through the coding of 120 cultural units consisting of textual segments, dialogues, listening transcripts, visual images, instructional tasks, project activities, and multimodal learning materials containing identifiable cultural meanings. The findings indicate that the three categories were not represented equally across the textbook.

To illustrate the overall distribution, Figure 1. presents the proportion of cultural representations identified throughout the dataset.

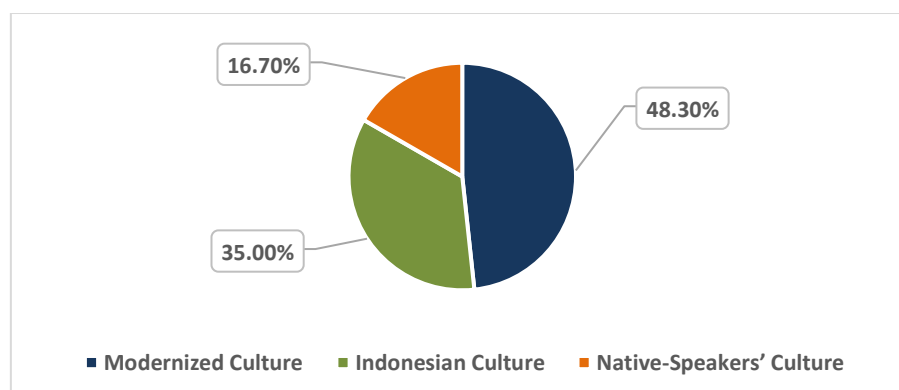


Figure 1. Distribution of Cultural Representation Across the Five Selected Chapters

The numerical distribution is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Cultural Representation Across the Five Selected Chapters

Cultural Category	Frequency	Percentage
Modernized Culture	58	48.3%
Indonesian Culture	42	35.0%
Native-Speakers' Culture	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 3, Modernized Culture accounted for 58 of the 120 identified cultural units (48.3%), making it the most dominant category represented in the textbook. Indonesian Culture accounted for 42 units (35.0%), while Native-Speakers' Culture appeared in only 20 units (16.7%).

The dominance of Modernized Culture suggests that the textbook is strongly oriented toward contemporary global communication practices rather than toward the transmission of specific national cultures. In this study, Modernized Culture refers to transnational cultural practices associated with globalization, digital communication, multimodal literacy, learner autonomy, creativity, innovation, and participation in networked societies. These representations frequently appeared in project-based activities, digital literacy tasks, multimedia learning, presentations, and collaborative problem-solving activities.

This finding indicates that culture is conceptualized less as national heritage and more as participation in contemporary social and technological practices. Such an orientation aligns with recent discussions in Global Englishes scholarship, which emphasize English as a resource for communication across diverse global contexts rather than as a language tied exclusively to native-speaker cultures (Baker, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

The findings also reveal that the textbook adopts a strong multimodal orientation. Cultural meanings are constructed through the interaction of written texts, images, visual layouts, listening materials, videos, and project tasks. Furthermore, students are positioned as active participants who discuss, negotiate, create, present, and evaluate knowledge rather than passively receive information. Consequently, cultural learning is embedded within communicative participation and collaborative engagement.

4.2 Representation of Indonesian Culture

Based on the analytical framework developed in Chapter III, Indonesian Culture refers to representations reflecting values and interactional patterns commonly associated with Indonesian society, including *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (collective deliberation), social harmony, reciprocity, communal participation, and collective responsibility (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

The findings indicate that Indonesian Culture is represented primarily through pedagogical interaction rather than through explicit descriptions of Indonesian traditions, historical events,

or cultural artifacts. In other words, Indonesian cultural values are embedded in how students are encouraged to interact, share perspectives, and construct understanding throughout classroom activities.

One representative example appears in a listening and discussion activity related to spectators' behavior during a sports event can be seen in the following figure.

