

Representation of Cultural Awareness in EFL Textbooks in Indonesian Secondary Schools: A Descriptive Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how cultural awareness is represented in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks. Cultural awareness forms essential component of intercultural communicative competence, and textbooks serve as primary sources shaping learners' exposure to cultural perspectives. Depth and orientation of such representation require systematic investigation. The study employs descriptive qualitative design using qualitative content analysis. Corpus consists of three nationally aligned secondary school EFL textbooks at grade seven, eight, and nine levels. Unit of analysis includes reading texts, dialogues, visual images, and learning activities. Cultural awareness is analyzed through five categories: self-cultural awareness, awareness of other cultures, critical cultural reflection, cultural values and norms, and representational bias. Data are coded and examined to identify forms and structural patterns of representation. Findings show that cultural awareness is constructed mainly through descriptive presentation of local identity and selective exposure to foreign contexts. Narrative texts and visuals emphasize shared practices and socially endorsed norms. Foreign cultures appear predominantly through English speaking references with limited regional diversity. Reflective tasks are present but remain peripheral and largely restricted to surface comparison. Cultural awareness functions primarily as structured knowledge embedded in language themes rather than as sustained intercultural inquiry. Representational framing and pedagogical sequencing shape depth of engagement. Inclusion of cultural content alone does not ensure critical intercultural development.

1. Introduction

Language learning has evolved beyond the mastery of grammatical structures and communicative functions today. Increasing mobility of people, ideas, and information across national boundaries requires learners not only to communicate effectively but also to

understand and negotiate cultural differences¹. Foreign language education has shifted from emphasis on linguistic competence toward development of intercultural communicative competence². Cultural awareness occupies a central position within this framework because it enables learners to recognize, interpret, and critically reflect on cultural meanings embedded in communication³. Intercultural competence frameworks adopted in educational discourse require alignment between curricular objectives and instructional materials⁴.

Cultural awareness does not refer only to acquisition of factual knowledge about traditions, festivals, or national symbols⁵. The concept encompasses understanding of values, norms, and perspectives that shape communication practices. Intercultural communicative competence includes knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness⁶. Cultural awareness therefore involves evaluation of cultural practices, including one's own cultural position, through reflective and analytical perspectives⁷. Pedagogical orientation that limits cultural content to descriptive information risks reducing intercultural competence to surface familiarity rather than evaluative understanding.

In many English as a Foreign Language contexts, textbooks remain the primary instructional resource used in classrooms⁸. Indonesian secondary school classrooms rely on textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education or commercial publishers aligned with the

¹ Fatmawati Djafri and Ummul Hasanah, 'Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in Vocational Foreign Language Courses: Case Study of Japanese and Korean Learners', *Chie Journal of Japanese Learning and Teaching*, 13.1 (2025), 63–71 <<https://doi.org/10.15294/chie.v13i1.22242>>; Nataliia Oberste-Berghaus, 'The Role of Teaching Foreign Languages in Developing Intercultural Competence', *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 16.1 (2024), 01–15 <<https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/16.1/808>>.

² Lhea Dela Cruz Ildelfonso and Jennifer N. Ramos, 'Crossing Cultures: Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competence Among English Language Teachers', *Journal of Education, Learning, and Management*, 2.2 (2025), 51–60 <<https://doi.org/10.69739/jelm.v2i2.729>>.

³ Tamara Lytniova, 'Formation of Intercultural Communicative Competence of Students of Non-Linguistic Specialties in The Process Of Foreign Language Teaching', *Перспективи Та Інновації Науки*, 8(54), 2025 <[https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-4952-2025-8\(54\)-26-35](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-4952-2025-8(54)-26-35)>.

⁴ Patchara Boonteerarak, Zaw Hkawng Hkawng, and Sorateeda Khueansri, 'The Integration of Intercultural Competence in English for General Education in a Thai University: A Document Analysis of Course Syllabi', *Journal of English Language and Linguistics*, 6.2 (2025), 297–309 <<https://doi.org/10.62819/jel.2025.1175>>; Iryna Kobylanska and Vladimir Karapetyan, 'Formation of the Intercultural Communicative Competence of Students in Foreign Language Learning Process', *Scientific Bulletin*, 2.47 (2024), 132–39 <<https://doi.org/10.24234/scientific.v2i47.169>>.

