

## An Analysis of Cultural Content in the English Textbook Entitled “English Advance” for the Eleventh Grade

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the cultural content of the English Advance textbook used in the second grade of Senior High School. Specifically, it seeks to identify the main cultural categories represented in the textbook, based on the framework by Cortazzi and Jin (1999), and the cultural dimensions present, as outlined by Moran (2001). A qualitative content analysis method was employed to examine the extent to which the textbook includes source culture, target culture, and international culture, as well as the five cultural dimensions: products, practices, perspectives, persons, and communities. The findings reveal that the target culture dominates the textbook with 56% of the total content, followed by international culture at 30%, and source culture at only 14%. Regarding cultural dimensions, products emerge as the most dominant with 52%, while persons (17%), perspectives (16%), and practices (15%) are present in smaller portions. Notably, the community dimension is absent. These results suggest that the textbook emphasizes surface-level cultural knowledge and underrepresents deeper, contextual cultural understanding.

### Keywords:

*Cultural representation,  
English textbook,  
Cultural Content*

## 1. Introduction

Language and culture are inseparable entities that are inherently interconnected in the process of communication and learning. The teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) not only aims at developing students' linguistic competence but also at enhancing their intercultural communicative competence, which enables them to understand, interpret, and appropriately respond to cultural meanings embedded in language use. In the Indonesian context, English textbooks play a particularly significant role as the primary medium of instruction, serving not only as linguistic resources but also as vehicles for cultural exposure. Consequently, the cultural representations embedded in textbooks are crucial in shaping students' perspectives of both their own culture and other cultures. Social media, textbooks, foreigners, and other sources are only a few resources that can serve as standards for language and cultural learning.

Based on Huang (2019), textbooks are a major part of introducing students to diverse cultures and new forms of expression. For Indonesian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), textbooks are the most convenient way to master the language and culture. In English language teaching (ELT) classes, textbooks are usually used as the main tool for linguistic and cultural comprehension of the target language (Cortazzi, Martin & Jin Lixian, 1999). According to Hutchinson & Torres (1994), textbooks are an almost universal component of the ELT process. They offer things like explanations, texts, and exercises. Schools must exercise greater caution when choosing the textbooks that will be utilized in the classroom, though. In general, every nation in the world has rules for creating the textbooks that students use in class. The purpose is to make it easier for a nation to accomplish its educational objectives.

In Indonesia, textbooks now and previously used in schools can be standardized and evaluated by the National Board of Education Standard (BSNP). A minimum of three requirements must be fulfilled by school textbooks. The first consideration is language appropriateness at the socioeconomic, cognitive, cohesive, and coherent levels. The second aspect is the book's presentation, which contains learning tasks and approaches. Last but not least, the book's presentation from beginning to conclusion is thorough. Textbooks, an almost universal component of ELT classrooms, need to set certain objectives for the students. Based on the regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Technology no 12 (2024, n.d.) National education aims to develop students' copyrights, tastes, and spirits as lifelong learners with Pancasila character while also achieving meaningful and effective learning in fostering faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble morals. Foster learners' copyrights, tastes, and sensibilities as they are lifelong learners who embody Pancasila.

The "Advance English" textbook is selected because it was released by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology as part of the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation. This book is intended for Indonesian grade eleventh students at the SMA/SMK level. Numerous studies examining how cultural information was represented in Indonesian secondary school English textbooks discovered similar patterns of target culture dominance and cultural representation imbalance.

The first researcher analyzed grade 11 textbooks and found that the target culture was the most dominant (57.6%), followed by local culture (30.3%) and international culture (12.1%). Cultural representations in the book are displayed through various forms such as text, images, print, and online media, as well as spoken and written language. The results of this study indicate that cultural content in textbooks is still not proportional. Similar findings also occur in the analysis of Work in Progress textbooks, where the target culture also dominates (53.4%), while the source culture only accounts for 13.8% and international culture 14.6%. In addition, the most featured cultural elements are cultural products and practices, while cultural perspectives are underrepresented. The two studies are similar to this research in terms of the purpose of identifying cultural content and data analysis methods, although they differ in the textbook sources used and the theories referenced.

The previous study only used Cortazzi & Jin's cultural framework, while this study combines Cortazzi & Jin's framework and Moran's cultural dimensions to get a more comprehensive picture of cultural representation in English textbooks (Astiandani & Purwati, 2021; Deswila et al., 2021; Farkhan Al Faya & Rochsantiningasih, 2023). Meanwhile, Nurmilayana (2019) conducted a study on the textbook English for SMK and found that source culture was the most represented (48%), followed by target culture (35%) and international culture (17%), indicating a stronger emphasis on Indonesian culture but still highlighting an imbalance in cultural representation. Similarly, Dita Safira Aulia Rahmawati (2020) studied the textbook Bahasa Inggris for senior high school and concluded that the source culture remained predominant, although all five categories of cultural content were found based on Chao's framework.

