A Visual Semiotic Analysis of Multicultural Values in An Indonesian English Textbook for Primary School Students: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Most previous studies have analyzed multicultural values from various countries and school levels, yet not extensively examined the Indonesian textbooks for young learners. To fill this gap, this study conducts a visual semiotic analysis to explore the representation of multicultural values in an Indonesian English textbook for primary school students. Utilizing Barthes' visual semiotic theory, the research examines images from the textbook "My Next Words" focusing on four multicultural value keys: respecting other people's traditions (ROPT), appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP), appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP), and appreciating women's equal rights (AWER). The first finding shows that appreciating women's equal rights (AWER) is the most frequently represented multicultural value in the textbook while appreciating other people's cultural products is the least represented. The second finding indicates that the images in the textbook primarily represent universality across cultures (UC), with no portrayal of intercultural interaction (ICI). The study concludes that the textbook has an imbalanced representation of multicultural values. Therefore, textbook authors and teachers must address this imbalance. Textbooks should offer more images that represent balanced multicultural values. Meanwhile, teachers should actively engage in selecting appropriate textbooks, reviewing and evaluating multicultural values and cultural references, and providing feedback to publishers. By comparing similarities and differences from different cultures and countries, learning activities can improve students' multicultural awareness and enhance their intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

Keywords: *cultural content; English textbooks; multicultural values; primary-level school; visual semiotic analysis.*

Introduction

In Indonesia, English has a great significance, particularly in education which is reflected in its inclusion as an elective subject in primary schools under the Merdeka Curriculum, implemented in late 2022 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). While English is not a mandatory subject at the primary level, recent data show a growing trend in its adoption. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, approximately 65% of Indonesian primary schools have integrated English into their curriculum, either as an elective or extracurricular subject (Falah et al., 2023). This indicates an increasing awareness of the importance of English proficiency for young learners. Research has further emphasized that early exposure to English can significantly enhance students' linguistic abilities, cognitive development, and intercultural competence (Spoden et al., 2020).

Indonesia's identity as a multicultural country with many different ethnicities and languages highlights the significance of multiculturalism in education. Multiculturalism refers to a concept that recognizes and values the variety of cultures, religions, and ethnicities within a society (Chin & Levey, 2022; Colombo, 2015). Thus, multicultural values are crucial in influencing the educational process regarding students' diverse cultural backgrounds. David-Izvernar (2023) said that introducing multicultural perspectives in the curriculum helps students acknowledge the diversity of statuses and cultures of every student, creating a positive environment for everyone. This idea promotes a feeling of inclusion and prepares students to navigate and contribute to a diverse global society.

As Indonesia is a highly diverse country with over 1,300 ethnic groups and more than 700 languages (BPS, 2023), incorporating multicultural values into English education is important. The study by Pakambanan et al. (2023) suggested that multicultural values can be integrated into education to promote the students' desire and capacity to understand more about diverse cultures and beliefs. The values not only enrich their process of learning but also help them to contribute to a multicultural and multifaceted society with dignity and respect. In conclusion, promoting multiculturalism in classes and teaching would ensure that students become highly accepting global citizens ready to give back to society.

Adopting culturally relevant and diverse materials to foster understanding is crucial to achieving a diverse and inclusive educational environment. Suprapto et al. (2021) stated that by integrating elements of culture, language, and viewpoint into learning materials, students get to identify with the material they are learning and develop pride in their roots. Moreover, it is essential to utilize materials demonstrating various cultures because it may contribute to the students changing their worldview and fostering tolerance (Islam et al., 2021; Hu & Zuo, 2023).

In support of this approach, research on culture-related content in English textbooks by Kim and Park (2015), citing Cortazzi and Jin (1999), proposed three types of cultural materials in language were identified: target culture (TC), source

culture (SC), and international culture (IC). Further expanding on this, the cultural materials by Cortazzi and Jin's framework were added by Chao (2011), which are universality across culture (UC) and intercultural interaction (ICI). This present study incorporates Chao's (2011) approach to examine multicultural values by sorting the cultural belongings portrayed within the images incorporated within the English textbook.

