



Teaching English or Teaching the West? Multimodal Cultural Imperialism in Big Show Level 5 Textbooks Used in Indonesian Islamic Montessori Schools

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Abstract

This study extends Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) beyond traditional textual examination to investigate multimodal representations of culture in "Big Show Teacher's Guide Level 5" a 135-page English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook guidance for teachers, widely used in Indonesian educational contexts, particularly Islamic Montessori elementary schools. Employing an expanded analytical framework incorporating five dimensions which are visual-spatial representation, digital multimodality, embodied cultural practices, temporal-contextual positioning, and material-environmental factors. The study reveals systematic patterns of cultural imperialism operating through multiple semiotic modes simultaneously. Analysis of all twelve units demonstrates that while the textbook superficially incorporates cultural variety, it fundamentally privileges Western cultural norms, consumer values, and secular worldviews that conflict with Indonesian communitarian values, Islamic principles, and indigenous knowledge systems. The study documents how 4th of July celebrations, London landmarks, and Western leisure activities are positioned as universal references while Indonesian Independence Day, traditional markets, indigenous games, and local wildlife remain entirely absent. Material requirements including extensive technology access create class-based educational exclusion, while rigid temporal structures contradict Islamic prayer schedules and traditional learning

rhythms. These findings demonstrate that genuine educational equity requires comprehensive multimodal redesign across all five dimensions, not superficial textual modifications.

1. Introduction

The proliferation of English as an inclusive Language of Wider Communication (LWC) has created unprecedented pedagogical challenges in culturally diverse educational contexts. While English language instruction aims to facilitate international communication and economic opportunity, the materials through which this instruction occurs frequently carry implicit cultural messages that may conflict with local values, knowledge systems, and identity formation processes (Phillipson, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2016). This tension between linguistic empowerment and cultural alienation has intensified in postcolonial contexts where English simultaneously represents opportunity and historical domination (Pennycook, 2017).

Indonesia presents a particularly complex case. Following the 2015 policy shift removing English as a mandatory elementary school subject, the government demonstrated increasing recognition of the need to prioritize national languages and cultural identity during early education (Lauder, 2008). Nevertheless, English remains essential in secondary and tertiary education, driven by perceived global competitiveness requirements (Zein, 2017). This policy ambivalence reflects deeper tensions around the position of English in Indonesian social order, manifesting concretely in educational materials.

Indonesian Islamic Montessori schools represent a distinctive educational model integrating child-centered Montessori pedagogy with Islamic values and Indonesian cultural contexts (Lillard, 2017; Abu et al., 2023). These institutions prioritize educational accomplishment as well as moral plus spiritual growth aligned with Islamic teachings (*adab, akhlaq, tawhid*) while maintaining Montessori principles of hands-on learning, mixed-age collaboration, and intrinsic motivation (Ramli, 2019). Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape demands educational materials that respect its heterogeneity while facilitating language acquisition.

Yet the global EFL textbook market remains dominated by publishers whose materials reflect Western cultural assumptions, consumer values, and secular worldviews (Gray, 2010; Harwood, 2014).

"Big Show Level 5," published by PT. Asta Ilmu Sukses in Indonesia (2019) and developed by international contributors, exemplifies this phenomenon. Despite being marketed for the Indonesian context, preliminary analysis suggests substantial cultural disconnect between the material's content and the lived realities of Indonesian students, particularly those in Islamic educational settings.

Traditional CDA has predominantly focused on linguistic content, inadvertently overlooking the multimodal nature of contemporary educational materials (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2009).

Textbooks communicate through multiple simultaneous modes namely visual design, digital affordances, implied physical activities, temporal sequencing, and material requirements (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). Each mode carries cultural assumptions that may reinforce or challenge existing power structures (Fairclough, 2015; Van Dijk, 2008).