Hence, the researcher attempted to examine how culture-related material was represented in the English textbook "Advance English," which was produced for Indonesian second-grade high schools by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This is because, according to Cortazzi Martin & Jin Lixian (1999), a good textbook should cover three different types of culture: source culture, target culture, and international culture. The five dimensions of culture identified in the other study were products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons. This classification was based on Moran (2001).

## 2. Method

This study employs content analysis to identify the cultural content categories and dimensions present in the English textbook "English Advance" for the eleventh grade of senior high school. It is based on the categories suggested by Cortazzi and Jin as well as the cultural dimensions proposed by Moran. As stated by Krippendorff (2004) Content analysis is a research methodology that examines facts within a particular context according to the explanations assigned to them by a person, a group, or a culture. To sum up, content analysis is a research method for deriving reliable and accurate findings regarding the context in which text (or other relevant material) is employed. According to the research objectives, a qualitative study using content analysis is the most practical research design.

Creswell, p. (2003, p. 45) stated that a qualitative researcher uses participant opinions, asks general questions, collects data from participants mainly in the form of words or texts, describes and analyzes these words or texts for themes, and conducts the inquiry or investigation subjectively (biasedly). Since this study employs a qualitative methodology and involves content analysis of the cultural contents included in the English textbook "English Advance," the researcher serves as the primary instrument.

In addition, Sugiyono (2013) as saying that in qualitative research, using people as the primary instrument in an experiment or study is the only viable option. The researcher used the documentary research approach in this study to get the data from the English textbook "English Advance" for senior high school second graders. Additionally, because the textbook's cultural elements fall within the category of documentary analysis, they become the subject of a descriptive qualitative study.

A documentary research method, as defined by Jashim Uddin Ahmed (2010), is a research approach that involves examining documents that provide details about the phenomena we want to investigate. Additionally The researcher used an interactive data analysis paradigm by Miles et al. (2014) to analyze the data. Throughout the study, the researcher can move between these four phases of data collection, condensing, presenting, and drawing/verifying conclusions, using the interactive model of data analysis (Miles et al. 2014).

Data reduction and simplification were employed in this study, which shifted the focus from corpus data (English textbooks) to text-based data that solely included cultural material. Therefore, the data center on visual pictures with text (e.g., a picture with conversation, description, and monologue) to the learning resources found in English textbooks. Subsequently, the investigator coded and arranged the gathered information according to the theoretical facets of cultural content. Data display, on the other hand, is defined by Miles et al. (2014) as a collection of structured information that makes it possible to make decisions and take action. forming judgments and acting on them.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

This research uses the categories of cultural theory purposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). There are three categories of culture: source culture, target, and international. The following are the results of the textbook analysis concerning the types of cultural categories. The Tables below were made to make it easier for readers to comprehend the overall data and the percentages of occurrence for each culture in the textbook. The number and percentages for each culture are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Percentages of Categories of Culture*

Cultural Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Source Culture	21	14%
Target Culture	82	56%
International Culture	45	30%
Total	148	100%

In this research, the cultural category is the first aspect represented in the textbook. The cultural category is represented by all materials such as images, text, dialogues, words, and names of people, places, statements, tasks, and other activities. In this textbook, the cultural category is dominated by the target culture, representing 56%, which means that the textbook tends to prioritize the target culture over other types of culture. Target culture refers to the culture of native English-speaking countries because student studying English must learn about the target culture to improve their understanding of the language. Then followed by International Culture, with a percentage of 30%. This Category refers to the cultures of countries other than Indonesia and native English-speaking countries. Last is the source culture, with a percentage of only 14%. Source culture is the culture used by the source country or the nation of origin of the student, Indonesia.

The second aspect presented in this book is the cultural element. According to Moran (2001), there are five cultural dimensions: product, persons, practices, perspectives, and communities. The findings of the study are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Percentage of Culture Dimensions proposed by Moran (2001)*

Cultural Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage
Products	77	52%
Practices	22	15%
Perspectives	24	16%
Communities	0	0%
Persons	25	17%
Total	148	100%

All the material in English textbooks represents cultural elements such as pictures, the names of persons, places, and food, songs, dialogues, texts, statements, and other activities. Cultural dimensions are dominated by the element of products, which accounts for product 52%. Product representation in this book is in the form of pictures, buildings, places, objects, musical instruments, songs, etc. The second element is persons, with a data percentage of 17%. The representation of persons in this book takes the form of names of persons, pictures, public figures, dialogue, and so on. Then the third element is perspective, with data representation of 16%. Perspective representation is taken from a person's view or the view of a society or country towards something in text, dialogue, or statement. The final element is practices, with a percentage of 15%, which includes activities contained in conversation, text, statement, or images.