Santi and Pratolo (2022) stated that English textbooks offer a guideline for cultural learning for both teachers and students. Regarding cultural learning, there have been studies over the past five years of English textbooks across the different EFL nations. These studies have looked at various aspects of culture and employed various types of analysis. Among the nine papers that were reviewed, two works were done in China, two in Arab Saudi, two in Indonesia, and the others were done in Spain, Turkey, Iran, and Algeria.

The issues being examined were the representation of cultures (Alfaya et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2022; Sayın, 2022; Zhang & Su, 2021), multicultural values (Sabillawati & Putra, 2023), cultural elements (Alshengeeti, 2020; Tajeddin & Pakzadian; 2020), national identity and culture (Alzubi et al., 2023), and cultural vocabularies (Daniela & Ponte, 2023). However, the results of these studies showed that the majority of the contents in the textbooks are mainly focused on inner circle cultures rather than the learners's cultures

In China, Lu et al. (2022) who analyzed cultural representation in EFL textbooks reported that there was an imbalance of cultural representation in EFL textbooks in China, focusing on the dominance of Inner Circle culture and the underrepresentation of local and Outer Circle culture. Zhang and Su (2021) also noted the preference for Inner Circle cultures over those of the Outer and Expanding Circle countries. In an attempt to examine the types of cultures in Indonesian EFL textbooks for secondary-level students, a study conducted by Alfaya et al. (2023) shows that the target culture was 50,9% dominantly represented in the textbook. Then, it was followed by the culture neutral 19,8%, the international culture 15,5%, and the last source culture 13,8%.

Sayın (2022) observed that while cultural content was present in less than half of the activities across all grades' textbooks, it was predominantly presented at the knowledge level rather than the communicative level. In the Indonesian context, Sabillawati and Putra (2023) identified an imbalanced representation of multicultural values in global textbooks, predominating Inner Circle aspects. In addition, Alshenqeeti (2020) similarly found that source culture was the least engaging for students, with a focus on skill development and target and international cultural training.

A study conducted by Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) showed that EFL textbooks like American English File, Interchange, and English Result predominantly featured Inner Circle cultural themes, despite including some references to Outer and Expanding Circle cultures. The underrepresentation of

local culture was also discovered in a study conducted by Alzubi et al. (2023) in analyzing the Mega Goal series, which overlooked essential cultural components necessary for fostering national identity in an international context.

In a study carried out by Daniela and Ponte (2023), they concluded that while cultural vocabulary in EFL textbooks did not proportionately increase with proficiency levels, the gradual introduction of more complex cultural concepts could help develop the cultural understanding of learners. The results of those previous studies showed that the majority of EFL textbooks lack sufficient multicultural values to enhance EFL learners' Intercultural interaction (ICI). Consequently, these findings underscore the necessity to improve a more balanced and inclusive representation of diverse cultures in EFL educational materials to better prepare students for global interactions.

Based on the literature review above, it is evident that studies of culture in EFL textbooks have been a popular topic of discussion in various international education journals. However, studies analyzing the multicultural values conducted in Indonesian primary-level schools' EFL textbooks remain underexplored. Therefore, given these challenges, this study aims to address the research gap by examining the multicultural values in English textbooks for Indonesian primary school students by utilizing visual semiotic analysis by Barthes (1977).

This analysis is particularly suitable for this study because images often represent detailed and precise information about cultural values. To analyze these images effectively, a particular type of semiotics known as visual semiotic analysis is applied. This approach focuses on examining how visual images embed meanings of visual representations (Qoriah, 2020). Furthermore, the researcher chose primary school textbooks as the object because young children should be exposed to multiculturalism at a young age to embrace cultural diversity and foster the development of tolerance in togetherness (Suradi et al., 2022; Hafidz, 2022).

