An Analysis of Local Content in the Local English Textbooks in Indonesian High Schools

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Abstract. Local content is one way to promote local wisdom in a country. Indonesia, being a very big and plural country, has a tremendous local wisdom that can promote the country in many aspects: political, economic, cultural, and in the educational sector. One of the main issues in the local wisdom is the local content. This research is trying to investigate the local content found in the reading passages in the local English textbooks used in Indonesian high schools. The research shows that many local English textbooks do not include local content in their reading passages. The problem arises due to the fact that many authors and or publishers are not aware of the importance of such local wisdom in their textbook writing. Another problem is due to the hegemony of so called the ideology of political identity within one nation which affects the philosophy of textbook writing in the respected country. By doing the research, it is hoped that many Indonesian authors write the reading passages which promote the local content in order to highlight the local wisdom of the country to other countries in the world.

1. Introduction

Language teaching materials are very important. Richard (2001) argues that materials are the key elements in most language teaching while Pardo and Téllez (2009) assume that language learning materials form a significant feature in building an effective teaching and learning process. To construct an effective teaching and learning environments, the most crucial aspect that should be presented in language teaching is cultural content (Pulverness, 2003) as it is the basis of understanding other aspects (Pardo & Téllez, 2009). It would be complicated, if not unfeasible, to teach a language without teaching some features of its culture (Hilliard, 2014; Neff & Jr, 2013) as language is one of the products of culture (Yule, 2010). Culture is often about wisdoms and worldview of the country and textbooks can be a good source for students to learn and adopt these wisdoms and worldview to develop their cultural awareness and identity. (Hermawan, 2012). In the context of Indonesia, the 2013 curriculum strongly emphasizes the local content in the form of local culture in the textbooks used at schools. The present condition shows that many EFL textbooks used at Indonesian school lack of local content (culture), if not imbalanced with the target language culture.

The aim of this study was to investigate the proportions of the local and target language cultures in local English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia. The following questions guided this study:

- How are the local culture and the target language culture represented in local EFL textbooks?
- What are the implications for the policy-making regarding the issue?

2. Literature Review

The inseparability of language and culture has become a rich source of investigation in the field of English Language Teaching (Hermawan, 2012). There are two kinds of cultural teaching and learning materials or resources that could be presented in English textbooks. The first is local culture materials and the second is target culture materials (Jiangqiong & Tin, 2010). Local cultural learning materials or resources reflect the norms, symbols, traditions, schemas, and beliefs shared by a specific social group. For example, when a group of people do a regular activity of something, it will be a habit and raised to be a continuous activity in that locality. Then, people will call it as their culture (Kawar, 2012). While, target culture is related to the cultures that subsist and abide from English speaking countries (Chao, 2011) where people use English as the first language based on the sociolinguistic aspects such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and USA (Karchu, 1996).

When linking cultures to the teaching materials, it should be equivalent. Bell and Gower (1998 as cited in Tomlinson, 2003) said that one of the principles in material development was that the materials should be put in balance proportion, and one of the materials is cultural content (Andarab, 2014; Rubby, 2003).

Similarly, Jiangqiong and Tin (2010) said that it was important to combine local and target cultures in teaching materials. Accordingly, many authors have suggested using both local languages and target language cultures to deal with the limitations of exclusively using one of the cultures (Choudhury, 2013) as students need to understand their own cultures and other cultures (Frank, 2013).

The unequal proportion of cultural contents in textbooks might lead confusion to students during their participation in intercultural interaction (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013).

2.1. Textbook and teaching learning process

In English learning and teaching process, textbooks are essential tools which serve various functions (Kobia 2009). In terms of intercultural issue, textbooks are believed to have several roles for students (Lund 2006). She believes that textbooks can provide valuable input when it comes to exposing students to new cultural expressions and to the diversity of cultures. Reflecting a worldview of a cultural system and a social construction, textbook is considered to be an ideology (Aliakbari 2004). Thus, it influences the way how students and teachers perceive the view of culture. This is in line with what Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989 as cited in McGrath: 2002) argue that English teaching and learning materials, textbooks in this sense, cover a hidden curriculum that consists of certain values and ideology built into materials by design.

2.2. Language and Culture

Byram et al. have pointed out in their discussion of "language and culture teaching as political education". Comparison is not only a technique for highlighting similarities and differences as a means of making them more perceptible. It also serves as a step towards the acceptance of other perspectives, and the valuing of them as equally acceptable.

In relation to the English language learning, many researchers have also emphasized on the inseparability between the notion of language and culture (Choudhury, 2013; Hall, 2013) As a result, this topic becomes an excellent source for researchers to investigate various topics, including what culture is represented and how the notion of culture is adopted, represented, and disseminated in the learning materials used in the classroom context (Hermawan & Noerkhasanah, 2012).

3. Research Methodology

For the cultural content evaluation, Byram and Morgan (1994) and Kilickaya (2004) proposed a qualitative evaluation checklist with a list of criteria for examining the extent and methods of how culture is presented. There are nine categories from the checklist, namely; social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behavior, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life-cycle, national history, national geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and national identity (Byram & Morgan, 1994).