### 3.2 Discussion

The analysis of the English Advance textbook reveals an imbalance in the representation of cultural categories. Referring to Cortazzi Martin & Jin Lixian (1999), the textbook shows a dominance of the target culture, which constitutes about 56% of the content. This reflects an orientation toward English-speaking countries, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, as a means to support language acquisition and cultural familiarity (Kramsch, 2014; Mustofa & Martina, 2019). García (2005) also stresses that exposure to the target culture can foster tolerance, respect, and intercultural communication competence. In contrast, the source culture is underrepresented, accounting for only 14% of the total content. Similar findings were reported by Farkhan Al Faya & Rochsantiningsih (2023) and Sihombing & Asnawi (2023), who noted that source culture content in textbooks rarely exceeds 15%. This limited representation reduces opportunities for learners to relate language learning to their own cultural background, potentially lowering motivation and restricting their ability to develop intercultural competence Razi (2016).

Meanwhile, international culture comprises about 30% of the content, indicating an attempt to expose learners to global perspectives. Such inclusion prepares students for communication in multicultural contexts, as argued by Yuen (2011) and Shin et al. (2011) and reflects Risager (2007) call for textbooks to integrate diverse perspectives. It also aligns with global citizenship education principles Widodo (2018). Overall, the findings highlight a significant imbalance: target culture dominates, international culture is moderately represented, and source culture is marginalized. This contrasts with Chao (2011) view that cultural categories should be presented in a balanced way, since each category contributes uniquely to learners' intercultural awareness. Without such a balance, learners may struggle to critically connect their own cultural identity with those of others.

The findings of this study show that the cultural dimensions in the English Advance textbook are unequally distributed. The product dimension dominates with 52% of the content, confirming a trend found in several earlier studies. Sofiah et al. (2024) who analyzed the Work in Progress textbook using Moran (2001) framework, also found that products accounted for the largest proportion of cultural representation. Similarly, Lestari et al. (2023) and Deswila et al. (2021) demonstrated that Indonesian EFL textbooks tend to emphasize visible and tangible elements of culture, such as food, clothing, and traditional objects. This recurring focus suggests that Indonesian EFL materials often privilege concrete cultural products over deeper or more abstract aspects of culture. While this helps students to easily recognize cultural items, it risks reducing cultural learning to surface-level knowledge. The persons dimension accounts for 17% of the content. This is in line with studies by Ariawan et al. (2022) and

Khoeriah et al. (2024), who found similar proportions in different textbooks. Characters in the form of names, public figures, or fictional personalities serve as cultural representatives that can enhance learners' intercultural awareness by connecting them with relatable identities.

Likewise, Paradita et al. (2024) observed that around 21% of cultural content in commercial ELT textbooks came from persons, presented through both text and visuals. These consistent findings suggest that the inclusion of cultural characters supports students' engagement with diverse cultural identities. The perspectives dimension, which constitutes 16% of the content, reflects cultural beliefs, values, and social norms. Setyawaningsih et al. (2021) reported similar findings, noting that perspectives were included but remained less dominant than other dimensions. This indicates that while learners are introduced to certain cultural viewpoints, such content is still secondary to products and persons. Practices, which account for 15% of the content, represent how people interact through routines, rituals, and traditions. This aligns with Jayanti & Mustofa (2023) study, which found practices in 17% of textbook content. Such representations help learners see how culture is lived in everyday activities, linking classroom language learning with real-world experiences.

However, the community dimension is absent from the textbook. According to Moran (2001), communities encompass the contexts, groups, and institutions in which cultural activities occur, such as national, religious, or social communities. The lack of this dimension limits students' exposure to the broader social environments where cultural practices take place, thereby narrowing their understanding of the cultural landscape. Overall, these results confirm that English Advance emphasizes surface cultural knowledge through products, while underrepresenting deeper aspects such as perspectives and practices, and omitting communities altogether. As Yuen (2011) points out, cultural categories reveal the breadth of culture, while the frequency of cultural dimensions indicates its depth. The imbalance found in this study suggests that learners may be introduced to cultural features in a fragmented way, with limited opportunities to develop comprehensive intercultural competence.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of the cultural exposure that the textbook offers is influenced by superficial components, which may help students in identifying and recognizing cultural symbols but provide little understanding of their deeper implications. The product's dimension predominance indicates a propensity to emphasize tangible aspects of culture above fostering a critical comprehension of cultural values, beliefs, and social behaviors. Despite recognizing that the dimensions of persons, perspectives, and practices demonstrate an effort to expose students to cultural identities, worldviews, and lifestyles, their comparatively low percentages imply that these elements are not yet completely integrated. A lack of portrayal of social groupings or collective identities within cultures is the most significant consequence of the community dimension's total absence. These elements are crucial for assisting learners in comprehending how language and culture operate in authentic social contexts.

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