Method
The subject of the research

The method used in this study is a qualitative method that analyzes the multicultural values in an English textbook for Indonesian sixth-grade primary-level schools published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The textbook titled "My Next Word [Student's Book for Elementary School]" which contains 11 units and 131 pages was chosen due to its widespread use in Indonesian primary schools and alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum. This textbook was considered suitable as it represents official governmental efforts to introduce English to young learners while integrating cultural elements. Moreover, Wang and Hemchua (2022) assert that analyzing visual representation in English textbooks can help learners in improving intercultural communicative (ICC) awareness and competence.

The study designs

This study analyzed the visual representation of multicultural values information in primary-level English textbooks by applying the framework of Barthes' visual semiotics. According to Barthes (1977), there are two aspects in layering of meaning in semiotics vision. The first one is the denotation, which refers to what the picture shows. The second is connotation at the symbolic level which emphasizes the ideas and values reflected in the picture and how they are represented. Both layers were employed in this study to identify what images were represented and how the information and values are portrayed in the multicultural information provided through the English primary-level school textbooks.

Data analysis techniques

The researcher used several steps to examine images in the English textbook that depict multicultural values. First, the images in the textbook were categorized according to the portrayal of behaviors that demonstrate acts that respect other people's traditions, appreciate other people's perspectives, appreciate other people's cultural products, and appreciate women's equal rights. Second, those images were classified according to the four categories, which are ROPT (respecting other people's traditions), AOPP (appreciating other people's perspectives), AOPCP (appreciating other people's cultural products), and AWER (appreciating women's equal rights).

ROPT refers to the cultural dimensions of practices, AOPP refers to the cultural dimensions of perspectives, AOPCP refers to the cultural dimensions of practices and products, and AWER refers to the cultural dimensions of communities. Third, the images were deliberately chosen for analysis based on their fulfillment of the criteria, specifically their inclusion of implicit and explicit ideas of multicultural values, as previously mentioned. These messages align closely with the five dimensions of culture by Moran (2001) and the framework of cultural categories by Chao (2011).

In this research, source culture (SC) is defined as Indonesian culture, target culture (TC) refers to inner circle countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA), and international culture (IC) encompasses cultures from all countries worldwide (European countries, countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America), excluding Indonesian and English-speaking cultures. Any differences in categorization were resolved through discussions. Fourth, the analysis results were explained and interpreted. In the last step, to ensure reliability and validity the analysis results are discussed thoroughly, wherein they were compared and contrasted with related findings from prior research studies.

Despite its strengths, this methodology has certain limitations. The dependence on visual semiotic analysis implies that the study focuses solely on images, potentially neglecting textual content that may also contribute to multicultural representation. Additionally, the findings may not be generalizable to

all Indonesian EFL textbooks since there are differences among various editions. Future research should consider a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative analysis for a deeper understanding of multicultural values within educational materials.

Results

In this research, the researcher analyzed the multicultural values represented in images in the English primary-level school textbook by applying a visual semiotic theory by Barthes (1977). Two stages of meaning were used to analyze the all pictures, namely "What is described in the picture" or "Who is described in the picture?" and "What are the ideas and values expressed behind the pictures?" Due to limited space, four pictures were selected from the textbook (Table 1), and one for each of the multicultural values categories (see Table 1), was analyzed. The four images selected to be examined were found in (a) Unit 10: I want to be a pilot, Look and say section, p. 98; (b) Unit 3: I was in Bali last week, My new words section, p. 37; (c) Unit 1: I studied last night, but my sister didn't, Look and say section, p. 3; and Unit 11: My dream, Look and write section, p. 117.