⁵ Tzu-Yin Lee, Yun-Chi Ho, and Che-Han Chen, 'Integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence into an Online EFL Classroom: An Empirical Study of a Secondary School in Thailand', *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 8.1 (2023), 4 <<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00174-1>>; Aifang Xu, Norhakimah Khaiessa Ahmad, and Siti Nadhirah Rahman, 'Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Multicultural Short Stories Among Chinese EFL Learners', *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 7.11 (2025) <<https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11419>>.

⁶ W. I. Griffith1 and Hye-Yeon Lim, 'Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Foreign Language Classroom', *Mextesol Journal*, 48.1 (2024), 1–10 <<https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v48n1-13>>; Quanying Ouyang, 'The Impact of Intercultural Communication Teaching in University Linguistics Courses on the Development of Students International Perspectives from a Classical Grounded Theory Perspective: A Case Study of Domestic and International Language Majors', *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 111.1 (2025), 66–73 <<https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/2025.ND26522>>.

⁷ Juan Carlos Araujo Portugal, 'Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Learning', *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 11.4 (2021), 243–56 <<https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v11i4.6006>>.

⁸ Florence Angelaila Fauzi and others, 'Integrating Cultural Aspects in EFL Curriculum: Fostering Intercultural Awareness and Communicative Competence', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah*, 3.2 (2025), 104–12 <<https://doi.org/10.69743/edumedia.v3i2.45>>.

national curriculum⁹. Textbooks transmit linguistic knowledge and construct social realities through selection of cultures, values, and identities¹⁰. Texts, dialogues, images, and learning activities communicate perspectives regarding cultural centrality and legitimacy¹¹. Examination of textbook representation therefore functions as evaluative mechanism for assessing coherence between intercultural competence objectives and material content.

Previous studies have examined cultural representation in EFL textbooks across different regions. Research identifies dominance of Western or target cultures in instructional materials, while local cultures appear in limited or supplementary roles¹². Scholars also report stereotypes, visual bias, and limited intercultural interaction within textbook discourse. Such studies provide insight into proportional distribution of cultural categories. Limited attention has been directed toward examination of cultural awareness as multidimensional pedagogical construct embedded in representation patterns.

Comparative investigations conducted in various Asian contexts demonstrate privileging of target culture representations over local or international cultures. Cultural content frequently centers on English speaking countries, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. Imbalance reflects hierarchical positioning of certain cultures within global English language teaching practices. Representation patterns influence learners' perception of cultural legitimacy and modernity. Dominance of target culture raises question regarding epistemic orientation of instructional materials.

Scholars have also analyzed depth of cultural presentation in textbooks. Cultural materials often emphasize festivals, food, clothing, and landmarks without contextualization of underlying social values¹³. Learners encounter fragmented information rather than interpretive or comparative engagement. Informational orientation constrains development of critical cultural awareness and limits reflective capacity. Absence of evaluative dimension in cultural presentation indicates gap between intercultural competence theory and textbook implementation.

Visual representation constitutes another focus within previous research. Textbook images frequently portray fair skinned characters, Western urban environments, and lifestyles associated with middle class modernity. Visual patterns normalize particular identities as global standards. Images transmit implicit cultural hierarchies that influence perception of aspiration and belonging. Representational bias within visual elements therefore requires systematic examination in relation to cultural awareness construction.

Research on textbook dialogues reports limited portrayal of authentic cross cultural communication scenarios. Conversations tend to occur within homogeneous cultural settings without depiction of misunderstanding or negotiation of meaning. Interactional context that could foster interpretive skills remains underrepresented. Lack of intercultural interaction

⁹ Rita Handayani and Della Yunita, 'Cultural Representation Analysis in English Textbook in Indonesia EFL Secondary School Students', *Anaphora : Journal of Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies*, 8.1 (2025), 11–19 <<https://doi.org/10.30996/anaphora.v8i1.12188>>.

¹⁰ Deri Supriatna, Fakhri Fikri, and Bambang Irawan, 'Exploring Moral Values in the Indonesian EFL Textbook "English for Nusantara": A Critical Discourse Analysis', *Journal of Education and Religious Studies*, 5.02 (2025), 91–102 <<https://doi.org/10.57060/jers.arykqs59>>.

