

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This section presents the introduction of this research, including the background of the research, the formulation of the problems, operational definitions, aim of this research, and the significance of this research.

1.1 Background of the Study

In this era of globalization, cultural identity is very important in influencing people's views, attitudes and behaviour. The main goal of cross-cultural communication today is to activate human potential and aims to develop a priority concept of universal values, uniting the cultures of various countries by introducing into the consciousness of each person a sense of togetherness and the values of our civilization (Puyod & Charoensukmongkol, 2019; Teunissen et al., 2017; Tombleson & Wolf, 2017), as stated in (Gainutdinova et al., 2020). Cultural identity is not just about recognising who we are and where we come from, but also about how we interact with the world around us. By understanding and appreciating our own and others' cultural identities, we can create a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Language communicates through culture, and culture also communicates through language. The communicative force of culture not only represents aspects of reality but also connects one context with another. This highlights the essential role of language and culture in shaping human thoughts, beliefs, and identities. The interwoven relationship between language and culture is best summed up by Brown (2000) who claims that both language and culture are components of one another. This is one of the the reason that mastering culture is essential when teaching language because language and culture are intertwined. Effective language instruction should merge language and culture to create global awareness and cultural competence. According to Hidayati et al. (2017), they said "The insertion of target-language culture in language class will be very beneficial for students' understanding since target culture brings essential feature of the target language."

Also Prihatiningsih et al. (2021) stated that "Inserting cultural aspects of language teaching and learning offers resources for students to experience the world from another's viewpoint." Mastering culture is essential when teaching language because it helps students gain a deeper understanding of the language and the culture it represents, promoting cultural awareness, cultural intelligence, and cultural competence. One example of inserting cultural teaching when teaching a language is by including cultural content in a textbook used as teaching material.

Textbooks not only serve as a source of information and instruction for students, but also as processing tools for language practice. This shows that textbooks can be an invaluable resource in facilitating active and applied learning. Selecting textbooks that include cultural content can provide an additional dimension to language learning. By including cultural aspects, students can more deeply understand the context of language use and develop their understanding of the related culture. According to Suryani (2018), textbooks are an essential component in most language programs. They provide the basis for language input and practice that students receive in the classroom, serving as a fundamental supplement to the teacher's instruction. Textbooks can assist teachers in describing the cultural content students will encounter while learning English (Bahrami, 2015). On the other hand, textbook that contains culture can influence students' awareness. Such as the cultural identity stated in a textbook, it is important to know that it has an implied meaning in it, for example in the 7th grade English textbook entitled 'English for the Nusantara'.

English textbook entitled 'English for the Nusantara' refers to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* guidelines created by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology which have the concept that in language teaching, it is important to include local context so that learning materials have relevance and meaning for students. By using the Indonesian theme, students can more easily identify themselves in learning English. Getting to know the cultural identity of the *Nusantara* will give students a deeper understanding of the social context, history and values that shape their culture. This will enrich their learning experience. By

linking English to Indonesian identity, the book can help recognize and strengthen students' national identity. This may strengthen their sense of national identification and love for their cultural heritage. Textbook with an Indonesian theme can bring in local values, traditions and local wisdom which are important to convey to the younger generation. This can be an effective means of maintaining and developing cultural heritage. By using the local context, students can develop their English skills in a context that is more relevant to their daily lives, including speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. By analyzing cultural identity in the textbook entitled 'English for Nusantara', learning English is not only a communication tool, but also a means to bridge understanding between language, culture and identity for students in the *Nusantara*.

Numerous studies have been conducted in analyzing textbooks. One of them is the study written by Prihatiningsih et al. (2021) entitled 'Cultural Representation in EFL Textbooks for the Seventh Graders: A Multimodal Analysis'. This research aimed to investigate a types of cultures represented in the EFL textbooks for the seventh graders. Two EFL textbooks were analyzed: 'When English Rings a Bell' and 'English on Sky 1'. This research applied a qualitative content analysis as method and Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal social semiotic approach as the technique of analyzing data. The result reveals that imbalances in the representation of cultural types exist. Source culture is represented more dominantly compared to target and international culture. It implies that both the authors and the publishers of the textbooks prioritize the learners' identities construction and characters education rather than focus on the use of language as the lingua franca.