Recent scholarship in multimodal social semiotics demonstrates that meaning-making in educational contexts involves diverse modes and media, each with distinct affordances and cultural associations (Kress, 2010; Machin, 2016). Visual elements position certain bodies, places, and practices as normative while marginalizing others (Djonov & Zhao, 2014). Digital requirements create access inequalities that disproportionately affect economically disadvantaged communities (Warschauer, 2004). Physical activities prescribed by textbooks train bodies in culturally specific comportment (Bourdieu, 1977). Temporal structures embed particular cultural rhythms and priorities (Adam, 1990). Material requirements assume economic and infrastructural contexts that may not exist in all learning environments (Luke, 2004).

This perspective reveals that cultural imperialism in educational materials operates not through overt statements but through subtle, systematic patterns across multiple representational modes (Giroux, 2001; Apple, 2004) such as a textbook may appear multicultural at the textual level while simultaneously privileging Western norms through visual design, technology, physical activities, and material requirements.

2. Method

Research Design

This study employs comprehensive multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis examining "Big Show Level 5" Teacher's Guide, encompassing all twelve units plus introductory materials and three review sections. The 135-page guide provides complete curriculum content, instructional sequences, required materials, timing specifications, and cultural contexts, enabling systematic analysis across all five multimodal dimensions.

The research adopts a qualitative interpretive approach recognizing that meaning-making in educational materials involves complex cultural negotiations rather than simple information transmission (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Analysis proceeds both deductively (applying established theoretical frameworks) and inductively (identifying emergent patterns from close textual engagement), consistent with grounded theory principles (Charmaz, 2014).

This study makes three original contributions to the field. First, it advances a five-dimensional Multimodal CDA framework that extends existing text-focused approaches by incorporating embodied, temporal, and material-environmental analysis. Second, it provides the first systematic multimodal audit of an EFL textbook designed for Indonesian Islamic Montessori contexts, a population underrepresented in critical textbook scholarship. Third, it proposes actionable design principles for culturally responsive, low-resource EFL materials grounded in the specific values of Islamic and Montessori pedagogy.

The study synthesizes these theoretical traditions into an integrated framework examining how EFL textbooks operate as multimodal instruments of cultural power. The framework analyzes five distinct but intersecting dimensions (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008): 1) Visual-Spatial Representation, which identifies how images, layout, color schemes, and spatial organization construct cultural meanings and hierarchies; 2) Digital Multimodality, which analyzes how technology requirements, audio-visual materials, and interactive features privilege particular access and literacy forms; 3) Embodied Cultural Practices, which classifies how prescribed physical activities, gestures, and body comportment train culturally specific behaviors; 4) Temporal-Contextual Positioning, which pinpoints how temporal sequencing, pacing, and historical references privilege particular time systems and cultural frameworks; 5) Material-Environmental Factors, which describes how resource requirements, learning space assumptions, and ecological contexts create barriers or affordances.

Analyzing these dimensions simultaneously reveals patterns invisible to text-only analysis, demonstrating how cultural imperialism operates through systematic multimodal coordination rather than overt textual statements.

Data Source

"Big Show Level 5" was selected for several reasons. First, it is specifically designed for Indonesian educational contexts and published locally (PT. Asta Ilmu Sukses, 2019), yet developed by international contributors (Ellie Kim, Peggy Anderson), exemplifying tensions between local adaptation and global standardization. Second, it targets Level 5 students (approximately ages 10-11), a critical developmental period for cultural identity formation. Third, its widespread use in Indonesian Islamic Montessori schools enables examination of fit between material design and specific educational philosophies. Finally, the complete teacher's guide provides rich data for multimodal analysis including visual elements, digital requirements, physical activities, temporal structures, and material specifications typically invisible in student-facing materials alone.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis proceeded through four phases. Phase 1 is the comprehensive content mapping. The researcher completed inventory of all units documenting vocabulary, activities, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) readings,

cultural references, and specifications for each of the five dimensions. This created a systematic database enabling pattern identification across the entire curriculum. Phase 2 is the dimension-specific analysis. Each dimension was analyzed by the researcher separately across all twelve units, identifying patterns, frequencies, and relationships. For example, visual-spatial analysis documented all character names, settings, and cultural symbols across units. Digital multimodality analysis catalogued technology requirements, noting escalation patterns.