Table 1. Visual semiotic analysis of multicultural values in the textbook

Multicultural values being represented	Description	Location	Cultural Content	Frequency
ROPT (respecting other people's traditions)	People washing hands	Page: 3, 9, and 64	IC	28 (11.2%)
	People queuing up	Page: 16, 26, 74 (2 pics), and 92	UC	
	People sit while eating and drinking	Page: 18, 19, 29, 35, 55, 58, and 91	UC	
	Two people handshaking	Page: 20	IC	
	Family having dinner together	Page: 29, 58, and 91	UC	
	People stop at the traffic light.	Page: 80, 98, 102, 104, and 116	UC	
	People wearing helmet	Page: 87, 98, 104, and 116	UC	

AOPP (appreciating other people's perspectives)	People are having conversations on the telephone	Page: 3, 5, 6, 9, 18, 29, 68, and 79	UC	58 (23.1%)
	People are having face-to-face conversations	Page: 4 (2 pics), 5, 6, 7 (2 pics), 9, 10, 17 (2 pics), 18, 20, 21, 25, 30 (2 pics), 32, 33, 34, 38 (2 pics), 40, 42, 45, 47 (3 pics), 49, 51, 55, 56, 64, 66, 67, 69, 81, 82, 89, 91, 103, and 110	UC	
	People reading books	Page: 4, 5, 9, 23, 32, 33, 35, 37, and 57	UC	
AOPCP (appreciating other people's cultural products)	People watching TV	Page: 1, 3, 13, 29, 58, 65, 69, 71, 77, and 79	UC	41 (16.3%)
	People listening to music	Page: 3, 20, 69, 77, and 86	UC	
	Girls practicing dance	Page: 3, 5, 65, 71, and 78	SC	
	Boys playing football	Page: 4, 5, 6, 8, 31, 54, 64, 68, 70, 91, 99, 102, and 104	TC	
	Boys playing basketball	Page: 6 and 7	TC	
	People taking photos in front of a Bali temple	Page: 28	SC	
	People playing hula hoop	Page: 69	TC	
	Boy playing a kite	Page: 69 and 78	IC	
	Boys swimming	Page: 92 and 95	IC	
AWER (appreciating women's	Females wearing hijab	Page: xii, 14, 16 (4 pics), 17 (2 pics), 18 (3 pics), 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34,	UC	124 (49.4%)

equal rights)		38, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47 (3 pics), 48, 51, 52, 53, 54 (2 pics), 55 (3 pics), 56, 57, 58 (6 pics), 60, 64, 65 (3 pics), 67, 68 (2 pics), 70, 71, 74, 75 (4 pics), 77, 78, 79, 89, 91, 93, 98, 102, 104, 106 (2 pics), 109 (2 pics), 112, 114, 116, and 119		
	Females studying	Page: 1, 3, 4, 65, 70, 76, 90, 91, 87, 98, 102, 104, 106, and 116	UC	
	Females reading books	Page: 4, 9, 23, 32, 33, and 57	UC	
	Females working outside the house	Page: 22, 87, 98 (2 pics), 99, 101 (3 pics), 102, 104, 105 (2 pics), 106 (2 pics), 107, 109 (2 pics), 111, 112, 115, 116, 117, and 119	UC	
	Females driving	Page: 75	UC	
	Females playing music	Page: 86	UC	
			Total	251 (100%)

Table 2. The variation in the representation of multicultural values across different units

Unit	ROPT	AOPP	AOPCP	AWER	Total
Unit 1: I Studied Last Night	4	6	7	8	25
Unit 3: I Was in Bali Last Week	3	10	6	14	33
Unit 10: I Want to Be a Pilot	5	8	5	12	30
Unit 11: My Dream	6	12	4	15	37

The findings show that appreciating women's equal rights (AWER) is the most frequently depicted multicultural value, accounting for 49.4% of the images, whereas appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP) is the least represented, making up only 16.3%. In terms of cultural categories, universality across cultures (UC) is dominant, while intercultural interaction (ICI) is absent. Moreover, Unit 11 contains the highest number of multicultural value representations, whereas Unit 3 has the lowest depiction of AOPCP. These findings highlight the need for a more balanced integration of multicultural values to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Addressing these gaps would require increased representation of AOPCP and the incorporation of ICI to enrich meaningful cross-cultural exchanges.

