



Whose Culture Is Represented? Multiculturalism and Diversity in Indonesian Primary English Textbooks

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Abstract

This study examined the representation of culture, multiculturalism, and diversity in Indonesian primary school English textbooks titled: My Next Word, Grades 1-6, published by the Centre for Curriculum and Books under the Ministry of Education, and how these textbooks promote cultural diversity and intercultural communication as an international language. Given the importance of developing multicultural awareness through early English education and strengthening intercultural communication in the globalised world, this analysis provided critical insight into how such objectives are reflected in textbook content. The study employed a qualitative research approach and content analysis to explore multicultural values (textual and visual) in Indonesian elementary English textbooks. Addressing the lack of comparative, multi-grade (Grades 1–6) analyses of textual and visual cultural content in elementary English textbooks, this study applied a theoretical framework that conceptualises language as an artefact: a system of codes (products) representing cultural thought (perspectives), communication (practices), and social actors (persons). Findings revealed that multicultural values in the image analysis of six textbooks (Grades 1-6) are more prevalent in Grades 1-3 than in Grades 4-6. Moreover, textbooks highlighted local traditions, predominantly featured certain cultures representative, and lacked sufficient representation of Indonesia's broader cultural and religious diversity. Additionally, global cultural representation was minimal. The study recommends a more balanced inclusion of local and international cultures in future textbooks.

1. Introduction

Textbooks in language acquisition provide essential learning materials, exercises, directions, and comprehension tools necessary to achieve educational objectives (Novianti & Ambarwati, 2023; Majid & Ambarwati, 2023; Ayu, 2020; Novia, 2023). Beyond their pedagogical function, textbooks also serve as a key source of cultural knowledge for English language learners, helping them become familiar with the social and cultural aspects essential to language learning (Ayu, 2020).

Textbooks also serve as the primary teaching and learning resources in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, and scholars examine their cultural contents to investigate how cultural elements are taught or immersed (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2019). Culture itself is deeply embedded in human habits, values, language, and ideas (Harmi et al., 2022), making its integration into English textbooks significant for fostering intercultural communication (Kusumaningputri and Widodo, 2018).

Apart from that, teaching cultural diversity is important in early childhood education. Alfayez and Allehyani (2024) argue that teachers must instil anti-bias behaviours and attitudes in students, encouraging respect for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. They argue this is important because children are naturally curious about differences, and foreign language learning helps introduce them to the world's multicultural realities. Sinaga's (2022) study shows that using children's songs in Indonesian, English, and Javanese can strengthen patriotism while encouraging openness to global cultures. Therefore, the need for intercultural communication skills becomes even more essential as modern education takes place in increasingly multicultural environments (Chaika et al., 2021).

In the context of the relation between language and culture, Yuen (2011, p. 459) described it as "language can be considered an 'artefact' or a system of code (products) used to signify thoughts (perspectives), for communication (practices), by different people (persons)". Later, Yuen elaborates on those four interconnected dimensions as: products, meaning as tangible cultural creations; persons, individuals associated with a culture; practices, shared traditions and activities; and perspectives, culturally shaped ways of understanding life.

Learning a language, therefore, involves engaging with cultural meanings, both within the language's own cultural context and in how it represents other cultures, especially when the language is used for intercultural communication beyond its native community. This perspective highlights how language serves as a means of communication and embodies cultural values, practices, and perspectives.

On the other hand, in the context of textbook analysis in early education, several studies have evaluated English textbooks titled: *My Next Words* series and reported crucial findings. The studies specifically examine four criteria of the

national education standard: content/material, language, presentation, and graphics. The first study by Novianti and Ambarwati (2023) analysed a fifth-grade English textbook and found that the textbook meets all quality standards and is suitable for young learners, with accurate, value-oriented content, appropriate and communicative language use, clear and engaging presentation, and well-designed graphics that support learning. The second study by Sarifah and Ambarwati (2023) analysed a fourth-grade English textbook and found that the Grade 4 textbook demonstrates strong overall quality in terms of content, language, presentation, and graphics, which enhances comprehension and motivation.

