

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the introduction of the present study. The discussion deals with the background of the study, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Culture has been acknowledged as an important component in English teaching and learning (Kramsch, 1995; Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996), and textbooks, as the second most important component in English classrooms after the teacher (Thumvichit, 2018; Riazee, 2003), are demanded to be an effective medium to present culture in the classroom to the students (McConachy, 2018). It is argued that incorporating culture into textbooks helps students to be linguistically and interculturally competent (Ho, 2009). The textbook must not only present linguistic contents but also cultural contents that could enrich the students with cultures and allow them to improve their multicultural competence to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds (Troncoso, 2010; Erfani S. M., 2014). This is important considering that English is used internationally by people from different languages and cultural backgrounds to communicate.

This phenomena seems to provoke many researchers to investigate how culture is incorporated in the textbook. The first question that often tickles researchers' curiosity regarding this issue is what elements of cultural contents are presented in the textbook and how they are presented. Those studies typically analysed the cultural contents based on the theories of culture that categorize culture into smaller elements to allow for analysis. Some studies (Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh, & Kafipour, 2017; Lee, 2009; Damar, 2013; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017), for example, viewed culture as

consisting of two main categories of culture, small “c” and big “C” of culture. Other studies (Hermawan & Lia, 2012; Faris, 2014; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014) categorized culture into four different senses, aesthetic sense, sociological sense, semantic sense, and pragmatic sense (Adaskou, Britten, & Fahsi, 1990). There are also other theories used to analyse the present of culture in English textbooks. They use different theories but they have similar objective to explore how culture takes place in English textbooks.

The research of cultural contents in English textbooks, however, does not stop there. Culture is there in the textbook, but it still needs to be investigated if the textbook puts the appropriate cultural contents or not in the textbook. To answer this question, some researchers (Hermawan & Lia, 2012; Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015; Thumvichit, 2018; Faris, 2014) adhere to the view that English language teaching should include learners’ own culture (source culture), the English native speakers’ culture (target culture), and the international culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). This theory comes from the idea that English is not used to communicate only among speakers with similar cultural background with the learners, nor it is used to communicate only with English native speakers. English is used to communicate with people from a variety of different cultural backgrounds all around the world. Therefore, studies (Bahrami, 2015; Faris, 2014; Yuen, 2011; Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015) wanted to accentuate whether textbooks have presented those three kinds of culture or not and to describe how they are presented in the textbooks.

Those studies on English textbook cultural contents are unique and different from one study to another. The results of a study on a textbook will be different with another textbook in different contexts. Some studies found that authors put more emphasis on their own culture (Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh, & Kafipour, 2017), and there are also studies that found native speakers’ culture to be more dominant than other cultures in the textbook (Hermawan & Lia, 2012; Su, 2014; Thumvichit, 2018). There is even a study that found the cultural contents embodied in the textbooks to be culturally neutral. The cultural contents in the textbooks do not refer to a certain culture

(Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). Therefore, because of the vast varieties of EFL textbooks published and used in different places, there needs to be studies on the appropriateness of EFL textbooks in presenting cultural elements (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). Moreover, although there have been a number of studies that investigated the cultural content of EFL textbooks, only a small number of them investigated textbooks published by local authors. Most of those studies investigated internationally used and published textbooks such as *Interchange* (Zarei & Khalessi, 2011; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017), *Top Notch* (Nasirahmadi, Madarsara, & Aghdam, 2014; Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh, & Kafipour, 2017) and other internationally published EFL textbooks (Rodríguez, 2015; Yuen, 2011; Bahrami, 2015). Some studies found that these international English textbooks to be better in terms of cultural elements (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). They present more variety of cultural elements in an attractive way. However, students or schools have to spend a significant amount of money to import those international books (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). Thus, it is not cost effective for most schools.

More importantly, in Indonesian context, the most widely used textbooks are developed and published locally and there are not many studies conducted in this similar context. A study investigated cultural content of a textbook used in senior high school in Cianjur published by a local publisher (Faris, 2014). The results show that target culture is dominantly presented in the textbook, while source or native, and international culture are underrepresented. Another study conducted in similar setting was conducted with similar purpose (Erlina, et al., 2018). This study analysed not only reading passages but also dialogues and pictures. However, the study only categorized culture into local and target culture. It did not take into account how cultures other than students' own culture and native speakers' culture are presented in the textbook. Moreover, most of the study in this issue focus only on the textbook. There is not a single study found to include the textbook author's opinion in the study. Therefore, the present study was conducted to add valuable information regarding cultural contents found in the textbook as well as to fill in this gap by incorporating international culture

in analysing every type of cultural contents in the textbook. This study also investigated the author's perception towards cultural contents in the textbook to gain an insight from the author's perspective. This served as a mean to improve the validity of the results of analysis.

1.2 Research Questions

This study tried to investigate the following questions:

1. What kinds of cultural contents does the Indonesian junior high school English textbook present?
2. How are those cultural contents presented in the Indonesian junior high school English textbook?

1.3 Aims of the Research

This study was conducted in hope that it would achieve the following purposes:

1. To find out the kinds of cultural contents the 9th grade Indonesian EFL textbook represents.
2. To investigate how those cultural contents are presented in the textbook.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The present study focused on investigating culture contained in an English textbook in Indonesia. This study limited its analysis on one textbook published for 9th grade students in Indonesia. All contents of the textbook, including reading passages, dialogues, tasks, and pictures, were included in the analysis process. The data was analysed to find out what and how cultural contents were presented in the textbook. Two theoretical frameworks were used to answer those questions. The first one was the view that cultural contents in textbooks include five dimensions (Moran, 2001). They are products, practices, perspective, communities, and persons. Furthermore, a theory proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) was also used to investigate which culture

the textbook represents. They mentioned that in English textbooks, there are three types of culture including source, target and international culture.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. The expected benefits are as follows:

1. Theoretical benefits

The results of this study are expected to enrich the theories of culture in English language teaching and learning, especially in second and foreign language contexts. It is also expected that the present study can be used as a reference for future researchers interested in cultural elements of English language textbooks.

2. Practical benefits

The findings of this study are expected to increase students and teachers' awareness concerning the role of culture in English language teaching, especially in the textbook. It is also expected that the results of this study can help teachers and students in using culturally appropriate materials in the classroom.

3. Professional benefits

The results of the present study can provide insight on what cultural contents are presented in the textbook and how they are presented. It is hoped that the results can give valuable information for textbook developers on how to improve the quality of the textbook as well as helping teachers selecting appropriate materials in terms of culture.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

1. Cultural Contents

In this study, culture is defined as “the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time” (Brown, 2000, p. 177). Cultural contents are any element in the textbook that contains references towards a certain culture. In order to allow for culture to be analysed, elements of cultural contents are determined based on Moran’s (2001) theory of five dimensions of culture which includes products, practices, perspective, communities, and persons. Furthermore, this study also investigated which culture those cultural contents represent. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) argue that in terms of cultural representation, textbook contents can be categorized into source, target and international culture.

2. Textbook

A textbook or a coursebook is defined as any book on a certain subject employed as a teaching and learning guide, especially used in a school or college (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). An English textbook, in this case, is a book used as an English teaching and learning guide in schools, colleges, or other educational institutions.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This work consists of five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction of the main research problems in this study. Chapter two discusses underlying theoretical background in cultural contents. Chapter three presents how the research was conducted including the research design, research data, instrument, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings and discussion based on the results of the research. The last chapter provides conclusion of the whole results of the research as well as recommendation for future research and teaching professionals.