

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of this study. This chapter consists of nine sections which are background, statement of the problem, reasons for choosing the topic, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

1.1 Background

Textbooks used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms have become the primary source of information on the culture and language. Francis (1995) affirms that it seems to be a common practice that foreign language textbooks and classrooms frequently overlook the conclusions drawn in studies that investigate the presence of cultural elements in textbooks, and neglect the essential information about the target language culture that would help students reach a cultural understanding to accompany their linguistic knowledge.

Previous studies (Francis, 1995; Turkan, 2002; and Aliakbari, 2004) revealed that English language education in elementary through high school levels is dependent on massively produced mainstream English language textbooks that decelerate the teachers' attempts to integrate the target culture into language teaching and learning. Such textbooks are produced massively for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) purposes all over the world, and aim to meet the needs of language learners, so that they can

function linguistically and culturally well in English communicative acts (Turkan and Celik, 2002).

Thus, it is exceedingly important that these textbooks include the vital components to teach the language, its culture, and are appropriate for learners' needs, cultural background, and level. However, certain aspects of the target culture, such as oral and written history, literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts, celebrations, and the lifestyle of native speakers are not always represented in these textbooks. In fact, many experts summarized that one of the learner factors that needs to be considered in materials selection is their socio-cultural background (Turkan, 2002).

Alongside with providing linguistic and topical content which necessarily reflect the ideology inherent in the ESL context, textbook could be a major source of cultural elements. Since today's English textbooks for primary school provided a large number of pictures, hence those images/pictures are expected to represent the target culture. Stokes (2002) affirms that the presence of visual elements in today's teaching and learning is increasing as the integration of images and visual presentations with text in textbooks, instructional manuals, classroom presentations, and computer interfaces broadens. Visualization helps make sense of data that may have seemed previously inarticulate (Kress, 2004).

Pictures may symbolize particular things. According to Kress (2004), all of these symbols drawn in the pictures are social meanings, and specific to a particular culture. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) offered a framework namely visual grammar to analyze components of picture, or drawing, which include the

structure of form of space and compositional layout which determine the illustrator's point of view.

This study is intended to identify how local culture is represented in the pictures contained in English textbook for primary school by using the standpoint of visual grammar theory and any other supporting theories regarding local cultures that may include values and habits.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study is geared toward answering the following question:

- 1.2.1 How is local culture represented in the pictures contained in English textbooks for primary school?

1.3 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic of the study is chosen because it seems to be a common practice that foreign language textbooks frequently fail to notice the conclusions made in studies (Francis, 1995; and Turkan, 2002) that investigate the presence of cultural elements in textbooks, and overlook the essential information about the target language culture that would help students reach a cultural understanding to accompany their linguistic knowledge.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The study is aimed at identifying how local culture is represented in the pictures contained in English textbooks for primary school.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study investigates only how local culture is represented in the pictures contained in selected English textbooks for fourth grade of primary school. The selected textbooks are the ones published over the year 2006 and adopted the revised curriculum, KTSP. Since there are numerous elements of pictures, the study only analyses certain elements of pictures namely attributes and compositional layouts which include color, setting, clothing, and gaze.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to contribute and give some informative input in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in terms of theory, profession and practice.

From the theoretical perspective, this study is expected to guide materials developers/picture editor or textbook writers to identify proper cultural elements to be integrated into the materials/pictures.

Moreover, practically, the findings hopefully could offer some suggestions to help the English language teachers and educators in Indonesia to select the textbooks to be used in the classroom. In addition, it may encourage other researchers to follow up and develop the study further.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

There are some terms used in this study that need clarification to avoid misconception.

1. Culture:

Culture is a shared background (e.g. nationality, ethnic groups, religions) resulting from a common language and communication style, customs, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Levine and Adelman, 1993).

2. Local Culture:

Local culture provides a sense of identity for rural communities and residents. This identity facilitates common understandings, traditions, and values, all central to the identification of plans of action to improve well-being (Brennan, 2005).

3. Pictures:

Pictures are a visual aid, a means of transmitting information to inexperienced listeners and readers that could not be conveyed by words alone (Nodelman, 1988).

4. Textbook:

Textbook is a manual of instruction or a standard book in any branch of study. It is the most obvious and most common form of material support for language instruction (Brown, 2001). Textbooks are the most used media for knowledge transmission in school systems especially where financial resources are limited (Albatch, Kelly, Petrie, and Weiss, 1991).

5. Visual Grammar:

Visual grammar is a study of the components of picture or drawing which includes the structure of form of space and compositional layout which determine the illustrator's point of view (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

1.8 Paper Organization

The paper will be presented into five chapters. Each chapter is divided into subtopics that elaborate the investigated issues.

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, reasons for choosing the topic, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

This chapter focuses on the review of related theories and literatures related to the use of textbooks and pictures as teaching media, local culture, and visual grammar framework.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter gives clear discussion about the methodology employed to analyze the data obtained in this study.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the study and analyzes those findings in discussion clearly.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and several recommendations of the study based on the analysis in chapter four.