Additionally, the third study by Majid and Ambarwati (2023) focuses on third-grade textbook analysis, which found that the textbook meets Indonesia's eligibility standards across material, language, presentation, and graphics, and is overall classified as an excellent textbook for English for Young Learners. However, each of the three studies identified different improvement areas. Novianti and Ambarwati (2023) (Grade 5) emphasised the need for more varied text types and additional supporting resources, particularly listening materials. Sarifah and Ambarwati (2023) (Grade 4) reported minor technical issues such as spelling errors, highlighting the continued importance of teacher mediation and material adaptation. Majid and Ambarwati (2023) (Grade 3), evaluating the book against the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia standards, identified broader structural concerns, including inconsistencies between chapter titles and content, uneven topic distribution, and incomplete thematic coverage.

Alternatively, a study by Kurniawati et al. (2021) offered a different angle of textbook analysis compared to the previous studies above. The study evaluated the *Learning By Doing* (LBD) textbook, assessing content, language, presentation, and visual design, with a specific focus on Discourse, Instruction, Visuals, and Games. The findings indicate that the book effectively supports communicative, child-centred English learning for young learners. However, the textbook provides limited teacher guidance for implementing activities and lacks audio or recording support for songs, dialogues, and listening practice.

Meanwhile, Kaltsum, Habiby, and Razali (2021) examined the visual representation of local culture in a fourth-grade English textbook from Surakarta and found that only 10% of the textbooks visually reflect Indonesian culture, while 90% lack representation, limiting their role in fostering local identity and pride. Riadini and Cahyono (2021) examined the cultural content in a tenth-grade English textbook published by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture and found that the textbook includes target, source, and international cultures, with source cultures being the most frequent and international cultures the least frequent.

Despite previous studies analysing cultural content in individual grade-level textbooks, comparative research across elementary school grades (Grades 1-6) remains limited. Additionally, only a small number of studies have thoroughly examined cultural content across texts and visuals in Indonesian elementary EFL

textbooks, utilising the four essential components of products, persons, practices, and perspectives by Yuen (2011). In response to these research gaps, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Are multiculturalism and diversity represented in the images and texts of Indonesian elementary EFL textbooks across Grades 1-6 in terms of products, persons, practices, and perspectives?
2. Do these cultural representations support the development of students' intercultural awareness?

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, using content analysis to examine cultural content in the textbook images and text, focusing on Yuen's (2011) four key elements: products, persons, practices, and perspectives. Content analysis is used to analyse a wide variety of data sources, including textual data, visual stimuli (e.g., photographs or videos), and audio data (Stemler, 2015), and is also used to identify and categorise themes and patterns arising from research questions and objectives (Hardwood & Garry, 2003).

The primary source for this study was English textbooks titled *My Next Word* for elementary school students in grades 1 to 6 (Gemala, Utami, & Farichah, 2021; Rahmawati, Angrisia, & Nailufary, 2021; EYLC 2021; 2022a; 2022b; 2022c). The textbooks were published by the Centre for Curriculum and Books, the Book Assessment and Development Agency, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of Indonesia, in 2021 and 2022. These textbooks were selected for specific reasons: they are among the primary learning resources used in educational institutions, part of the "2013 Curriculum" (Indonesia's competency-based national curriculum), and have attained curriculum criteria.

Furthermore, the textbooks are available on the website of the Centre for Curriculum and Books, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. The books were compiled by the English for Young Learners Community (EYLC) Sidoarjo, a working group of English teachers from Muhammadiyah Elementary and Islamic Elementary schools across Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. Experts in English language teaching and student development have reviewed the contents of these books. The textbook series comprises 61 units in total. Grades 1 and 4 each include twelve units, Grades 2, 3, and 5 contain ten units each, and Grade 6 consists of eleven units.

In data analysis, this study integrated content analysis to explore multicultural values and diversity in EFL Textbooks. Yuen's (2011) four key elements to examine cultural content: products, persons, practices, and perspectives, were used to categorise the images and text for data analysis. Products refer to tangible cultural elements, including man-made artefacts associated with a particular culture, such as historical landmarks, songs, folklore,

books, comics, inventions, and traditional foods.