In this study, the content analysis design was used for addressing the purpose of this study since it is a research design used to help researchers make inferences by interpreting and making codes for textual materials and by analytically evaluating texts such as documents, oral communication, and graphics (Mayring, 2014). Mayring (2014) argues that the central idea of the content analysis is to evaluate texts or documents, oral communication, and graphics or pictures through working with many text passages and analyses of frequencies of categories and processing and assigning categories to text passages.

3.1. Data Resources
The data were taken from 3 (three) local English textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools, namely (the researcher uses initial as the consent form has not been sent to the publishers):
1. X textbook
2. Y textbook
3. Z textbook

3.2. Data Collection Technique
Guided by Byram and Morgan's (1994) evaluation checklist with a list of nine criteria, the researcher evaluated the local and target language cultures in local English textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia. The researcher examined the percentage of local and target cultures proportions in English textbooks for senior high school in Indonesia. Particularly, the researcher searched for whether English School textbooks promoted a balanced proportion of the local and target language cultures or not. The researcher analysed the reading texts in the three textbooks published by local publishers.

3.3. Data Analysis
The researcher used checklists proposed by Byram and Morgan in analyzing the textbooks. There are nine categories from the checklist, namely; social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behavior, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life-cycle, national history, national geography, national cultural heritage, stereotypes and national identity (Byram & Morgan, 1994).

social identity and social groups: groups within the nation-state which are the basis for other than national identity, including social class, regional identity, ethnic minority, professional identity, and which illustrate the complexity of individuals' social identities and of a national society (NB the issue of national identity is dealt with under 'stereotypes');
social interaction: conventions of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in social interaction at differing levels of familiarity, as outsider and insider within social groups;
belief and behaviour: routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group national or sub-national and the moral and religious beliefs which are embodied within them; secondly, routines of behaviour taken from daily life which are not seen as significant markers of the identity of the group;
socio-political institutions: institutions of the state and the values and meanings they embody which characterize the state and its citizens and which constitute a framework for ordinary, routine life within the national and sub-national groups; provision for health-care, for law and order, for social security, for local government, etc.;
socialization and the life-cycle: institutions of socialization, families, schools, employment, religion, military service and the ceremonies which mark passage through stages of social life; representation of divergent practices in different social groups as well as national auto-stereotypes of expectations and shared interpretations;
national history: periods and events, historical and contemporary, which are significant in the constitution of the nation and its identity both actually significant and, not necessarily identical, perceived as such by its members;
national geography: geographical factors within the national boundaries which are significant in members' perceptions of their country; other factors which are information (known but not significant

to members) essential to outsiders in intercultural communication (NB national boundaries, and changes in them, are part of 'national history');

national cultural heritage: cultural artefacts perceived to be emblems and embodiments of national culture from past and present; in particular those which are 'known' to members of the nation e.g. Shakespeare in Britain, the Impressionists in France, Wagner in Germany through their inclusion in curricula of formal education; and also contemporary classics, not all of which have reached the school curriculum and some of which may be transient but significant, created by television and other media e.g. Truffaut's films in France, Agatha Christie in Britain, Biermann's songs in Germany;

stereotypes and national identity: for example, German and English notions of what is 'typically' German and English national identity; the origins of these notions historical and contemporary and comparisons among them; symbols of national identities and stereotypes and their meanings, e.g. famous monuments and people.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Local Culture and Target Culture

No	Textbook	Local Culture (Passages)	Local Culture (Pictures)	Target Culture (Passages)	Target Culture (Pictures)
1	Textbook X	5	4	8	8
2	Textbook Y	8	5	13	7
3	Textbook Z	10	9	11	5

No	Categories	Textbook X	Textbook Y	Textbook Z	Total
1	social identity and social groups	3	7	5	15
2	social interaction	5	4	4	13
3	belief and behaviour	-	3	-	3
4	socio-political institutions	-	-	-	0
5	socialization and the life-cycle	5	3	5	13
6	national history	2	5	6	13
7	national geography	5	7	4	16
8	national cultural heritage	5	6	7	18
9	stereotypes and national identity	-	-	4	4

From the above findings it is shown that textbook X has fewer local culture than target culture similar to textbook Y, while textbook Z has more local culture than target culture. On a separate note, among nine categories proposed by Byram and Morgan, it was found that national cultural heritage and national geography are the most dominant elements in the English local textbooks.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that among the three local English textbooks used in high schools, textbook Z is the only book which used most local culture compared to the other two textbooks. It is assumed that textbook writers are not aware of the importance of the local content (culture) in text book writing. Furthermore, among the nine categories of textbook writing proposed by Byram and Morgan, it is shown that many text book writers still use national cultural heritage and national geography in writing the textbooks. From this point of view, text book writers are encouraged to involve other categories which will enrich the quality of the English textbooks in Indonesian high schools.

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