This phase produced detailed dimension-specific findings. Phase 3 is the intersectional analysis. The researcher conducted examination of how dimensions intersect and reinforce each other. For example, how visual representations of Western characters in Western settings are reinforced through digital content (American holiday videos), embodied practices (Western sports), temporal references (4th of July), and material requirements (amusement park economic assumptions). This phase revealed the multimodal coordination creating comprehensive cultural messages. Phase 4 is the cultural alignment evaluation.

Systematic comparison of patterns with Indonesian cultural values, Islamic educational principles, and Montessori pedagogical philosophy was identified by the researcher. This evaluative phase assessed degree of alignment or conflict, identifying specific concerns for Indonesian Islamic Montessori contexts.

Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative study, four criteria were applied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, credibility was established through prolonged engagement with the full 135-page teacher's guide, triangulation across five analytical dimensions, and inter-rater reliability checks in which two independent coders analyzed Units 1–3 and achieved agreement on over 85% of cultural pattern identifications before proceeding. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus. Second, transferability is supported by thick description of the textbook's context, publisher background, and target school type, enabling readers to assess applicability to analogous EFL settings. Third, dependability is addressed through an audit trail: all coding decisions, dimension-specific matrices, and excerpts are documented and available upon request. Fourth, confirmability is strengthened by grounding interpretations in direct textual and visual evidence from the data, with theoretical claims linked explicitly to specific unit-level examples rather than unsupported generalizations.

3. Result

The multimodal critical analysis of the 135-page *Big Show Level 5* textbook guidance for teachers, contextualized within Indonesian Islamic Montessori schools, reveals a systematic and layered privileging of Western cultural norms. The findings are organized according to the five analytical variables, demonstrating how each contributes to a comprehensive framework of cultural marginalization.

Variable 1. Visual-Spatial Representation

This variable consists of the erasure of Indonesian semiotic landscapes. The textbook's visual-spatial design consistently constructs a Western-centric worldview, rendering Indonesian cultural and environmental contexts invisible.

The textbook exclusively features characters with Western names (Louie, Rachel, Anna, Jeff) and physical characteristics. These characters are situated in environments familiar to Western middle-class life including supermarkets, classrooms with individual desks, and amusement parks. This visual narrative systematically excludes iconic Indonesian spaces such as *Pasar Tradisional* (traditional markets), *Masjid* (mosques), *Pendopo* (pavilions), and other tropical landscapes. For instance, Unit 10 ("What Do We Need From the Supermarket?") visually reinforces Western consumer spaces, while the communal, sensory-rich environment of Indonesian markets is entirely absent. This constitutes a form of semiotic violence (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), where the students' lived environment is denied symbolic representation.

The analysis identified a consistent preference for Western corporate aesthetics (e.g., blue/white color schemes) over Indonesian cultural symbols. While Unit 1 briefly mentions chopsticks, positioning them as foreign ("I never use chopsticks"), there is no reference to Indonesian eating implements like banana leaves or shared serving styles. Furthermore, traditional Indonesian art forms, such as the intricate patterns and earth tones of batik, are entirely missing from the visual design. This absence devalues local aesthetic systems and reinforces a hierarchy where Western visual codes are normalized (Janks, 2010).

The visual representation of geography is profoundly Western-centric. The CLIL reading in Unit 7 focuses exclusively on Lombard Street in San Francisco, describing it as a globally significant landmark with "2 million visitors annually." Simultaneously, the textbook guidance contains no visual or textual reference to Indonesian geographic wonders, such as Borobudur, Raja Ampat, or Mount Bromo. Similarly, Units 11-12 on wildlife feature animals like cheetahs, giraffes, and peregrine falcons within zoo contexts, while endemic and critically endangered Indonesian species like the Komodo dragon, Sumatran tiger, and Orangutan are completely ignored. This visual curation implicitly teaches Indonesian students that their nation's natural heritage lacks global significance.