Discussion
Respecting other people's traditions (ROPT)

Figure 1. A picture of drivers and passengers waiting for the traffic lights; and a traffic police officer directing the traffic flow

Respecting other people's traditions (ROPT) is represented through illustrations of people washing hands, people queuing up, people sitting while eating and drinking, two people handshaking, families having dinner together, people stopping at the traffic light, and people wearing helmets. However, due to the limitations of space, this segment only discusses one of the visual representations of ROPT. Figure 1 is one of the pictures representing ROPT located in Unit 10: I want to be a pilot, Look and say section, p. 98.

Figure 1 denotatively portrays an intersection full of drivers and passengers with different types of vehicles. The characters' illustrations appear using a motorcycle, a bus, and cars. The depiction of the vehicle variation implies people of different lifestyles and socioeconomic backgrounds. The happy faces of all the drivers and passengers suggest they patiently await the traffic light. It also can be

seen that a traffic police officer stands near the zebra crosses wearing his uniform. This character has a smile on his face and seems to be directing traffic flow with open arms. The background includes trees, a clear sky, and the sun, which complements the whole, alive, and cheerful feel of the picture.

Connotatively, this picture illustrates the act of obeying the rules of the drivers and passengers at a traffic light. Concurrently, the traffic police imply the necessity to adhering rules and regulations to ensure the safety and efficiency of traffic. This picture is defined as universality across cultures (UC), as it represents the respect for rules and regulations in public places, including traffic lights, which is considered as a piece of general knowledge or content that is not limited to any specific culture or country.

Vu and Dinh (2021) proposed that teachers can improve students' ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) by comprehending and organizing data about diverse cultures using interconnected ICC constructs perceived from various perspectives. Teachers should enrich their cultural knowledge and understanding, as well as that of their students, by embracing knowledge of different cultures and encouraging students to deliberate their cultural backgrounds. These methods can be used by utilizing different learning activities, such as task-based learning focusing on social communication (Vu & Dinh, 2021).

Teachers may assign students to stimulate their curiosity about traffic rules in neighboring countries of Indonesia, such as Malaysia, Singapore, or Thailand. This activity can be started by observing data online or at the library. After the necessary information is gathered, the teacher can prompt the students in a group to elaborate further on the differences and similarities discovered between Indonesian and the neighboring country's cultural traffic rules based on the image depicting traffic rules as a product of culture. Teachers can effectively foster the growth of students' ICC by focusing on students' interactions to enhance relationships with classmates from different cultural backgrounds and develop communication abilities through critical thinking activities.

Appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP)

Figure 2. A picture of a man reading a book on an airplane

Appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP) is depicted by images of people having conversations on the telephone, people having face-to-face conversations, and people reading books. However, only one of the visual depictions of AOPP will be explored in this section. Figure 2 is among the pictures that represent AOPP located in Unit 3: I was in Bali last week, My new words section, p. 37. Denotatively, the image depicts a scene inside a plane with several passengers seated. There are two men in the front part of the scene.

The man on the left is dressed in a white shirt and brown pants, gesturing as if he is talking or explaining something. The man on the right is dressed in a yellow jacket and red pants, holding a book with an animal on the cover, possibly an elephant. The image also shows the words "was" and "were" at the bottom, which might indicate a possible language lesson or an educational context. The cultural category of this picture is universality across culture (UC) which is considered as a piece of general content that is not limited to any specific culture or country.

Connotatively, this image symbolizes the theme of appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP) through the passengers' interaction. The man on the left appears to be explaining something, while the man on the right, with a book in his hand, could be either sharing information or listening attentively. The book is also written from the perspective of someone regarding something they want to discuss in the book. This situation emphasizes the sharing of thoughts and perspectives among individuals from potentially various backgrounds, represented by their different appearances and activities.

The setting inside an airplane implies travel, which is frequently linked with encountering different cultures and perspectives. The terms "was" and "were" hint at a learning or teaching situation, emphasizing the significance of effective communication and understanding in appreciating different perspectives. The

general impression conveys a message of conversation, mutual respect, and the importance of learning together through a trustworthy source like a book, in line with the principles of appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP).