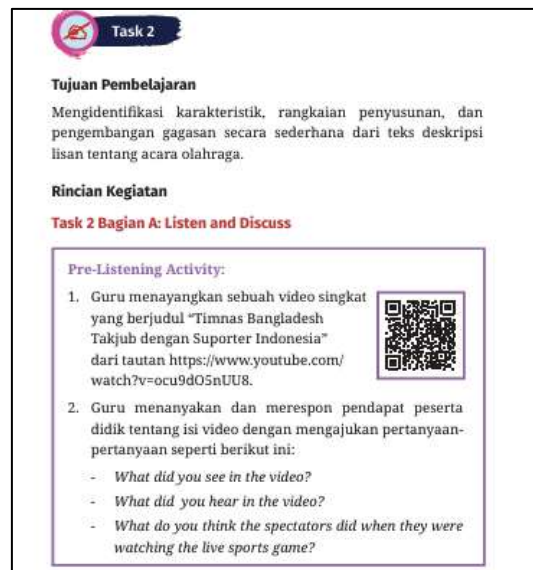


Figure 2. Discussion Activity Reflecting Indonesian Cultural Values
Source: Work in Progress (Hermawan et al., 2022, p. 48)

Figure 2 presents a listening and discussion activity in which students are invited to observe a video and share their opinions regarding spectators' behavior during a sports event. Through teacher-guided questions, students are encouraged to express their views, exchange ideas, and respond to different perspectives. Although Indonesian culture is not explicitly mentioned, the interactional structure reflects values commonly associated with *musyawarah* and social harmony, as students participate in collective meaning-making through classroom discussion.

In addition, the activity promotes collaborative participation and mutual engagement among students, reflecting the spirit of *gotong royong* within the learning process. Rather than emphasizing individual performance, the activity encourages learners to engage with others' viewpoints and develop understanding through shared interaction. Such practices have long been recognized as important characteristics of Indonesian social life (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

Additional evidence can be observed in pair-work and group-discussion activities distributed throughout the textbook. Students are repeatedly encouraged to exchange ideas, support peers, negotiate meaning, and construct responses collaboratively. These interactional patterns prioritize collective engagement over individual competition and foster a classroom environment that values cooperation and mutual respect.

The findings therefore suggest that Indonesian Culture is represented implicitly through pedagogical organization and classroom interaction. Rather than presenting culture as factual

information to be learned, the textbook embeds local cultural values within the learning process itself. Through discussion, collaboration, and shared participation, students are encouraged to enact cultural values that are closely associated with Indonesian social practices.

4.3 Representation of Native-Speakers' Culture

Native-Speakers' Culture refers to cultural representations associated with countries where English functions as a first language, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Such representations include cultural products, social practices, institutions, places, lifestyles, and symbolic references originating from these contexts. For analytical purposes, this category also includes globally circulated cultural references that are predominantly encountered through English-language communication and international media. During the coding process, cultural references originating from non-English-speaking contexts were provisionally categorized under this category when they were presented through English-language communication and functioned as cultural content within English-mediated learning contexts. This operational criterion was adopted to accommodate the increasingly transnational nature of contemporary English use, in which cultural references frequently circulate beyond their original national boundaries.

The findings indicate that representations related to Native-Speakers' Culture appear relatively infrequently throughout the five chapters. When present, they are commonly introduced through sports, entertainment, tourism, and international communication contexts. However, several cultural references are presented not as direct representations of English-speaking countries but as globally recognized cultural phenomena frequently accessed through English-language communication.

One example appears in a listening text describing the experience of attending a football match at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium can be seen in the following figure.

b. Guru memfasilitasi peserta didik dengan kata-kata dalam tabel yang harus mereka pilih bila kata tersebut muncul dalam rekaman audio tentang pengalaman seseorang menonton sebuah pertandingan olahraga.

stadium	streaming
Real Madrid	Liverpool
sandwich	hotdog
singing	crying
locker room	rest room

c. Guru membimbing peserta didik mempelajari kata-kata dalam tabel yang akan dipilih peserta didik berdasarkan rekaman audio tentang pengalaman seseorang menonton sebuah pertandingan olahraga yang disimakinya.

d. Guru memperdengarkan rekaman audio tentang pengalaman seseorang menonton sebuah pertandingan olahraga.

Berikut transkrip rekaman audio tentang pengalaman seseorang menonton sebuah pertandingan olahraga:

I had the pleasure of watching Real Madrid vs Valencia in Santiago Bernabeu stadium. The atmosphere was electric. And you may know that Real Madrid stadiums are always completely occupied with more than 80k supporters cheering their hearts out. The atmosphere will surely give you goosebumps.

I could also see a fan group which coordinates their anthems with drums, microphones, flags, etc. These guys were really active and you could hear them singing and supporting throughout the match.