Variable 2. Digital Multimodality

This variable consists of the technologically-mediated cultural hegemony. The textbook's digital components create significant accessibility barriers while functioning as a conduit for Western cultural content.

The teacher's guide repeatedly mandates the use of digital technologies, including QR codes for music videos, Internet access for "Class Booster" activities, and A/V equipment like CD/DVD players. For example, instructions such as "scan the QR code" and "if no smart device available" appear throughout. This assumes a level of technological setup, for instance consistent electricity, internet connectivity, and personal high-tech gadgets that is absent in many rural and economically disadvantaged Indonesian schools (Sari & Sugandi, 2019). This dependency creates a digital cultural divide, where educational equity becomes contingent on economic and technological capital that many students lack.

The audio tracks (Tracks 02-64) accompanying the textbook exclusively feature Western English pronunciation models and Western musical styles. There is no representation of successful Indonesian or other Asian English speakers. This consistent auditory exposure delegitimizes Indonesian-accented English and reinforces the ideological construct of the "native speaker" as the sole authority (Phillipson, 1992). In Unit 5, which covers emotional expression, the audio likely models Western vocal patterns for excitement and embarrassment, further prescribing culturally specific embodied communication.

A pivotal moment occurs in Unit 11 (page 79), where a comic strip depicts a character using the Internet to fact-check whether a lion or cheetah is faster. This activity privileges Western digital information gatekeepers (e.g., Google, Wikipedia) over local ecological knowledge and oral traditions. It teaches students to value digitally-mediated, English-language "facts" over the wisdom of community elders, thereby enacting a form of epistemicide (de Sousa Santos, 2014), the destruction of indigenous knowledge systems.

Variable 3. Embodied Cultural Practices

This variable consists of the disciplining the Indonesian body. The textbook prescribes a set of Western corporeal norms that conflict with Indonesian and Islamic ways of using the body.

Unit 5, "Why Is He So Excited?", teaches vocabulary for emotions (excited, surprised, embarrassed) through activities that assume Western display rules. For instance, the association of "fall down" with individual embarrassment contradicts the Indonesian cultural response of *gotong royong* (collective help). Similarly, the phrase "have a fight" likely depicts direct confrontation or war monger ideology, which conflicts with Indonesian and Islamic conflict resolution models that emphasize *musyawarah* (deliberation) and *sabr* (patience). The textbook thus pathologizes Indonesian emotional restraint (*malu*) and promotes Western expressiveness as the normative mode for English communication.

Unit 6, "Which Boy Is Toby?", focuses exclusively on Western athletic activities (jumping jacks, basketball, running races). These activities emphasize individual competition and achievement, as seen in the "Field Day" context. This stands in stark contrast to traditional Indonesian games like *gobak sodor* (which requires team coordination) and *pencak silat* (a martial art with spiritual dimensions). The textbook's approach also ignores the requirements of Islamic Montessori education, such as gender-segregated sports and modest dress, thereby creating a conflict between physical education and religious values.

Unit 7 teaches navigation using Western urban infrastructure like "Go straight and turn left after three blocks," and "at the crosswalk." This embodies a detached, individualistic mode of wayfinding. Indonesian navigation, however, is often landmark-based ("turn at the *warung*"), relational ("ask the *pak RT*"), and communal, where people accompany visitors rather than merely giving directions. The textbook's model erases this socially embedded, communal embodiment of movement.

Variable 4. Temporal-Contextual Positioning

This variable consists about the colonization of time. The textbook imposes Western temporal frameworks, rendering Indonesian and Islamic rhythms of time invisible.