¹¹ Febi Suwandani and Sari Hidayati, 'Conceptual Representation of Culture in EFL Textbook Images: A Multimodal Analysis', *Dinamika Ilmu*, 25.1 (2025), 99–122 <<https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v25i1.10098>>.

¹² Draženka Molnar and Zvonimir Prtenjača, 'A Critical Overview of the Cultural Elements in Four EFL Textbooks Used in Croatian Secondary Schools', *Studia Anglica Resoviensia*, 21 (2024), 122–36 <<https://doi.org/10.15584/sar.2024.21.9>>.

¹³ Ery Ryan Nirwana and Ika Lestari Damayanti, 'Socio-Cultural Content in English Textbook: A Teachers' Perspective', *LINGUISTICA*, 14.1 (2025), 26–36 <<https://doi.org/10.24114/jalu.v15i1.64958>>.

restricts opportunity for learners to relate perspectives across cultural boundaries. Descriptive orientation of dialogue content suggests insufficient integration of critical awareness dimension.

Despite extensive discussion of cultural representation, systematic analysis of cultural awareness representation in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks remains limited. Existing studies emphasize identification of cultural types or proportional presence rather than examination of awareness construction. Absence of conceptual clarification generates uncertainty regarding pedagogical direction of textbook discourse. Alignment between intercultural competence objectives and textbook content therefore requires empirical investigation. Conceptual mapping of awareness categories offers analytical contribution to intercultural material studies.

Secondary school level represents critical phase in identity and cognitive development. Students at this stage demonstrate capacity for abstract reasoning and evaluative judgment. Textbook representation influences formation of attitudes toward cultural diversity. Descriptive and hierarchical framing of culture may restrict development of inclusive perspectives. Examination of cultural awareness representation thus carries conceptual and pedagogical significance¹⁴.

This study aims to examine how cultural awareness is represented in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks and to identify dominant patterns that characterize such representation. Analytical focus extends beyond categorical distribution toward evaluation of awareness construction within texts, dialogues, visuals, and activities. Conceptual contribution lies in positioning cultural awareness as pedagogical orientation rather than cultural topic. The study addresses the following research question: *How is cultural awareness represented in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks?* Analysis focuses on textual, visual, and activity based representations contained in secondary school EFL textbooks aligned with the national curriculum.

2. Research Method

2.1. Research Design

Research corpus consists of three EFL textbooks used at grade seven, eight, and nine levels in Indonesian secondary schools under the national curriculum. Textbooks were published between 2018 and 2022 and are officially distributed for classroom use. Selection includes one government issued textbook and two commercially published textbooks that are widely adopted in public schools. Corpus provides variation across grade levels and thematic units to allow examination of representational consistency and progression.

Selection follows purposive sampling strategy based on curricular alignment, institutional adoption, and availability of complete instructional components¹⁵. Criteria include integration of reading texts, dialogues, visual materials, and structured learning activities within each unit¹⁶. Sampling strategy ensures relevance to national educational context and supports analytical depth rather than statistical generalization. Corpus size is considered sufficient to reveal structural patterns of cultural awareness representation across instructional materials.

¹⁴ Budi Setyono and Handoyo Puji Widodo, 'The Representation of Multicultural Values in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture-Endorsed EFL Textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis', *Intercultural Education*, 30.4 (2019), 383–97 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2019.1548102>>.

¹⁵ Fransiska Prihatiningsih, Ismail Petrus, and Sary Silvhiyany, 'Cultural Representation in EFL Textbooks for the Seventh Graders: A Multimodal Analysis', *Lingua Cultura*, 15.1 (2021) <<https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v15i1.7319>>.

¹⁶ Arum Priadi, 'Unspoken Influence : Presupposition , Implicature , and Hypnotic Ambiguity in Indonesian Political Interviews', *Journal Fast In Humanities*, 1.1 (2025), 1–19.

2.2. Unit of Analysis

Unit of analysis includes four instructional components within each textbook: reading texts, dialogues, visual images, and learning activities. Reading texts contain narrative and descriptive content that present cultural practices, identities, and social contexts. Dialogues reflect interactional norms, speech conventions, and relational positioning among speakers. Visual images convey implicit cultural symbolism, representation of social actors, and contextual framing. Learning activities reveal pedagogical direction toward cultural engagement and reflection.