Teachers need to be able to promote students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by encouraging peer learning. Teachers can create a setting that motivates students to share their readings and knowledge with their classmates. This method can be done through book clubs, reading groups, or paired reading sessions. After reading sessions, engage students in reflective discussions about the content, characters, and backgrounds of the books they have read. Furthermore, teachers can also give questions and provide oral constructive feedback that fosters students to think critically about the perspectives and experiences of others (Wei et al., 2023). By applying this image as a starting point, teachers can deepen students' understanding of intercultural competence, develop critical thinking, and promote empathy and appreciation of various perspectives linked to the AOPP values.

Appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP)

Figure 3. A picture of two girls practicing a traditional dance

Appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP) is shown by pictures of people watching TV, people listening to music, females practicing dance, boys playing sports (football, basketball, and swimming), people taking photos of a Bali temple, people playing hula hoop, and boy playing a kite. However, because of the limited space, this segment only examines one visual representation of AOPCP. Figure 3 is among the pictures that depict AOPCP available in Unit 1: I studied last night, but my sister didn't, Look and say section, p. 3.

Regarding denotation, figure 2 shows two girls wearing traditional clothing and dancing. They have their arms crossed over their chests as they kneel on the floor. Both girls are smiling. They wear headpiece and brightly colored clothes, red

and green colors. In the background, there are two portraits of Indonesia's president and vice president and a national emblem of Indonesia, Garuda Pancasila. From the clothing, movement, and background, the researcher identified the image of two girls dancing a traditional Indonesian dance, namely 'Saman Gayo' from Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam.

Connotatively, this image conveys and strengthens cultural pride and promotes awareness of Indonesia's rich artistic heritage. The traditional attire and dance symbolize a relation to and admiration for cultural practices. The girls' happy expressions indicate they take pride in their cultural identity and enjoy sharing it. The presence of the national emblem and portraits of important Indonesian figures in the background suggests that this cultural expression holds national recognition and importance. This picture not only embodies the aspect of appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP), but the researcher also connects it to another multicultural value, which is appreciating women's equal rights (AWER) since the picture also depicts a woman who wears a hijab as the identity of Muslim because the hijab is an obligation for Muslim women that is required by the Holy Quran and protected by Indonesian law (Yunianti, 2022; Khaidar & Nugraha, 2022). The culture depicted in Figure 3 is identified as source culture (SC) since the characters' identity and the content of images are specified to the Indonesian culture.

From this interpretation, students can develop their understanding of AOPCP by observing the actions of the characters. Instead of only re-enacting, the teacher can ask students to do more engaging and interesting activities. Initially, students have the opportunity to plan events such as role-playing or cultural presentations so that they can effectively participate in and present aspects of the culture depicted in the picture. Moreover, teachers can organize a cultural day in which students can discover different elements of the culture, including dance, music, food, and artwork. By guiding students through interesting activities, teachers can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures, enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Makhmudov, 2020).

Appreciating women's equal rights (AWER)

Figure 4. An illustration of a woman who works as an architect

Appreciating women's equal rights (AWER) is represented by illustrations of females wearing hijabs, studying, reading books, working outside the house, driving, and playing music. However, due to space constraints, only one visual representation of AWER will be discussed in this section. Figure 4 is one of the pictures that imply AWER available in Unit 11: My dream, Look and write section, p. 117.

The image denotatively depicts a woman standing in front of a building under construction area. She wears a safety hard hat and holds architectural plans, which shows her involvement in the construction or architecture field. She also wears practical work attire, which is a white shirt, brown pants, and black shoes. This attire portrays proper wearing for a construction setting. The background shows a half-finished brick building with scaffolding, a clear blue sky, and a bright sun, implying a productive day at the construction site. It can be seen that this image is categorized as a universality across culture (UC) as it depicts a scene that is universally recognizable and understood regardless of specific cultural context.