The textbook explicitly promotes Western national and cultural timelines while completely ignoring Indonesian and Islamic calendars. The most egregious example is in Unit 9, which presents the "4th of July" as a universal temporal reference for watching fireworks. Meanwhile, Indonesian Independence Day (August 17) and major Islamic holidays like Ramadan and Eid are never mentioned. This constitutes temporal imperialism, where the colonizer's calendar is naturalized, and the significant colonized-people dates are erased (Rifkin, 2017).

The sample lesson plan prescribes a rigid, efficiency-driven schedule, including a "2-minute roll call" and 5-10 minutes activity segments. This linear, fragmented time management conflicts with the flexible, cyclical rhythms required in Indonesian Islamic contexts. It allows no time for *musyawarah* (collective discussion), the five daily prayers (*salat*), or contemplative learning, creating a fundamental dissonance with the temporal reality of the students' lives.

The textbook assumes universal Western patterns, such as the three-meal-a-day schedule and weekly supermarket shopping. Unit 8 presents breakfast as the kickstart meal of the day based on the Western scientific model, with no acknowledgment of the radically different eating patterns during Ramadan (predawn and sunset meals). This ignores the seasonal, religious, and economic factors that structure daily life in Indonesia.

Variable 5. Material-Environmental Factors

This variable consists of the economics of exclusion. The textbook's material requirements create a class-based barrier to access and assume environmental contexts alien to many Indonesian students.

The analysis identified an extensive list of required materials across the 12 units including a student book, a workbook, worksheet sets, audio CDs, art supplies (crayons/colored pencils mentioned 24+ times), and game materials (balls, buckets, tape). Combined with the necessary technology (smartphones, internet), the estimated cost (Rp 500,000-750,000 for materials plus technology costs) is prohibitive for many Indonesian families, particularly in rural areas where monthly income can be below Rp 3,000,000. This creates material stratification, effectively excluding the economically disadvantaged from full participation.

The activities assume classroom environments with individual desks, ample storage, projector mounting space, and reliable electricity. These assumptions are mismatched with the reality of many Indonesian schools, which may use communal floor seating, *halaqah* (circle learning in *pesantren*), and have limited or no electricity. Games requiring large, open floor space (Review 1) are impractical in often crowded classrooms. Unit 10's vocabulary ("a can of beans", "a tub of frozen yogurt", "a carton of milk") assumes access to refrigeration, packaged goods, and Western consumption patterns.

This is culturally and economically misaligned with the reality of traditional markets, where shopping is daily, goods are fresh and unpackaged, and staples include rice, *tempe*, and fresh fish. The textbook thus positions Western consumerism as the default modern lifestyle.

Table 1. Multimodal Cultural Imperialism Framework – Summary Model

Analytical Dimension (Variables)	How Dimension Operates (Semiotic Process)	Key Mechanism of Cultural Imperialism	Primary Impact on Learners
(V1) Visual-Spatial Representation	Erasure of Indonesian semiotic landscapes	Symbolised exclusion & Western-centric worldview	Devaluation of local cultural symbols and environments (e.g., Pasar vs Supermarket)
(V2) Digital Multimodality	Technologically-mediated cultural hegemony	Access barriers and epistemicide of local knowledge	Educational inequality and legitimizing Western 'native speaker' audio

			models
(V3) Embodied Cultural Practices	Disciplining the Indonesian body	Pathologizing Indonesian emotional restraint (<i>Malu</i>)	Conflicts with Islamic/Indonesian corpus norms (e.g., Individual Competition vs <i>Gotong Royong</i>)
(V4) Temporal-Contextual Positioning	Colonization of time	Temporal imperialism and efficiency-driven schedules	Invisibility of Indonesian and Islamic calendars (e.g., 4th of July vs <i>Eid/Ramadan</i>)
(V5) Material-Environmental Factors	Economics of exclusion	Class-based barriers and assumptions of Western consumption	Material stratification, excluding economically disadvantaged (IDR 500,000-750,000 costs)

The table above synthesizes how each analytical dimension operates, the key mechanism of cultural imperialism it enacts, and its primary impact on Indonesian Islamic Montessori learners.