Segmentation of data follows thematic and structural boundaries within each unit. Textual segments are identified at paragraph or dialogue exchange level when cultural reference appears explicitly or implicitly. Visual segments are identified at image level when representation contains cultural markers such as attire, setting, social role, or symbolic elements. Activity segments are identified when instructional prompts require cultural description, comparison, interpretation, or evaluation. Clear segmentation ensures analytical consistency and prevents arbitrary interpretation of cultural representation.

2.3. Analytical Framework

Analytical framework draws upon conceptual dimensions of cultural awareness within intercultural communicative competence scholarship. Cultural awareness is operationalized through five analytical categories: self-cultural awareness, awareness of other cultures, critical cultural reflection, representation of cultural values and norms, and representational bias. Categories function as coding scheme to classify cultural elements and to identify orientation of presentation across instructional components. Framework provides conceptual structure that guides systematic examination of representation.

Each category is defined through operational indicators to ensure analytical consistency. Self-cultural awareness includes segments that present local cultural identity, practices, or perspectives. Awareness of other cultures includes representation of foreign cultural contexts, social norms, or communicative conventions. Critical cultural reflection includes segments that invite comparison, evaluation, or questioning of cultural assumptions. Representation of cultural values and norms includes depiction of social expectations, behavioral standards, or moral positioning. Representational bias includes selective emphasis, stereotyping, marginalization, or imbalance in cultural portrayal. Operational clarification reduces subjectivity and strengthens validity of interpretation.

2.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection employs systematic documentation technique applied to the selected textbooks. Researcher conducts comprehensive reading of each unit to identify segments that contain explicit or implicit cultural references. Identification focuses on textual description, dialogue interaction, visual depiction, and instructional prompts that relate to cultural identity, practice, norm, or value. All relevant segments are extracted and organized according to textbook, grade level, and unit theme to maintain traceability of data source.

Coding process follows predefined analytical categories established in the framework section. Each identified segment is examined and assigned to one or more cultural awareness categories based on operational indicators. Repeated examination of coded segments ensures categorical consistency across textbook components. Documentation record includes segment location, contextual description, assigned category, and preliminary interpretive note. Systematic recording supports transparency of analytical procedure and allows verification of interpretive decisions.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis proceeds through structured interpretive stages designed to reveal forms and patterns of cultural awareness representation. Initial stage involves data reduction to retain segments that align with operational indicators of cultural awareness. Selected segments are then organized according to analytical categories in order to map distribution of representational types across textbooks and grade levels. Categorization enables identification of dominant and marginal forms of cultural presentation.

Subsequent stage focuses on pattern identification and structural examination. Analysis investigates narrative framing, interactional positioning, visual symbolism, and pedagogical orientation embedded in each segment. Attention is directed toward depth of cultural engagement, degree of evaluative invitation, and balance between local and foreign cultural depiction. Interpretive stage synthesizes findings to explain how cultural awareness is constructed, whether representation remains descriptive, comparative, reflective, or critical. Analytical procedure aims to reveal structural tendencies that characterize cultural awareness representation within Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks.

2.6. Trustworthiness and Scope Limitation

Trustworthiness is established through theoretical grounding, systematic documentation, and procedural transparency. Interpretation relies on established intercultural competence scholarship to maintain conceptual consistency across analytical stages. Coding decisions are recorded in detailed documentation to provide audit trail of category assignment and interpretive reasoning. Reexamination of selected segments ensures stability of classification and reduces risk of inconsistent interpretation. Conceptual alignment between research question, analytical framework, and interpretive procedure strengthens internal coherence of the study.

Scope of the study is limited to content representation within selected textbooks. Investigation does not extend to classroom implementation, teacher mediation, or student response. Focus remains on discursive construction of cultural awareness embedded in instructional materials. Limitation clarifies boundary of analysis and maintains direct alignment with the research question concerning representation.

3. Results and Discussion

Analysis across three textbooks at grade seven, eight, and nine levels indicates that cultural awareness is embedded in reading texts, dialogues, visual images, and learning activities with uneven depth of engagement. Cultural content appears consistently in thematic units related to celebration, school life, social interaction, and public events. However, examination of textual framing and instructional prompts shows stronger emphasis on descriptive cultural introduction than on reflective inquiry.

