

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter, which is an introduction to the thesis, discusses the background of the research, research objectives, research questions, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Textbooks are considered as the main source of language input that learners receive and the basis for language practice that occurs both inside and outside the classroom (Richards, 2005). They are considered to be the most familiar teaching materials in an EFL context. As a result, it is essential that textbooks contain language and a cultural dimension that fits the students' need, cultural background and linguistic proficiency. This is in line with Cortazzi and Jin (1999, as cited in Radic-Bojanic & Topalov, 2016) who consider a textbook as a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, and an authority. A textbook shows an outline of linguistic and cultural elements as a structured program and it guides students and teachers to follow the steps taken in previous lessons.

The use of EFL textbook in the classroom has two different reactions among authors and linguists. Some believe that textbooks are important tools for language teaching and learning, and they are helpful for students to improve their language skills as well as their cross-cultural understanding (Radic-Bojanic & Topalov, 2016, p. 140). On the other hand, some researchers such as Allwright (1981), Porreca (1984), Cathcart (1989), Clarke and Clarke (1990), Carrell and Korwitz (1994), and Renner (1997) argue that textbooks lack authentic texts, biases of their authors and may lead to misjudgment, misconception, prejudices, and stereotypical representations of people from other countries. Hence, selecting an EFL textbook can be a challenge for school teachers as they are "not trained how to choose, adapt, evaluate and use the textbooks according to their students need. Therefore, selecting a textbook becomes one of the most challenging tasks for them" (Radic-Bojanic & Topalov, 2016, p. 148). For that reason, a set of criteria for textbook analysis, especially for teachers, is imperative in order to

Miftahul Huda, 2019

*CULTURAL CONTENTS OF A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK WHEN ENGLISH RINGS A BELL FOR GRADE VII*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

select the most appropriate ones for classroom usage that will fulfil the students' need.

The ideal of textbook has become the concerns for some experts that ELT textbook should contain cultural contents. Liu (2016) explained that many experts have posited some criteria to evaluate cultural contents in textbooks (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Cunningsworth, 1995; Huhn, 1978; Kilickaya, 2004; Reimann, 2009; Risager, 1991; and Sercu, 1998). These criteria can be a tool for teachers and practitioners to evaluate the cultural contents of textbooks. One of the prominent experts is Byram and Morgan (1994) who formulate a checklist of nine elements of cultural content in a textbook. In addition, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) formulated three types of cultural information that can be used in textbook (1) target culture materials; (2) source culture materials; and (3) international target culture materials.

Given the prominence of cultural elements and types of cultural information for an ideal textbook, some studies analyzed the cultural content in textbooks in the international domain. Bahrami (2015) analyzed the types of cultural content presented in a government English textbook using Kilickaya's (2004) guidelines for textbook evaluation. Some other scholars addressed the manifestation of the cultural information itself. Aldera (2017) used the guideline proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) to analyze two international textbooks. Meanwhile, Ajideh and Panahi (2016) used a different guideline; they analyzed six government English textbooks by using Ramirez and Hall's (1990) model.

In the Indonesian context, some scholars have also addressed both aspects of cultural content. Related to the elements of cultural content, Gunantar (2017) employed Byram's (1993) checklist to analyze three government English textbooks for junior high school (competence-based curriculum). In the same year, Muslim (2017) analyzed fifteen English textbooks across local publishers by using the same checklist. However, he focused on the manifestation of national heritage in the textbooks. Related to the types of cultural information, Munandar and Ulwiyah (2012) analyzed three government English textbooks for senior high school (competence-based curriculum) focusing on readings, dialogues, special sections, and exercise by using Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) model. Additionally,

Faris (2014) conducted the same research focusing on reading passages by using Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi's (1990) models. The former model was used to seek the presence of the type of cultural information, while the latter was used to seek the four senses of cultural content. Diana (2017) analyzed two government English textbooks for senior high school (2013 curriculum) focusing on reading passages, exercises and pictures by using the former model only. Last but not least Murti (2017) analyzed the government English textbook for junior high school using the same curriculum. She particularly focused on the pragmatic representation of spoken texts. Faris (2014) conducted the same research focusing on reading passages by using Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) and Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi's (1990) models. The former model was used to seek the presence of the type of cultural information, while the latter was used to seek the four senses of cultural content. Diana (2017) analyzed two government English textbooks for senior high school (2013 curriculum) focusing on reading passages, exercises and pictures by using the former model only. Last but not least Murti (2017) analyzed the government English textbook for junior high school using the same curriculum. She particularly focused on the pragmatic representation of spoken texts.

Although cultural content in EFL textbooks has been analyzed thoroughly, scant studies have addressed the cultural content from both aspects i.e. elements of cultural content and types of cultural information simultaneously in Indonesia. Previous studies that have analyzed the dialogues in the textbooks only focused on senior high school textbooks. Furthermore, they only analyzed one of the two aspects.