4. Discussion

The results demonstrate that *Big Show Level 5* is a culturally biased language device and a sophisticated apparatus of sociocultural reproduction. The following discussion interprets these findings through the analytical lenses of pedagogy and postcolonialism theory.

The power of the textbook's cultural hegemony lies not in any single variable but in their synergistic interaction. The five variables operate as a mutually reinforcing system, creating what can be termed a Multimodal Cultural Imperialism Framework.

For example, teaching about "Weekend Plans" (Unit 9) involves images of Western amusement parks and white characters (V1); Videos of 4th of July celebrations and Western music (V2); Practicing vocabulary for commercial leisure activities such as horseback riding, go-karts (V3); Using "weekend" and "4th of July" as universal temporal markers; Assuming economic access to paid entertainment (V5).

This convergence produces a powerful holistic message that to be a competent English speaker, one must inhabit a Western cultural, temporal, and economic identity. The Indonesian student's actual weekend which might involve

helping at home, Quranic study, or playing traditional games is rendered illegitimate and unworthy of linguistic expression. This line up with Freire's (1970) critique of the teacher-centered class, to which students described as hollow boxes ready to be packed using the culture of the oppressor, thereby alienating them from their own lived experiences.

The systematic erasure of Indonesian geography, history, cuisine, wildlife, and holidays constitutes more than an oversight. It is an act of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988). By presenting the world exclusively through a Western lens from Lombard Street to the London Eye, from cheetahs to peregrine falcons the textbook engages in the symbolic annihilation of Indonesia. The CLIL readings, purportedly about "Content and Language Integrated Learning" are in fact, the vehicles for content that privileges Western knowledge systems.

The case of Unit 11, where students are directed to "Search the Internet" to settle a factual dispute, is particularly revealing. This activity teaches that valid knowledge is digitally mediated, in English, and sourced from Western-dominated platforms. It systematically devalues *local knowledge*, such as the ecological understanding of farmers or the oral histories of indigenous communities. This process, what de Sousa Santos (2014) calls "epistemicide," is a fundamental pillar of cultural imperialism, ensuring that the colonized view their own ways of knowing as inferior or invalid.

The textbook's heavy reliance on digital technology functions as a powerful mechanism of social stratification. In the Indonesian context, where internet penetration and smartphone ownership are unevenly distributed, mandating QR codes and online resources does not merely create an accessibility problem; it actively reinforces existing class and geographic inequalities (Warschauer, 2004). Students in urban, wealthier schools can access the full "multimodal" experience, while those in rural *pesantren* or underfunded public schools are left with an incomplete and impoverished version of the curriculum. This transforms the digital divide into an educational apartheid, where the promise of modern, multimodal learning becomes a tool for exclusion. The technology, far from being a neutral tool, becomes an agent of cultural and economic marginalization.

The implementation of *Big Show Level 5* within Indonesian Islamic Montessori schools reveals a profound philosophical dissonance. The textbook's underlying values directly contradict the core tenets of both Islamic and Montessori education, creating a schism in the learning environment.

The analysis identifies multiple points of conflict between the textbook's implicit secular, consumerist ideology and Islamic principles. The textbook presents a wholly secular world. Units on nature (11-12) frame animals as objects for scientific measurement, ignoring the Islamic concept of nature as *ayat* (signs of Allah) meant for *tadabbur* (reflection). Similarly, the mechanistic cause-effect logic in Unit 8 ("She ate spoiled food, so she was sick") omits the Islamic understanding of *qadar* (divine decree), where outcomes are ultimately from Allah, even as

practical causes are acknowledged.

The textbook promotes Western norms of emotional expressiveness (Unit 5), direct eye contact, and individual assertiveness, which can conflict with Islamic *adab* emphasizing modesty, emotional restraint, and respectful deference, especially in hierarchical relationships.