Local culture occupies central narrative space across grade levels. Foreign cultural references appear intermittently, often associated with English speaking countries. Reflective tasks are present but positioned at the periphery of instructional sequences. Pattern suggests that cultural awareness functions primarily as contextual support for language learning rather than as structured intercultural competence development.

3.1. Self-Cultural Awareness

Self-cultural awareness is prominently constructed through narrative descriptions of national and community practices. In Grade 7 Textbook A, Unit 4, a reading passage describing Independence Day includes the sentence, "People gather in the field to join the ceremony and sing the national anthem together." Lexical items such as gather, ceremony, and together

construct collective participation as defining cultural feature. Social unity is foregrounded through repetition of communal verbs and plural subjects.

Visual representation reinforces this construction¹⁷. Illustration in the same unit depicts students standing in symmetrical formation facing the national flag. Central placement of the flag and uniform arrangement of figures emphasize order and shared identity. Cultural awareness here is framed as recognition of symbolic national markers rather than exploration of regional diversity or alternative experiences.

Learning activities associated with this unit instruct students to “mention activities in your neighborhood” and to “describe your favorite celebration.” Prompts focus on recall and description. No question requires comparison between regions or reflection on changing traditions. Similar pattern appears in Grade 8 Textbook B, Unit 2, where traditional market interaction is portrayed as harmonious exchange between seller and buyer. Dialogue emphasizes politeness and mutual respect. Absence of analytical questioning indicates that self-cultural awareness is constructed as stable cultural knowledge rather than dynamic social practice.

3.2. Awareness of Other Cultures

Awareness of other cultures appears through short descriptive texts and dialogues involving international contexts. In Grade 8 Textbook B, Unit 5, a passage titled “School in Australia” describes classroom routines and extracurricular activities. Sentence structure presents information in declarative form without evaluative commentary. Cultural difference is introduced through factual description rather than comparative analysis¹⁸.

Dialogue segments in Grade 9 Textbook C depict conversation between Indonesian and British students. Exchange includes greeting forms and discussion of hobbies. Interaction reflects informal communication style associated with global English use. However, cultural depth remains limited. No task invites examination of communicative norms beyond surface differences.

Visual materials often portray urban settings such as city parks, modern classrooms, or public transportation in foreign contexts. Repetition of Western urban imagery suggests concentration on dominant English speaking environments. Limited representation of non-Western global regions indicates structural imbalance in intercultural exposure. Awareness of other cultures is therefore constructed as supplementary contextual knowledge without sustained intercultural negotiation.

3.3. Critical Cultural Reflection

Critical cultural reflection is present but marginal within instructional structure. In Grade 9 Textbook C, Unit 3, students are asked to “compare celebrations in Indonesia and other countries.” Prompt invites identification of similarities and differences. However, instruction does not extend toward evaluation of underlying values or social meaning. Reflection remains at descriptive comparison level.

Few units include open ended questions that encourage interpretation of cultural perspective. Where present, reflective prompts appear after reading comprehension exercises rather than guiding the reading process itself. Structural placement reduces their pedagogical

¹⁷ Heru Saputra and Dolendra Paudel, ‘Critical Literacy in Indonesian ELT: A Multicultural Approach Based on Banks’ Dimensions of Education’, *Kognisi: Jurnal Ilmu Keguruan*, 2.2 (2025), 117–28 <<https://doi.org/10.59698/kognisi.v2i2.428>>.

¹⁸ Denatasa Permatasari, ‘Multimodal Analysis on The Cultural Content of Indonesian High School English E-Textbooks’, *ENLIT Journal*, 2.2 (2022), 111–22 <<https://doi.org/10.33654/enlit.v2i2.1921>>.

influence. No activity explicitly addresses potential stereotype, cultural hierarchy, or internal diversity within a cultural group.

Pattern across textbooks indicates that critical reflection does not function as organizing principle of cultural representation. Cultural awareness is framed as information to be recognized rather than assumption to be examined¹⁹. Limited evaluative engagement restricts development of deeper intercultural competence.