Bab 2 | Sport Events 49

The air was so full of excitement and all kinds of smell, but mostly I could smell popcorn, sweat and the fresh cut grass from the field.

While the match was exciting sometimes, I kept on chewing the boring I thought earlier. It was a bit cheesy, but it was smooth and tasted really good.

You can also pay to have a tour of the stadium, which includes a trophy room and locker rooms too.

I would like to conclude by saying that if you are a football fan, you must see a live match and if possible the match of the club you support. World cup match tickets are difficult to buy so I would suggest club matches.

e. Guru meminta peserta didik memeriksa pilihan kata yang telah mereka tentukan.

f. Guru meminta peserta didik menyimak kembali rekaman audio tentang pengalaman seseorang menonton sebuah pertandingan olahraga untuk menemukan informasi yang disampaikan di Bab 2.

g. Guru dan peserta didik mendiskusikan jawaban dan melakukan review terhadap kalimat-kalimat yang diisi peserta didik lalu dipertukarkan.

Catatan: Untuk membantu peserta didik memahami cara memilih pertandingan yang berhubungan dengan pertanyaan tentang pilihan kata dalam teks (room to go) mereka melakukan waktu istirahat untuk mengerjakan strategi menemukan kata rujukan dalam teks.

Berikut ini adalah langkah-langkah yang dilakukan guru untuk mengajarkan strategi menemukan kata rujukan dalam teks.

Strategi Penemuan Kata Rujukan (Strategic Word Discovery)

Strategi ini bertujuan untuk membantu siswa menemukan kata rujukan dalam teks.

Langkah-langkahnya adalah:

1. Siswa membaca teks dengan saksama.
2. Siswa mengidentifikasi kata-kata yang tidak dikenal.
3. Siswa mencari kata rujukan dalam teks untuk memahami arti kata tersebut.
4. Siswa mencatat kata-kata tersebut dan arti mereka.
5. Siswa berdiskusi dengan teman sebangkunya tentang kata-kata tersebut.
6. Siswa melakukan review terhadap kata-kata tersebut.

Figure 3. Example of International Sports and Global Cultural Reference
Source: Work in Progress (Hermawan et al., 2022, p. 49-50)

As illustrated in Figure 3, the text introduces internationally recognizable symbols associated with global sports culture. Students are exposed to well-known sporting venues, football clubs, fan experiences, and international sporting events that are widely circulated through English-language media and communication. Although the cultural references originate outside Indonesia, they function primarily as contextual support for language learning rather than as a focus of cultural exploration.

The accompanying activities emphasize listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and communicative practice. Learners are encouraged to understand information, identify key vocabulary, and discuss experiences related to sports. However, the textbook provides limited opportunities for students to critically examine the cultural beliefs, values, identities, or social practices associated with the contexts presented.

Consequently, representations associated with Native-Speakers' Culture are often introduced indirectly through internationally shared cultural references rather than through detailed exploration of English-speaking societies themselves. Culture therefore functions mainly as a background context for language learning, supporting communicative competence while offering only limited engagement with deeper intercultural understanding.

4.4 Representation of Modernized Culture

Modernized Culture emerged as the most dominant category across the dataset. Unlike the categories of Indonesian Culture and Native-Speakers' Culture, which are associated with identifiable sociocultural contexts, Modernized Culture reflects transnational cultural practices that transcend national boundaries.

This category includes representations associated with digital communication, technological literacy, media engagement, critical thinking, learner autonomy, global connectivity, and participation in contemporary digital society. During coding, these representations appeared consistently across multiple chapters and could not be adequately classified as either Indonesian Culture or Native-Speakers' Culture.



Figure 4. Example of Digital Media-Based Learning Activity
Source: Work in Progress (Hermawan et al., 2022, p. 122-123)

Figure 4 presents a learning activity in which students access a video through a QR code and respond to questions related to a contemporary social issue. The activity integrates digital media into the learning process and encourages students to engage critically with information obtained from online sources. Through guided discussion, learners are invited to interpret media content, express opinions, and evaluate social phenomena presented in the video.

The activity reflects key characteristics of Modernized Culture, particularly technological literacy, digital engagement, and participation in globally mediated communication practices. Rather than focusing on culture as a national phenomenon, the task positions learners as active participants in contemporary information environments where knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and discussed through digital platforms.

