

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Language and culture are two intricately intertwined facets of human existence. They shape our identities, define our interactions, and offer a lens through which we perceive and interpret the world (Ishanjanova & Ahmadaliyeva, 2023). In other words, language can express the speakers' culture because culture is shared conceptually and meaningfully through spoken mode. Hall (2023) explains that the shared cultures are represented through diverse forms such as words, gestures, fashion, music, and sounds. Besides, language is a social interaction in which students learn how to communicate with other people. Especially, focus for ELF learners should be about communication performance, and not about finding linguistic flaws or comparing outputs to native norms (Ambele & Boonsuk, 2020).

English as a foreign language (EFL) refers to the learning and use of the English language in a non-English-speaking country where English is not the primary language of communication. In these countries, English is taught and studied as a subject in schools, colleges, language institutes, or through private language learning programs to enable individuals to communicate in English for various purposes, such as travel, business, education, or international communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Given this fact, it is undeniable that culture plays an important role in language, which furthermore contributes to language teaching. This involves many elements which one of them is textbooks. As the major source of learning materials, textbooks should become the medium to enrich students' cultural awareness (Kramsch, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to insert the cultural content in the textbooks.

Textbooks play a vital role in English language teaching, especially in secondary school, in this case in junior high school. Equipping EFL or ESL learners through textbooks may be the best option because it is a resourceful framework of

guidance for both teachers and learners in creating an effective lesson in the teaching-learning process. According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbooks are identified as an effective resource for self-directed learning and self-study, a valuable resource for presentation material (written and spoken), a source of ideas and activities for learner practice and communicative interaction, and a reference source for students. However, textbooks also have limitations that can lead to both teachers and learners become uncomfortable with the course. Based on Gak's (2014) research, one of the textbook disadvantages is the content of the textbooks and one of the very visible elements of the content itself is culture. "The content or examples may not be relevant or appropriate to the group and they may not reflect the students' needs since textbooks are often written for global markets and often do not reflect the interests and needs of students." (Dragana, 2014).

Haskins (2019) mentions before that culture is one of the elements of content that is quite important in textbooks. It is because culture shows the identity of the writer to the reader and because a lot of textbooks of the English language have elements from English native speakers like U.S. or U.K. culture that will make the teaching-learning process confusing for EFL or ESL learners in other words if language textbooks are not sufficiently contextualized both socially and culturally, students will not see them as relevant to their lives and this will affect their engagement with the language. Furthermore, the textbooks detain the language in its native settings with its culture that probably other countries did not have and this could be unrealistic and confusing. Aguilar (2010) said that "if native speakers are taken as a model, language learners may feel that their own culture is in an inferior position or it is ignored". For this reason, to prevent learners' feeling inferior and to provide them with an understanding of their native culture, their own culture can be given a place in foreign language teaching (Arslan, 2016).

This study tries to analyze the cultural content in the textbook. The textbook needs to be studied more deeply in order to meet the goals which are the students are not only to master in the five competences of language learning, but also the cultural awareness. In this regard, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) propose three categories of culture, namely source or local culture, target culture, and international culture.

The source culture refers to the culture of teachers and learners, which in this research is Indonesian culture. The target culture concerns the culture belonging to the country that used the language as a first language, e.g., British or American culture. The international culture is related to cultures that do not belong to the source culture nor the target culture, which refers to varieties of the other target culture from both English and non-English speaking countries, e.g., Germany, Spain, Japan, etc. In this study, the above-mentioned three categories of cultures, local and target culture will be used for analyzing various cultures portrayed in the textbook.

Faris (2014) investigated cultural content in an English textbook for grade three Senior High School in Cianjur, West Java. His research finding informed that the target culture is predominant with 77.05 % in the textbook. However, the scope of his research is simply focusing in the reading passages in the English textbook. The textbook used was “Look Ahead” published by Airlangga publisher. The similarity of both researches is the categories of cultural content analyzed in this research. While the previous study focused on the reading passages of the textbook, this present study will shed light on not only written texts but also illustrations content in a certain chapter of the textbook entitled “When English Rings a Bells”.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

In this research, the writer will focus on answering the following question:

1. How are local and target cultures represented in selected chapters of Bahasa Inggris: When English Rings a Bell textbook?

## **1.3 Operational Definition**

### **1.3.1 Culture**

Culture often refers to “the total way of life of people composed of their learned and shared behavior patterns, value, norms, and material objects.” Therefore, culture influences the way how the community lives, behaves, thinks, and speaks.

#### **1.3.1.1 Local Culture**

The source culture refers to the culture of teachers and learners, which in this research is Indonesian culture.

#### 1.3.1.2. Target Culture

The target culture concerns the culture belonging to the country that used the language as a first language, e.g., British or American culture.

#### 1.3.2 Textbook

A textbook can be described as a mediator between the intended curriculum as an official policy and the implemented curriculum by the teachers. In this study, English Language textbook with title *When English Rings a Bell* written and published by The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia for the seventh grade of Indonesian Junior Highschool.

#### 1.3.3 Representation

Representation refers to a clear and specific description of how a particular concept, idea, or object is measured, observed, or identified in a research study or practical setting. It specifies the observable and measurable characteristics or indicators that researchers use to quantify or identify the presence or absence of the concept they are studying.

### **1.4 Aim(s) of the Research**

In this study, the researcher attempts to see how local and target cultures are represented in an Indonesian junior high school English language textbook.

### **1.5 Significances of the Research**

**1.5.1 Theoretical Uses** : This research is expected to contribute to the awareness about how culture in a textbook can

be analyzed using four dimensions of culture frameworks proposed by Moran (2001).

- 1.5.2 Empirical Uses** : This research also brings benefits to educational backgrounds by sharing awareness that cultural representation in the textbook can be one of the important subjects for building cultural awareness and identity for the learners.
- 1.5.3 Practical Uses** : This research may also be beneficial for preservice teachers and other educators as a cautionary tale to be able to sort and choose carefully the teaching materials before entering the class.