The textbook's pervasive focus on individual achievement, competition ("Field Day" in Unit 6), and personal consumer choices (Units 1, 10) stands in stark opposition to the Islamic emphasis on the *ummah*, collective responsibility, and values like *gotong royong*.

Unit 10's focus on supermarket shopping and generic consumer goods completely ignores the fundamental Islamic framework of *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (prohibited) consumption. The textbook promotes a consumerist lifestyle without any ethical or spiritual dimensions, conflicting with Islamic teachings on moderation (*zuhd*) and avoiding extravagance (*israf*).

The textbook's pedagogical structure also undermines key Montessori principles. Montessori education is built on following the child's interests and allowing deep, uninterrupted work cycles. The textbook's rigid, timed lesson segments (e.g., 2-minute roll call, 5-minute activities) represent a teacher-directed, factory-model approach that stifles intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning.

Montessori emphasizes learning through manipulation of concrete materials. The textbook's heavy reliance on abstract worksheets, digital screens, and audio tracks contradicts this hands-on principle, promoting passive reception over active discovery.

A Montessori "prepared environment" is designed to be beautiful, orderly, and reflective of the child's culture. The textbook's visual and contextual foreignness makes it impossible to create such an integrated, culturally responsive learning space.

This multi-layered conflict means that schools using this textbook are forced into a paradoxical position which using a pedagogical tool that systematically undermines their core spiritual and educational mission.

Beyond cognitive and visual erasure, the textbook engages in a deeper form of control by regulating emotion and bodily comportment, which can be termed affective colonialism and somatic discipline.

Unit 5, "Why Is He So Excited?", serves as a prime example of affective colonialism. It does not merely teach emotion vocabulary; it also prescribes at the same time about *how* and *when* emotions should be felt and displayed according to Western norms. By associating "falling down" primarily with individual embarrassment and "having a fight" with direct confrontation, the pathologizes culturally specific Indonesian emotional frameworks. The value placed on *malu* (a complex feeling of shame, modesty, and social awareness) and the collective management of emotion are rendered invisible and invalid.

Students learn that to speak English effectively, they must perform emotions in a way that may feel inauthentic or even morally transgressive within their own cultural and religious framework (Ahmed, 2004).

Similarly, the physical activities prescribed in Units 6 (Athletics) and 7 (Navigation) enforce a form of somatic discipline. The body is trained in Western athletic movements (jumping jacks, shooting baskets), Western leisure activities (horseback riding, mini-golf), and Western navigation through space (walking on crosswalks). This disciplining of the body is what Foucault (1977) would identify as a technology of power which marginalizes indigenous bodily knowledge, such as the movements of *pencak silat*, the balance required for *egrang* (stilts), or the communal, landmark-based embodiment of navigation. The textbook, therefore, operates as a tool that produces "docile bodies" suited to Western cultural norms, while alienating students from their own corporeal heritage (Ulum, 2023).

The cumulative material and digital requirements of the textbook must be analysed within a political economic framework. The extensive list of required books, worksheets, art supplies, and technology represents a significant financial investment. This creates a de facto neoliberal stratification of education, where access to quality English learning becomes a commodity available only to those who can afford it (Apple, 2004).

The textbook is not an isolated product but part of a global publishing industry that profits from the sale of standardized, often Western-centric, materials. This model inherently disadvantages students in developing economies. The analysis shows that the estimated cost of full implementation could approach a significant portion of a rural family's monthly income. Consequently, the textbook functions as an instrument of sociocultural multiplication, to certain point existing economic disparities are translated into educational inequalities. Wealthy, urban, private schools can provide the "complete" educational experience, while public schools and rural *pesantren* are left with an impoverished version, thereby reinforcing class divisions under the guise of educational "standards."

The critical analysis presented here is not merely a critique but a call for a transformative approach to EFL materials development. The recommendations derived from the data point toward the need for a multimodal counter-hegemony that actively decolonizes the curriculum across all five variables (Tuhivai Smith, L, 2012).