Meanwhile, connotatively, this image reflects the idea of appreciating women's equal rights (AWER), particularly in breaking gender stereotypes by presenting women in male-dominated industries (Çınar, 2019). The woman's confident gesture and professional attire indicate her strength and skill. The character's existence challenges traditional ideas about gender in the workplace and highlights the importance of gender equality. The clear and bright sky represented optimism and a hopeful future where women have equal chances in all professional fields. This image honors women's skill and involvement in industries aligning with the goals of appreciating women's equal rights (AWER), in which they have historically been underrepresented (Auriol et al., 2022).

Using this picture, teachers can develop students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) knowledge by guiding students through activities and discussions that help them understand and appreciate cultural diversity and the importance of equality and gender roles in various settings. First, teachers can assign students to observe and present a woman who has made significant contributions in a field that is typically dominated by males, such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mining, transport, and technology (Hulls et al., 2020). Second, students can be assigned to investigate the implications of this on gender roles and equality. Finally, teachers can facilitate a group discussion on how students can promote gender equality and show support for women in their school or community. By obtaining observation and group discussion, Shim et al. (2021) state that students can evolve their understanding of multiculturalism by reflecting on their own experiences and comparing them to the realities in society.

Based on the findings above, four categories of multicultural values are represented through the images provided in primary-level school EFL textbook published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The result of this study is in line with the nine previous studies mentioned in the Introduction section indicating a lack of sufficient multicultural values to improve EFL learners' intercultural interaction (ICI) (Alfaya et al., 2023; Alshengeeti, 2020; Alzubi et al., 2023; Daniela & Ponte, 2023; Lu et al., 2022; Sayın, 2022; Sabillawati & Putra, 2023; Tajeddin & Pakzadian; 2020; Zhang & Su, 2021).

Despite its similarity regarding the categories of multicultural values, the analysis of this textbook represents the different results of the representation of cultural categories which shows that universality across cultures (UC) is dominant in the textbook and followed by the target culture (SC). The portrayal of images representing socio-cultural aspects and interpreting real-life conditions in Indonesia based on the population's heterogeneity offers students opportunities to develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by learning to appreciate cultural diversity and embrace racial and religious tolerance.

The result of this study also emphasizes the importance of integrating multicultural values into the curriculum in a structured and meaningful way. Since textbooks play a crucial role in influencing students' perceptions of cultural diversity, curriculum developers should ensure that multicultural values are embedded in learning objectives, lesson plans, and assessment methods. This method will encourage cultural understanding, inclusivity, and respect among students. Moreover, integrating understanding, empathy, effective communication, and social justice awareness—can create a more holistic learning experience that aligns with global citizenship education (Chhatlani, 2023).

To effectively convey multicultural values in the classroom, teachers can implement particular teaching methods designed for each value. To foster tolerance and respect, engaging in role-playing activities where students adopt various cultural perspectives can help them understand different viewpoints

(Komisaryk, et al., 2023). Collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds can be promoted through group projects that encourage teamwork and social harmony (Schwarzenthal, et al., 2020).

Cultural understanding and appreciation can be improved by storytelling and literature discussions that include narratives from various cultures (Mandarani & Munir, 2021). Equality and inclusion can be enhanced by engaging in classroom discussions and debates centered on real-world case studies to foster critical thinking on issues of discrimination and social justice. Nationalism and patriotism within a multicultural context can be examined through comparative studies of national identities across various countries, fostering national pride and international unity.

Despite the benefits, integrating multicultural values into teaching practices may face several challenges. Not all educators are equipped with the necessary training to effectively handle multicultural issues. Moreover, certain stakeholders, including parents and policymakers, may perceive multicultural education as a threat to national identity or traditional values (Luu & Boreczky, 2022). Teachers already manage a full curriculum, and incorporating new multicultural components might be perceived as an additional burden.