The prominence of this category suggests that the textbook conceptualizes culture not only as belonging to particular nations but also as participation in globally shared communicative and technological practices. This finding reflects broader developments in contemporary ELT, where English increasingly functions as a global communicative resource within digitally connected environments (Baker, 2021; Porto & Houghton, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

4.5 Teacher Cognition Evidence

Because each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes, the findings generated richer evidence than can be represented by a single quotation per theme. Three major themes emerged.

Theme 1: Instrumental Orientation Toward English Learning

Teachers consistently viewed English as a practical resource for communication and employment.

“Students mainly need English for communication and future work opportunities, so I focus more on speaking practice.” (Teacher A)

“Most students want English that can help them when they work after graduation.” (Teacher B)

“For vocational students, communication skills are usually more important than theoretical knowledge.” (Teacher C)

These statements indicate a shared belief that English learning should prioritize communicative competence and employability skills.

Theme 2: Localization of Cultural Content

Teachers frequently adapted textbook content to students’ local experiences.

“I often ask students to connect the topic with their own experiences because they understand local examples more easily.” (Teacher B)

“When discussing sports or stories, I usually ask students to compare them with activities in our community.” (Teacher B)

“Sometimes I replace examples in the textbook with examples from Gresik so students can relate to them.” (Teacher A)

“Students participate more actively when the examples are close to their daily lives.” (Teacher C)

These responses demonstrate that teachers actively mediate cultural content by connecting global themes with familiar local contexts.

Theme 3: Institutional Constraints

Participants also reported challenges associated with curriculum requirements and assessment demands.

“There is limited time to discuss cultural meaning in depth because we must finish the lesson targets.” (Teacher C)

“Most assessments focus on language skills, so cultural discussion is usually secondary.” (Teacher C)

“If we spend too much time discussing culture, it becomes difficult to complete all required materials.” (Teacher A)

These findings suggest that institutional pressures often prioritize language outcomes over intercultural exploration.

4.6 Linking Textbook Representation and Teacher Interpretation

The findings further demonstrate that cultural representation is actively interpreted and adapted through classroom practice. Teachers do not simply transmit textbook content directly but modify and contextualize learning materials according to classroom needs and student backgrounds.

Table 4. Textbook-Teacher Interaction

Component	Cultural Representation	Teacher Interpretation
Group discussion	Collectivist interaction	Experience sharing and cooperation
Listening task	Global culture	Vocabulary and comprehension focus
Project task	Experiential and globalized learning	Localization and contextual adaptation

The table illustrates that teachers function as mediators who shape how cultural meanings are experienced in classroom contexts. Cultural representation therefore emerges not only from textbook content itself but also from pedagogical adaptation and teacher interpretation.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that cultural representation in Indonesian EFL classrooms operates through a dynamic interaction among textbook content, pedagogical practices, and teacher cognition. Across the five selected chapters, three categories of cultural representation were identified: Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, and Modernized Culture. Among these categories, Modernized Culture emerged as the most dominant representation, followed by Indonesian Culture and Native-Speakers' Culture. This pattern reflects broader transformations in contemporary English Language Teaching (ELT), where English is increasingly conceptualized as a global communicative resource rather than as the cultural property of native-speaker communities (Baker, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

The predominance of Modernized Culture is particularly significant because this category was not adopted directly from McKay's (2018) tripartite framework. Instead, it emerged inductively during the coding process when numerous cultural representations could not be adequately categorized as either Indonesian Culture or Native-Speakers' Culture. These representations consistently emphasized globalization, digital communication, multimodal literacy, learner autonomy, project-based participation, creativity, innovation, and technological engagement. Through iterative coding and constant comparison, these recurring patterns formed a distinct category that reflects contemporary transnational cultural practices.

Importantly, Modernized Culture should not be understood merely as a pedagogical approach. Rather, it represents a set of shared social practices, values, and communicative norms associated with participation in contemporary global society. Activities involving digital communication, collaborative online interaction, multimedia production, project-based learning, and global connectivity reflect cultural practices that transcend national boundaries and are increasingly experienced by learners across diverse contexts. This interpretation is consistent with Global Englishes scholarship, which views English as a resource for participation in interconnected global networks characterized by mobility, technology, and intercultural communication (Baker, 2021; Porto & Houghton, 2021; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Consequently, the dominance of Modernized Culture suggests that the textbook conceptualizes culture less as national heritage and more as participation in contemporary global communicative practices.