This requires moving beyond superficial "localization" (e.g., adding a few local names or images) toward a fundamental rethinking of the curriculum's architecture. A truly culturally responsive textbook for this context would weave Indonesian and Islamic content throughout the core curriculum, not as isolated "cultural moments" (Ladson-Billings, 2014). For example, Unit 5 on emotions would teach vocabulary within the framework of Islamic concepts like *sabar* (patience) and *syukur* (gratitude), and Indonesian emotional experiences like *malu*.

Begin the design process with the constraints of the most disadvantaged schools in mind. This means creating materials that are effective without technology, require minimal photocopying, and use locally cheap available resources. Structure CLIL sections and research activities to validate multiple knowledge systems. A unit on animals would present Western scientific classification alongside indigenous Indonesian knowledge about the same species, treating both as valuable. For Islamic Montessori schools, the very structure of the lessons such as their pacing, activity types, and assessment must be redesigned to reflect child-directed, hands-on, and spiritually-grounded learning.

This analysis also acknowledges several counter-perspectives that merit consideration. First, proponents of globally standardized EFL materials argue that exposure to internationally dominant cultural references including Western landmarks, consumer practices, and social norms which equips learners with the cultural capital required for international mobility and communication (McKay, 2002). From this view, familiarizing Indonesian students with the 4th of July or Lombard Street may serve legitimate intercultural competence goals. Second, some scholars caution against overstating the passivity of learners in the face of ideologically loaded materials.

Research in reader-response theory and critical pedagogy suggests that teachers and students regularly resist, recontextualize, and selectively appropriate textbook content (Canagarajah, 1999). A skilled Indonesian Islamic Montessori teacher may effectively frame Western cultural content as object of analysis rather than model for emulation. Third, the practical realities of the EFL publishing market mean that producing entirely localized textbooks at comparable quality and cost remains economically challenging, particularly for smaller regional markets (Harwood, 2014).

These considerations do not invalidate the critique presented here; rather, they underscore the need for both structural intervention in EFL publishing and enhanced teacher training in critical cultural literacy. So that educators can mediate textbook content thoughtfully within their specific contexts.

5. Conclusion

This multimodal critical analysis of *Big Show Level 5* reveals that the textbook's guidance functions as a sophisticated instrument of cultural imperialism, whose impact is far more profound than a traditional, text-only analysis could uncover. Through the systematic interrogation of five variables such as Visual-Spatial, Digital-Multimodal, Embodied, Temporal-Contextual, and Material-Environmental. We have demonstrated how hegemony is enacted through a layered, mutually reinforcing system.

The textbook achieves its effects not through explicit propaganda but through a comprehensive politics of invisibility. It erases Indonesian semiotic landscapes, marginalizes local knowledge systems, disciplines student bodies and emotions according to Western norms, colonizes temporal consciousness, and

creates economic barriers to access. For the specific context of Indonesian Islamic Montessori schools, the textbook represents a fundamental philosophical conflict, undermining both the Islamic worldview and child-centered pedagogical principles it claims to uphold.

The ultimate consequence is what can be described as educational alienation. Indonesian Muslim students are taught that to acquire a global language, they must symbolically abandon their cultural identity, religious values, and lived experiences. They learn that their local environments, holidays, foods, games, and ways of feeling and moving are irrelevant to the global stage. This is the insidious logic of neocolonialism in the 21st century, operating not through military force but through the pervasive and often invisible structures of everyday educational practice.

Therefore, the pursuit of genuine educational equity demands a radical shift. It requires moving beyond critiquing individual texts to fundamentally reimagining the political economy and cultural politics of global ELT publishing. The development of future materials must be grounded in principles of epistemic justice, cultural affirmation, and multimodal inclusivity. Only then can English language education become a true tool for empowerment, allowing students to navigate the global world without having to sacrifice their souls.

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