According to the previous study above, it is reasonable to assume that most of the study focuses on multimodality analysis. As a result, the researcher will identify cultural content in different textbook. This research will focus on what are cultural identity conveyed by the authors of English language textbooks in schools, especially English language textbooks for seventh grade *Kurikulum Merdeka* entitled 'English for Nusantara'. Recognizing the significant influence in English textbooks on learners' cultural awareness and intercultural knowledge. The

researcher examines the representation of textbook materials from the two perspectives on cultural elements: the perspectives on cultural dimensions by Moran (2001), and on cultural categories by Cortazzi & Jin (1999). The researcher do this by using a content analysis of an English textbook for the seventh grade junior high school in Indonesia education. In this research, the ‘cultural dimensions’ are extended to five factors (culture as products, practices, perspective, communities, and persons) by including Moran’s (2001). Additionally, the ‘cultural categories’, which are termed the identification of sources of cultural information, are analyzed using Cortazzi & Jin (1999) framework of three factors: source culture (SC), target culture (TC), international culture (IC).

Considering the benefits of understanding culture in EFL textbooks and the gaps in data analysis techniques and expanding empirical studies that focus on how book authors convey culture in English textbooks, analyze cultural identity in EFL textbooks, which are national in scope and published by trusted publishers, especially for seventh grade students needs to be done. Therefore, the research question that guides this research is what are cultural identity content conveyed by the authors of English language textbooks in schools, especially English language textbooks for seventh grade *Kurikulum Merdeka* entitled 'English for Nusantara'?. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the pedagogical aspect because they can provide input for EFL teachers in choosing textbooks based on cultural content considerations.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background above, the researcher addresses the following question, — What are cultural identity content conveyed by the authors of English textbooks at schools, especially in the English textbook for grade 7 *Kurikulum Merdeka* entitled 'English for Nusantara' written by Ika Lestari Damayanti et al. in 2022?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

1.3.1 Cultural identity

Cultural identity is a concept that includes an individuals or groups feelings about their identity that originate from the culture to which they originate. Cultural identity includes elements such as language, traditions, values, social norms, beliefs, and other cultural symbols. In this research, the cultural identity in question is the cultural identity of the author of the textbook 'English for the Nusantara'. The cultural identity that is explained are the cultural categories and dimensions contained in the English textbook. Including cultural identity in textbooks is important for promoting diversity, fostering cultural awareness, and enhancing the overall learning experience for students.

1.3.2 Textbook

A textbook is a type of instructional resource that offers organized knowledge on a particular topic or field. It often supports teaching and learning activities in schools, colleges, and universities. Textbook entitled 'English for Nusantara' are made to provide ideas, information, and illustrated examples in an orderly and systematic way, making it simpler for students to comprehend the material.

1.3.3 Textbook *English For Nusantara* for grade VII Junior High School

Textbook English For Nusantara for seventh grade in Junior High School is an English language textbook prepared for the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This textbook is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The contents of the book include five chapters, each chapter title in this English book includes: "About Me", "Culinary and Me", "Home Sweet Home", "My School Activities", and "This is My School". This book published

in 2022 with the authors are Ika Lestari Damayanti, Iyen Nurlaelawati, Yusnita Febrianti, Pipit Prihartanti, Aji Jehan Fellani, Raymon Rahmadhani, and Gilang Asri Devianty. This book is widely used to support the junior high school learning process in Indonesia.

1.4. Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to find out what are cultural identity content conveyed by the authors of the English textbooks at schools, especially in English textbook for grade 7 *Kurikulum Merdeka* entitled 'English for Nusantara' written by Ika Lestari Damayanti et al. in 2022.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are several significances of this study, they are:

- 1.5.1 Theoretical uses : This research will enrich how cultural identity is conveyed by authors in English textbooks at school.
- 1.5.2 Practical uses : This research provides a reference for educators to be more selective in choosing textbook for children. This research also provides an overview for authors, publishers and illustrators in creating textbooks for students that contain cultural identities appropriately and inclusively.
- 1.5.3 Empirical uses : This research will provide empirical insight for researchers on how to analyze cultural identities represented in EFL textbook and how these representations can impact language learning.