The findings further reveal that global culture within the textbook is frequently presented in standardized and decontextualized forms. Topics such as sports, youth lifestyles, creativity, digital communication, environmental awareness, and personal experiences are framed as universally accessible themes without substantial sociocultural explanation. References to international athletes, global sporting events, online communication, and contemporary lifestyles often function primarily as contexts for language-learning activities rather than as opportunities for intercultural exploration. Consequently, culture frequently serves as a communicative backdrop rather than as an object of critical inquiry.

This finding supports Gray's (2021) argument that many contemporary ELT materials construct a "sanitized global culture" characterized by culturally neutral, non-controversial, and globally marketable themes. Such representations minimize sociocultural complexity and ideological

sensitivity in order to ensure broad applicability across diverse educational settings. Similar patterns have been reported in Southeast Asian EFL contexts, where textbook developers often prioritize globally acceptable topics because they are considered pedagogically safe and politically neutral (Marlina, 2024; Widodo et al., 2023). In the present study, the predominance of Modernized Culture may therefore reflect both curriculum standardization and the institutional role of government-issued textbooks intended for nationwide implementation.

At the same time, Indonesian Culture remains visible throughout the textbook, although it is represented differently from conventional textbook portrayals of culture. Rather than emphasizing traditional dances, folklore, local foods, historical figures, or regional ceremonies, Indonesian Culture is embedded within pedagogical interaction patterns and classroom learning structures. In this study, Indonesian Culture refers to cultural values associated with cooperation, collective participation, reciprocity, social harmony, consensus-building, and mutual respect. These values have long been identified as important characteristics of Indonesian social life and community organization (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

The representation of Indonesian Culture is particularly evident in activities requiring students to collaborate, negotiate decisions, exchange experiences, and reach collective agreements. For example, the activity asking students to evaluate spectator behavior during sports events requires learners to discuss alternatives, negotiate viewpoints, and arrive at a shared conclusion. Similarly, pair-work and group-work activities consistently encourage cooperative problem-solving and collective knowledge construction.

Although such activities may initially appear to reflect general communicative language teaching principles, their interactional orientation closely resembles Indonesian sociocultural values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *musyawarah* (collective deliberation), communal participation, and collective responsibility. These values emphasize collaboration, social harmony, and consensus-building rather than individual competition or personal achievement (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Therefore, the interpretation of these activities as representations of Indonesian Culture is grounded not merely in their collaborative format but in their alignment with broader Indonesian sociocultural traditions.

From a sociocultural perspective, these findings suggest that local culture is not transmitted solely through explicit cultural content but also through socially organized forms of participation and interaction (Lantolf & Thorne, 2022). Students therefore experience Indonesian cultural values not only by reading about culture but also by engaging in culturally meaningful ways of learning and interacting. This finding extends previous textbook research by demonstrating that culture can be represented implicitly through pedagogical design as well as explicitly through textual content.

Nevertheless, the implicit nature of this representation also creates important pedagogical limitations. Because local cultural values are rarely named, explained, or critically examined, students may participate in culturally informed activities without recognizing the cultural assumptions underlying them. Previous studies suggest that intercultural communicative competence develops not simply through cultural exposure but through opportunities for reflection, comparison, interpretation, and critical analysis (Lee, 2022; Yazan & Rudolph, 2023). Consequently, the intercultural potential of Indonesian cultural representation may remain underutilized because cultural meanings remain largely implicit.

The relatively limited representation of Native-Speakers' Culture reflects broader shifts within Global Englishes and English as an International Language (EIL) scholarship, which challenge the traditional dominance of Anglo-American cultural norms in language education (Galloway & Rose, 2022; Matsuda, 2020). The textbook contains occasional references to international sports, entertainment, tourism, and globally recognized figures; however, these references generally function as contextual support for language-learning objectives rather than as opportunities to explore specific cultural systems, identities, or worldviews.

Interestingly, the findings indicate that reducing Native-Speakers' Culture does not automatically result in greater intercultural diversity. Instead, Anglo-American cultural references are frequently replaced by generalized global themes that lack clear sociocultural specificity. As a result, students encounter fewer opportunities to compare cultural perspectives, examine cultural differences, or develop critical intercultural awareness. This finding supports Baker's (2021) argument that intercultural learning requires meaningful engagement with cultural diversity rather than simply reducing native-speaker dominance.