Furthermore, evaluating students' understanding and internalization of multicultural values is more complex than evaluating traditional subjects. Addressing these issues requires professional development programs for teachers, community engagement initiatives, and flexible curriculum designs that support multicultural education without overburdening educators.

Comparing the findings of this study with similar research in other countries underscores effective strategies and potential areas needing enhancement. In the United States, multicultural education is integrated into subjects like history and literature, yet issues persist concerning inclusivity in standardized testing (Sleeter & Grant, 2020). Canada's policies on multiculturalism offer strong support for varied representation in educational resources (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013).

Finland integrates multicultural perspectives into its national curriculum, emphasizing equity and student well-being (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016). While traditionally homogeneous, Japan has started integrating multicultural education to cater to its growing foreign population, though challenges remain in balancing tradition with diversity (MEXT, 2020). By examining these international approaches, policymakers in Indonesia can find inspiration for effective strategies and tailor them to suit local contexts.

To enhance the representation of multicultural values in educational resources, textbook publishers should consider several recommendations. They should ensure diverse representation by integrating illustrations, texts, and examples that reflect Indonesia's ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. Authentic

narratives should be included, showcasing firsthand accounts, interviews, and stories from various cultural groups to offer genuine perspectives (Banks, 2019).

Engaging students can be fostered through interactive content like discussion prompts, digital resources, and case studies. Publishers should also frequently update their content to align with current multicultural topics and evolving societal norms (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Collaborating with teachers, sociologists, and cultural studies scholars will help ensure accuracy and inclusivity in textbooks. By implementing these improvements, textbook publishers can contribute to cultivating a more inclusive and culturally aware generation of students.

Integrating multicultural values into educational resources is essential in shaping students' views and attitudes regarding diversity. By enhancing curriculum development, utilizing targeted teaching strategies, addressing implementation issues, learning from international models, and improving textbook content, Indonesia can further its dedication to multicultural education. These strategies will both improve students' cultural literacy and prepare them to handle an increasingly interconnected world with empathy and respect.

Conclusion

The study has analyzed the four categories of multicultural values represented in an English textbook used in Indonesian primary-level schools published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The four categories of multicultural values to be analyzed are 28 images (11.2%) depicting an act of respecting other people's traditions (ROPT), 58 images (23.1%) depicting acts of appreciating other people's perspectives (AOPP), 124 images (49.4%) depicting acts of appreciating women's equal rights (AWER), and 41 images (16.3%) depicting acts of appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP). The result shows that the most represented multicultural value in the textbook is the act of appreciating women's equal rights (AWER). In contrast, the least representation is appreciating other people's cultural products (AOPCP).

In the matter of the cultural categories, 6 images were categorized as the source culture (SC), 8 images were categorized as international culture (IC), 221 images were categorized as universality across culture (UC), 16 images were categorized as the target culture (TC), and none of it categorized as intercultural interaction (ICI). Thus, this can be inferred that the most numerous representations of cultural categories are in the form of universality across cultures (UC). There is no portrayal of intercultural interaction (ICI) values in the textbook. In summary, the results of this study show an imbalanced representation of multicultural values in the textbook.

Therefore, textbook authors and teachers are crucial in addressing the imbalance of multicultural values representation and intercultural interaction culture content. English teachers should actively engage in selecting appropriate English textbooks, checking and evaluating multicultural values and cultural references, and providing feedback to publishers as both evaluators and users. To overcome the multicultural representation imbalance, English textbooks should offer more pictures that represent multicultural values and materials that focus on AOPCP to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) through visual aids.

The help of English teachers is important in offering various extra activities related to the images in the textbook to improve students' multicultural awareness and develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by comparing cultures among diverse cultures. Therefore, the researcher hopes teachers can support the English learning process by serving effective activities representing balanced multicultural values to develop students' understanding and tolerance of diversity. The researcher suggests future research to analyze how teachers perceive and utilize the multicultural values from English textbooks in their teaching practices to understand teachers' views that can help improve the integration of multicultural education in the classroom.

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