Persons include well-known figures such as singers, poets, writers, national icons, athletes, artists, and heroes linked to a specific culture. While some famous individuals can be seen as cultural products, this study includes all real people, portrayed as actual individuals despite any mythologisation, unlike fictional characters. Practices encompass cultural traditions, rituals, and activities unique to a particular culture, such as holiday celebrations, ceremonies, and inherited customs. Meanwhile, perspectives represent how a cultural group perceives certain aspects of life, distinguishing them from other cultures.

To ensure consistent understanding during data categorisation, before conducting data analysis, the authors discussed Yuen’s (2011) four cultural elements: products, persons, practices, and perspectives, with two senior university English teachers from Indonesia to establish shared criteria. The selection criteria of the teachers were that both have teaching experience from primary to university level and have contributed to English curricula and textbook development in Indonesia, with specific expertise in cross-cultural English education. In total, about 615 pages of images and 866 pages of text were independently analysed by the authors using the four cultural elements. The teachers then reviewed and rated the authors’ coding based on this agreed framework, and inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen’s Kappa. The Cohen’s Kappa score was 0.87, indicating strong agreement between raters.

3. Result

Based on an analysis of six English textbooks from grades 1 to 6, we found that grades 1 to 3 contain more multicultural and diverse images than grades 4 to 6. As presented in Table 1, of a total of 183 images, 38 are in grade 1, 35 are in grade 2, 42 are in grade 3, and only 23 are in grade 4, 22 are in grades 5, and 23 are in grade 6, representing multiculturalism and diversity. On the other hand, in the context of text-based multiculturalism and diversity representation, among the 192 texts related to multiculturalism and diversity, 37 are in grade 1, 41 are in grades 2, and 41 are in grade 3. Also, in grades 4, 5, and 6, texts related to multiculturalism and diversity are relatively few, with 19 in grade 4, 22 in grade 5, and 32 in grade 6 (Table 1). Tables 2 and 3 illustrate sample images and text that represent multiculturalism and diversity in the textbooks.

Table 1. Multiculturalism and diversity contents in the English Textbook for grades 1 to 6.

Grade	Image		Text	
	Total page with Image	Image on Multiculturalism and Diversity	Total page with text	Text on Multiculturalism and Diversity
1	96	38	144	37
2	94	35	152	41

3	117	42	168	41
4	113	23	152	19
5	89	22	136	22
6	106	23	144	32
Total (1-6)	615	183	866	192

Image on Multiculturalism and Diversity

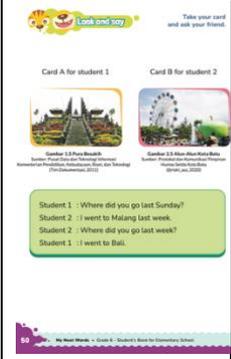
In the image-based analysis, representations of multiculturalism and diversity are predominantly found in the person category, comprising 99 images. This is followed by the product category with 57 images and the practice category with 21 images. The perspective category is the least represented, appearing in only 6 images. Selected examples of these images are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. The samples of image content in the English Textbook for grades 1 to 6.

Grade	Number of Images and Image Samples				
	Products	Persons	Practices	Perspectives	Total
1	11	27	0	0	38
	 <p>Hijab</p> <p>Skin colour and hair</p>				
2	14	19	2	0	35

	 <p>Hijab</p>	 <p>Skin colour and hair</p>	 <p>Traditional game Egrang (Stilts), and Bakiak</p>		
	13	15	8	6	42
3	 <p>Ulee Balang (traditional dress from Aceh)</p>  <p>Food: Mie Aceh</p>	 <p>Skin colour and hair</p>	 <p>Traditional game Marbles</p>	 <p>Food preference between Made (Balinese) and Alphonso (Italian)</p>	

	4	13	6	0	23
4	 <p>Aisyah and Cici are dancing "Ta Piring" in the classroom.</p> <p>Piring Dance</p>	 <p>Skin colour and hair</p>	 <p>Lompat Tali Game</p>		
	7	13	2	0	22
5	 <p>Food: Gado-gado and Baso</p>	 <p>Skin colour and hair</p>	 <p>Balap Karung (traditional Game)</p>		
	8	12	3	0	23
6	 <p>Joglo Building architecture</p>	 <p>Skin colour and hair</p>	 <p>Religious activity: Sholat</p>		