The analysis of both aspects in this textbook confirms the trend of previous studies stating that there is an unbalanced elements of cultural content and types of cultural information (Bahrami, 2015; Dian, 2016; Faris, 2017; Gunantar, 2017; Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012; Panahi, 2016; Syahri & Susanti, 2016). Hence, the present research aims to conduct a cultural content analysis on the English textbook for junior high school published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and culture in 2013 and revised in 2016 entitled "When English Rings a Bell". The textbook was selected for it becomes the current and primary

sources for junior high school students. Moreover, considering the different nature between junior and senior high school EFL textbooks, this research confirms the empirical question whether the previous findings (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012; Syahri & Susanti, 2016) and can be extended to junior high school textbooks. In addition, it is considered a suitable textbook to be analyzed because it contains many spoken texts presented in dialogues which are mostly uttered by particular characters in certain places. Thus, the dialogues presented in the textbook become the main data to be analyzed in the present research.

Finally, the present study attempts to seek how the elements of cultural content and type of cultural information are presented simultaneously in the textbook in the form of dialogue or conversation. Thus, the research addressed (1) the trends of elements of cultural content; (2) the trends of the types of cultural information toward the whole value of cultural content in the analyzed textbook.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Under the aforementioned background, these three research questions are addressed, as follows.

1. What are the elements of cultural contents identified in the dialogues of the textbook entitled “When English Rings a Bell” for junior high school grade VII?
2. What are the sources of cultural contents presented in dialogues in the textbook entitled “When English Rings a Bell” for junior high school grade VII?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The research attempts to analyze the dialogues identified in the English textbook entitled "When English Rings a Bell" for junior high school students grade VII (the revised edition) from the cultural contents in order to understand:

1. The elements of cultural contents identified in the dialogues of the textbook entitled “When English Rings a Bell” for junior high school grade VII;
2. The sources of cultural content identified in the dialogues of the textbook entitled “When English Rings a Bell” for junior high school grade VII

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The focus of present research is on types of cultural content (Byram & Morgan, 1994) and a source of cultural content (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). The focus of this study is merely on dialogues in the English textbook entitled "When English Rings a Bell" for junior high school grade VII (seventh) of junior high school, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017 (revised version).

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The research is expected to give significance in terms of the theory and the practice. Theoretically, this study will provide insights regarding the exposure of elements of cultural content and the types of cultural information contain in the dialogues of EFL textbook for junior high school students in terms of cultural contents. Practically, it is expected to benefit English language teachers and practitioners in examining the dialogues objectively based on the types and source of cultural content. Moreover, it can help teachers to choose, select, and provide additional cultural inputs and information from other supporting learning sources related to the dialogues. Thus, the students will prevent misunderstanding using the language, caused by different cultures. Furthermore, it also gives the teachers suggestion to provide the supplementary materials and spoken language activities to raise students' intercultural communicative competence in the target language. Socially, it intends to share insights for curriculum developers and authors to consider types and sources of cultural content in EFL textbooks in the framework of intercultural communicative competence and Curriculum 2013.

Finally, the present study attempts to seek how the cultural content and source of culture are presented simultaneously in the textbook in the form of dialogue or conversation. Thus, the research addressed (1) the trends of elements of cultural content; (2) the trends of the types of cultural information toward the whole value of cultural content in the analyzed textbook.

#### **1.6. Operational definitions**

In order to prevent misunderstanding of the terms available in the thesis, these are the brief clarification of several terms related to the research.

### **1.6.1 Textbooks**

Textbooks are considered the main source of language input that learners receive and the basis for language practice that occurs both inside and outside the classroom (Richards, 2005). In this thesis, the student's English textbook sponsored by the National Ministry of Education entitled "When English Rings a Bell" for junior high school students' grade VII (the revised edition) is the focus of the research.

### **1.6.2 Dialogues**

According to Brown (2001), dialogues involve two or more speakers and can be subdivided into interpersonal (promoting social relationships) and transactional function (conveying propositional or factual information).

### **1.6.3 Elements of Cultural Content**

Byram and Morgan (1994, p. 51) in their book under the title "Teaching and Learning Language and Culture" stated that elements of cultural content in a textbook can be presented either as structured information or integrated into language learning under the nine checklist (social identity and social group; social interaction; belief and behaviour; socio-political institutions; socialisation and the life cycle; national history; national geography; national cultural heritage; and stereotypes and national identity).

### **1.6.4 Types of Cultural Information**

Based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999) framework of cultural content in ELT materials consist of three types of culture; source culture, target culture, and international target culture.

### **1.6.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is "the ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997, p. 7). „intercultural speakers' as „competencies which enable them to mediate/interpret the values, beliefs and behaviours (the "cultures") of themselves and of others and

to "stand on the bridge" or indeed "be the bridge" between people of different languages and cultures' (p. 12). This term was used to analyze the cultural content and its relation to the pedagogical implications.

### **1.6.7. Organizational Structures of the Study**

Chapter one highlights some points regarding the introduction of this research. It consists of the background of the research, research objectives, research questions, the scope of the research, the significance of the research, several definitions of the key terms, and the organization of the paper. Chapter two contains the related theories of the research related to the topic of the research, related to previous research, and the concluding remark. Next is chapter three that describes the research methods employed in the present research. It covers the research design, research setting, and data collecting technique, research procedure, and data analysis technique and research timeline.

Chapter four presents the results of the cultural content analysis of the dialogues and the discussion of the findings to answer the research questions and chapter five contains the conclusions of the research, pedagogical implication, and the recommendations for further research.