Teacher cognition also emerged as a significant factor shaping intercultural learning in classroom practice. The interview findings reveal that teachers primarily view English as a practical resource for communication, employment, and vocational development. This instrumental orientation is reflected in Teacher A's emphasis on speaking practice and workplace communication. Such perspectives are particularly common in vocational education settings, where language learning is often closely connected to employability and labor-market demands (Zein, 2021).

At the same time, teachers actively localize textbook content by connecting learning materials to students' everyday experiences and community contexts. Teacher B's responses illustrate how global textbook topics are frequently adapted to local realities to increase relevance and learner engagement. This finding supports Borg's (2019) argument that classroom implementation is shaped not only by instructional materials but also by teachers' beliefs, experiences, and contextual knowledge. Teachers therefore function as cultural mediators who negotiate the relationship between global textbook content and local classroom realities.

Meanwhile, Teacher C's comments highlight the influence of institutional constraints on intercultural learning. Curriculum targets, assessment requirements, and limited instructional time often reduce opportunities for deeper cultural discussion. Consequently, communicative competence and task completion tend to receive greater emphasis than intercultural reflection. Similar challenges have been identified in previous Indonesian EFL studies, where teachers recognize the importance of cultural learning but face difficulties implementing intercultural pedagogy because of curricular and institutional pressures (Sercu, 2020; Zein, 2021).

Taken together, these findings suggest that cultural representation in Indonesian EFL education is a multi-layered and dynamically mediated process. Culture is not simply contained within textbook content; rather, it is interpreted, transformed, localized, and negotiated through pedagogical practices and teacher cognition. More importantly, the findings indicate that the primary challenge is not the absence of cultural content itself but the limited presence of explicit intercultural pedagogy. Without intentional opportunities for reflection, comparison, and critical discussion, cultural learning remains largely implicit and experiential. As a result,

learners may develop communicative competence without fully developing the intercultural awareness required to navigate cultural diversity in contemporary global communication.

6. Conclusion

This study examined cultural representation in Indonesian EFL classrooms through an analysis of five chapters of *Buku Panduan Guru Bahasa Inggris: Work in Progress* and interviews with three EFL teachers. The findings identified three categories of cultural representation: Indonesian Culture, Native-Speakers' Culture, and Modernized Culture. Among these, Modernized Culture emerged as the most dominant category (48.3%), followed by Indonesian Culture (35.0%) and Native-Speakers' Culture (16.7%).

The predominance of Modernized Culture indicates that the textbook positions English as a resource for participation in contemporary global communication. Cultural representations are largely associated with digital literacy, technological engagement, collaboration, creativity, learner autonomy, and globally connected communication practices. This suggests that culture is presented not as a fixed national entity but as a dynamic set of practices relevant to participation in modern society.

Indonesian Culture is represented mainly through classroom interactions and pedagogical activities that encourage cooperation, discussion, and collective participation. Rather than emphasizing cultural artifacts or traditions, the textbook embeds local cultural values within the learning process itself. However, these values are generally presented implicitly, limiting opportunities for students to develop explicit cultural awareness.

In contrast, Native-Speakers' Culture receives relatively limited attention. References to English-speaking contexts are typically introduced through sports, entertainment, tourism, and popular figures, with little exploration of deeper cultural perspectives or social practices. As a result, these cultural representations function primarily as contextual support for language learning.

The study also highlights the important role of teachers in mediating cultural content. Teachers generally viewed English as a practical tool for communication and future career development, leading classroom instruction to focus on communicative competence and task completion. Although teachers frequently connected textbook content to students' local experiences, limited instructional time and curriculum demands often restricted deeper cultural discussion.

Overall, the findings suggest that the main challenge in Indonesian EFL classrooms is not the absence of cultural content but the limited implementation of explicit intercultural pedagogy. While cultural representations are embedded throughout textbook materials and classroom activities, opportunities for critical cultural reflection and intercultural understanding remain limited. Therefore, future textbook development and teacher education programs should place greater emphasis on integrating intercultural learning objectives alongside language development.

This study is limited to one government-issued textbook and three teachers from a single vocational school. Future research could include multiple textbooks, classroom observations,

and learner perspectives to provide a broader understanding of cultural representation and intercultural learning in Indonesian EFL contexts.

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