	<p>and Keris (Traditional Dagger)</p>  <p>Pura Besakih (Temple)</p>				
Total	57	99	21	6	183

In the product category, across grades 1 to 6, this category is represented by a growing range of cultural images. In grades 1 and 2, multiculturalism and diversity appear mainly through students and teachers wearing hijabs as cultural products. In grade 3, product representation expands to traditional clothing such as Sarong, Peci, Ulee Balang, and hijab, along with diverse foods including Baso, Mie Aceh, Nasi goreng, Pizza, Spaghetti, Sate, and Papeda, showing multicultural representation through both Indonesian and international cuisine.

Meanwhile, in grade 4, cultural products include hijabs and traditional dress such as Bundo Kandung from West Sumatra. In grade 5, product diversity is shown through hijabs, a traditional hat from eastern Indonesia, Kebaya, and foods such as Baso, Pizza, Mie Aceh, and Gado-gado. Finally, in grade 6, product representation becomes broader, including traditional clothing from East Java and West Sumatra, regional tourist attractions such as Bali, Batu, Mount Bromo, and Dufan (Fantasy World), as well as architectural (Joglo building) and cultural symbols such as Pura Besakih (a temple) and the Keris (a traditional Dagger). Overall, the textbooks progressively present more varied cultural products, ranging from clothing and food to architecture, tourism, and symbolic artefacts, reflecting increasingly complex representations of multicultural diversity across grades.

Across grades 1 to 6, the person category consistently represents multiculturalism through the four main characters: Cici, Made, Aisyah, and Joshua, who reflect diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds in Indonesia, along with some representation of people from other countries. However, some additional characters also appeared and not limited to the main character. Additionally, across grades 1 to 6, diversity in person category is consistently represented through physical appearance, including differences in skin tone and

hair type. Earlier grades emphasise darker skin and curly hair (often linked to eastern regions), while later classes show broader variation, including dark and fair skin and diverse hair textures and colours such as curly, straight, black, and blonde. Overall, the textbooks consistently depict multicultural representation through visible physical differences across all grades.

The representation of cultural practices in the textbook is developed gradually across grades 1 to 6. In grade 1, no images reflect the practices category, while in grade 2, practices appear through images of traditional games such as Egrang (stilts), Bakiak (long wooden sandals race), and Lompat Tali (rope jumping), as well as a family praying before meals. Meanwhile, in grade 3, practices become more varied, including religious activities such as family prayer before eating and Muslim students performing prayers, as well as social interaction through traditional games like marbles and Engklek.

Additionally, in grade 4, practices are demonstrated through cultural performances and play, including the traditional Tari Piring dance and marble games. Furthermore, in grade 5, cultural practices continue through traditional competitions such as Balap Karung (sack race) and Makan Kerupuk (cracker-eating contest). Finally, in grade 6, practices are represented through both traditional and religious activities, including traditional dancing and Islamic prayer (Sholat). Overall, the textbooks progressively introduce religious, social, and cultural practices across the grades.

In the last category, across grades 1 to 6, the representation of cultural perspectives is largely limited. In grades 1 and 2, no images reflect the perspective category. In grade 3, perspectives emerge through images that show differences in food preferences between Made (Balinese) and Alphonso (Italian), highlighting distinct cultural approaches to cooking and ingredients that reflect differing cultural viewpoints. However, in grades 4, 5, and 6, no images represent the perspective category. Overall, cultural perspectives are minimally represented, appearing only once across the textbook series.

Text on Multiculturalism and Diversity

In the text-based analysis, multiculturalism and diversity are most frequently represented in the person category, with 142 words or sentences identified. The product category follows with 43 words or sentences, while the practice category appears only 6 times. The perspective category is minimally represented, occurring in only 1 word or sentence. Selected examples are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The samples of text content in the English Textbook for grades 1 to 6.

Grade	Number of Text (words or sentence) and Text Samples of each category				
	Products	Persons	Practices	Perspectives	Total
1	0	37	0	0	37
		Names: Joshua, Made, Cici, and Aisyah.			
2	0	41	0	0	41
		Names: Joshua, Made, Cici, and Aisyah.			
3	17	23	0	1	41
	Indonesian foods: Baso, Mie Aceh, Nasi Goreng, Satai, Papeda, and Ayam Betutu. Italian food: Pizza and Spaghetti.	Names: Alphonso (Italian), Joshua, Made, Cici, and Aisyah,		Alfonso likes pizza and spaghetti, but doesn't like rice, bread and tea (a short song in unit 3, page 20)	
4	4	11	4		19
	Places mentioned as part of Indonesian history, art, culture and vibrant religious community and tradition: Surabaya, Malang, and Bali.	Names: Made, a traditional Balinese name; Cici, often found among Chinese Indonesian communities, and Ujang, a Sundanese name	Cultural Practices mentioned: Tari Piring (Plate dance) Religious practices: "They (Aisyah's family) pray Shubuh together at 05.00 o'clock".		
5	9	11	2	0	22
	Food: Pizza, Nasi Uduk, Baso, and	Names: Alphonso	Religious Practices: Islamic greetings		

	Gado-Gado (diverse food cultures)	(Italian), Made, Udin, Neneng, Ujang, and Togar reflect both international and Indonesian identities.	“Assalamualaikum” and “Walaikumsalam”, to reinforce Indonesia’s religious heritage and promote respectful communication.		
	13	19	0	0	32
6	Places: Bali (God and Goddess Island), Batu (the city of Apple), Jakarta (Metropolis), Surabaya (City of Heroes), and Jember provide geographical representation of Indonesia.	Made, Aisyah, Cici, Joshua, Niluh, and Ujang, reflecting Indonesia’s multicultural society.			
Total	43	142	6	1	192

Textual representations of multiculturalism within the product category emerge progressively across grades 1 to 6. No cultural products are presented in the texts of grades 1 and 2. Beginning in grade 3, the textbook introduces a range of culturally significant foods, including Indonesian dishes such as Baso, Mie Aceh, Nasi Goreng, Sate, Papeda, and Ayam Betutu, alongside international foods like Pizza and Spaghetti, thereby reflecting both national culinary richness and global diversity.

In grade 4, the focus shifts to culturally meaningful locations, with references to Surabaya, Malang, and Bali, which represent regional heritage, historical backgrounds, and local traditions. Grade 5 continues to highlight cultural products through both local and global cuisines, including Pizza, Nasi Uduk, Baso, and Gado-Gado. By grade 6, the emphasis expands to geographical and cultural identity through references to places such as Bali (God and Goddess Island), Batu (City of Apple), Jakarta (Metropolis), Surabaya (City of Heroes), and Jember, illustrating the cultural and historical diversity of regions across Indonesia.

In addition to local themes, the textbook also incorporates global perspectives in this category. For instance, in “A Sloth is Slow, but it is so Cute”, students are introduced to South American biodiversity, accompanied by a map and factual

descriptions of sloths. The text is: "Sloths live in the lowland tropical area of South and Central America" (A short text titled 'A Sloth is slow, but it is so cute' for grade 6, unit 9, page 94).

Meanwhile, the person category consistently reflects cultural and ethnic diversity across grades 1 to 6 through the use of culturally identifiable names. In grade 1, character names correspond to specific ethnic and regional backgrounds, such as Made (Balinese), Joshua (commonly associated with eastern Indonesia), Cici (Chinese Indonesian), and Togar (Bataknese), illustrating Indonesia's multicultural composition. Grade 2 similarly presents diverse ethnic representation through names such as Made, Joshua, Cici, Neneng, and Ujang, with the latter two commonly associated with Sundanese culture. In grade 3, multicultural representation expands to include international identity through the name Alphonso from Italy, alongside Indonesian names such as Joshua, Made, Cici, and Aisyah. Grade 4 continues to highlight varied cultural and regional affiliations through names such as Joshua, Made, Cici, and Ujang, reinforcing awareness of Indonesia's diverse communities. In grade 5, both national and global perspectives are represented through names including Alphonso, Joshua, Made, Udin, Neneng, Ujang, and Togar, reflecting multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Finally, grade 6 maintains this multicultural representation through names such as Made, Aisyah, Cici, Joshua, Niluh, and Ujang, collectively portraying the diversity of Indonesian society.

On the other hand, the practice category is absent in grades 1, 2, 3, and 6. Cultural practices appear only in the middle levels. In grade 4, the text introduces traditional and religious practices, including Tari Piring (Plate Dance) from West Sumatra, which highlights regional artistic heritage through performances involving swinging porcelain plates, as well as Sholat (Islamic prayer), reflecting Indonesia's Islamic traditions and encouraging respect for religious diversity. In grade 5, cultural practice is represented through Islamic greetings such as Assalamualaikum and Walaikumsalam, reinforcing religious identity and promoting respectful social interaction. Overall, textual representations of practices are limited and concentrated mainly in grades 4 and 5.

Further, the perspective category is largely absent across most grades, appearing only in grade 3. Grades 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 do not contain textual elements that reflect cultural perspectives or value systems. In grade 3, however, perspective is conveyed through song lyrics that describe Alphonso's food preferences, liking spaghetti and pizza but not rice, illustrating how different cultural groups prioritise and interpret food differently. Overall, the textual representation of perspectives is minimal, limited to a single example in grade 3.

Overall, both image and textual representations demonstrate a broadly similar developmental pattern in presenting multiculturalism across the four categories, yet they differ in emphasis and depth. In both modes, the product and person categories are the most consistently represented, indicating their

dominance in constructing multicultural awareness; cultural diversity is repeatedly conveyed through tangible artefacts, places, and visible human differences.

The practice category appears in both representations but is more gradual and visually continuous in images, whereas in texts it is sporadic and concentrated only in specific grade levels, suggesting a stronger experiential orientation in visual materials and a more selective descriptive approach in written content. The perspective category is the least represented in both forms, appearing only minimally and inconsistently, which indicates limited engagement with underlying cultural values or interpretive worldviews. Additionally, International elements are introduced primarily in Grades 3, 5, and 6, with a limited number of images and texts.

These include the Italian character Alphonso, food items like pizza and spaghetti, and the depiction of sloths alongside a South American map. Grade 6 also features iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Kaba, the Great Wall of China, and the Arc de Triomphe. In conclusion, while images and texts align in prioritising observable and concrete dimensions of culture, images provide broader and more continuous exposure to practices, whereas texts offer slightly more structured but still limited articulation of cultural meaning, with cultural perspectives remaining least represented in both.

4. Discussion

The analysis of Indonesian English textbooks for grades 1 to 6 reveals a strong emphasis on cultural elements categorised into persons, products, practices, and perspectives. These elements are considered positive signs since English as a foreign language is introduced to young learners in Indonesia. This aligns with the views of Ayu (2020) and Riadini and Cahyono (2021), who argued that teaching language also involves teaching culture. Learning a language involves comprehending various aspects of the culture in which it is spoken and, occasionally, how other cultures are portrayed in that culture, as language represents both its own and other cultures (Yuen, 2011).

The textbooks introduce students to Indonesia's diverse cultural heritage, but their scope remains limited in terms of global engagement and balanced representation of all Indonesian regions. Combining these two aspects is important because multiculturalism strongly emphasises the value of viewing the world through various cultural perspectives and acknowledging and valuing the depth of cultural diversity both domestically and internationally (Suri & Chandra, 2021).

In this case, EFL bridges local and target cultures, enabling students to develop language skills while expressing their identity and gaining insights into foreign cultures through teaching materials and class activities (Ayu, 2020). Understanding the sociocultural aspects of a target language can help learners of foreign languages (FL) establish appropriate interaction in the language with a

target language community, in addition to successful and effective communication (Putra & Musigrungsi, 2022). “By using the English textbook that has been integrated with cultures in the EFL teaching and learning process, students will indirectly and automatically internalise the contents to meet the competence” (Riadini & Cahyono, 2021, p. 286).

In the context of teaching English, on her research findings, Yuen (2011) suggests that textbooks should contain more information about foreign cultures (apart from those of English-speaking nations) since this fosters students’ understanding of a much greater variety of foreign cultures, mainly when English is taught as an international language rather than just a means of communication with members of English-speaking societies.

Even though the cultural elements outside Indonesia are limited, the textbooks try to illustrate similarities and contrasts between them. Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018) explained that analysing cultural similarities plays a pivotal role in developing intercultural understanding, as it encourages students to recognise shared human practices across cultures, challenge stereotypes often rooted in personal biases, and appreciate both the diversity and commonality within cultural representations, ultimately helping them see that, despite some variations, human experiences are fundamentally interconnected. Chaika et al. (2021) described that when developing new educational technologies, it is essential to consider cultural diversity and integrate universal cultural elements.

They also added that learning intercultural communication skills helps students study foreign languages more effectively. According to them, this process also deepens their understanding of their own and foreign cultures’ history, culture, and worldview. Further, they stated that by constantly comparing different languages and cultural perspectives, students become more aware of their own cultural identity and develop greater tolerance for different traditions and ways of thinking.

Moreover, considering that the textbooks are designed for various provinces in Indonesia, religious diversity within Indonesia is underrepresented, with a predominant focus on Islamic practices. To foster a more comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity, future textbooks should aim for a more balanced portrayal of Indonesia’s regions, religious groups, and cultural elements from outside Indonesia while integrating a broader global perspective. Overall, the textbooks effectively promote multicultural understanding, blending local and global perspectives, though greater emphasis on international diversity could further enhance students’ global awareness.

Apart from the textbook, which is a crucial element in teaching English to young learners in Indonesia, the future concern should be paying closer attention to the classroom teaching and learning process. A good textbook should be accompanied by proper policy and capable teachers to support the learning

process. The fact that the difficulties in teaching English in Indonesia begin at the elementary school level suggests that English is not prioritised in early childhood education, resulting in students frequently lacking a solid language foundation (Maximilian & Ajeng, 2023).

In this case, Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) also stated that English language teaching in Indonesian elementary schools remains limited due to its non-compulsory status, with only urban public schools and those with English teachers able to offer the subject. Moreover, according to Meisani, Hamied, Musthafa, and Purnawarman (2020), Kurniawati, Wahyono, and Mulyasari (2021), and Ayu (2020), English in primary school is now considered an extracurricular or local content rather than an obligatory subject under the 2013 curriculum.

Additionally, English is a mandatory subject that started in Indonesia's junior high school (seventh grade) according to the curriculum (Prihatin, 2015). On the other hand, according to Diyanti and Madya (2021), Jazuly, Indrayani, and Prystiananta (2019), and Hawanti (2014), many primary English teachers in Indonesia are initially trained for secondary education and lack the necessary skills to teach young learners. Further, they elaborated that those teachers without a proper degree in English language education for children often struggle with English for Young Learners (EYL) pedagogy and English proficiency. Therefore, the concern to synchronise the status of English in elementary schools in Indonesia, teaching materials, including textbooks, and teachers' quality should become the focus in future studies.

This study is limited in several aspects. The analysis is limited to a single textbook series and relies exclusively on content analysis of images and texts, without examining classroom implementation or students' interpretations. The use of a predefined categorical framework may also restrict the exploration of implicit or more complex cultural meanings. Consequently, the results provide a descriptive account of representation but do not fully capture the depth or enactment of multiculturalism in practice.

5. Conclusion

Examining primary school Indonesian English textbooks reveals how they promote multiculturalism and diversity in language learning. Through depictions of cultural products, persons, practices, and perspectives, this textbook series successfully provides students with an understanding of Indonesia's rich cultural legacy. Although multicultural components are widely present in Indonesia, there is still an inadequate representation of other cultures within Indonesia and globally, limiting students' exposure to a variety of cultures worldwide.

Furthermore, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) requires effective intercultural communication. Students are inspired to challenge prejudices and acknowledge common human experiences when cultural similarities and

differences are incorporated into textbooks. Future textbook production should strive for a more thorough representation of Indonesia's various regions, religious communities, and international cultures to reflect the worldwide nature of English as an international language. English textbooks can better prepare students for meaningful interaction in a global, interconnected society by improving cultural representation.

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