3.4. Representation of Cultural Values and Norms

Cultural values and norms are embedded implicitly within narrative and dialogue. Texts portray respect for elders, cooperation among peers, punctuality, and responsibility as expected social behaviors. In Grade 7 Textbook A, dialogue between teacher and student highlights polite expressions and formal address. Language choice positions respect as normative behavior within educational context.

Foreign contexts are also associated with specific values such as independence and direct communication. These values appear through character interaction rather than explicit explanation. Moral positioning across texts emphasizes harmony and positive social conduct. Variation within cultural groups is rarely represented.

Construction of values as coherent and widely shared contributes to clarity of cultural introduction yet minimizes recognition of social complexity. Representation does not problematize differences in interpretation or contestation of norms²⁰. Cultural values function as instructional examples rather than as objects of inquiry.

3.5. Representational Bias and Structural Imbalance

Examination of distribution across textbooks reveals structural imbalance in cultural selection. Local culture receives extensive narrative attention across grade levels. Foreign culture is represented through selective global references, predominantly from English speaking countries. Limited inclusion of diverse global regions reduces intercultural breadth.

Gender roles within narratives reflect conventional positioning in certain contexts, particularly in domestic settings and school activities. Minority cultural voices are absent from both local and foreign representations. Emphasis on harmony and shared values creates coherent thematic presentation but narrows visibility of social tension or marginal perspectives.

Representational bias operates through selection and omission rather than explicit stereotyping²¹. Pattern indicates preference for culturally safe and socially stable imagery. Such orientation supports national identity affirmation yet restricts exposure to intercultural complexity.

3.6. Construction of Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks is constructed primarily through descriptive presentation of local identity combined with selective introduction of

¹⁹ Hayat Aoumeur and Melouka Ziani, 'Representation of Culture in EFL Textbooks: A Linguistic and Content Analysis of My Book of English', *Arab World English Journal*, 13.2 (2022), 282–96 <<https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no2.19>>.

²⁰ Uzlatul Izzah, Dihliza Basya, and Dyah Ayu Nugraheni, 'Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Local Culture in Indonesia's EFL Textbook', *English Teaching Journal : A Journal of English Literature, Language and Education*, 12.2 (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.25273/etj.v12i2.21648>>.

²¹ Fajrin Diana Putri, Djatmika Djatmika, and Kristian Adi Putra, 'Framing Culture in EFL Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis at Islamic School', *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15.3 (2023), 2955–66 <<https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.4417>>.

foreign cultural contexts²². Lexical choice, visual framing, and instructional prompts emphasize recognition of shared practices, symbolic markers, and socially approved norms. Critical reflection appears sporadically and remains peripheral within pedagogical structure.

Local culture occupies central narrative position, reinforcing identity familiarity across grade levels. Foreign cultures are introduced through dominant English speaking references with limited regional diversity. Comparative tasks focus on surface differences without extended evaluative inquiry. Cultural awareness therefore emerges as structured knowledge domain embedded within thematic language instruction rather than as transformative intercultural competence developed through sustained analytical engagement.

Representation supports contextual understanding and identity affirmation but provides limited opportunity for deeper exploration of cultural plurality, internal diversity, and value negotiation. Construction of cultural awareness reflects pedagogical orientation toward informational exposure rather than dialogic intercultural formation.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how cultural awareness is represented in Indonesian secondary school EFL textbooks. Findings demonstrate that cultural awareness is constructed primarily through descriptive presentation of local identity and selective exposure to foreign cultural contexts. Representation relies on narrative depiction, symbolic imagery, and contextualized dialogue that emphasize shared practices and socially endorsed norms. Critical reflection appears in limited instructional prompts and does not function as central organizing principle of textbook design. Cultural awareness therefore operates largely as structured knowledge embedded within thematic language instruction rather than as sustained intercultural inquiry.

Analysis further indicates that representational orientation shapes depth of cultural engagement. Local culture occupies dominant narrative position, while foreign cultures are introduced through restricted global references with minimal regional diversity. Comparative tasks encourage recognition of difference but rarely extend toward evaluation of cultural assumptions or negotiation of values. Study highlights that inclusion of cultural content alone does not ensure development of intercultural competence; structural framing, lexical positioning, and pedagogical sequencing determine whether cultural awareness remains informational or becomes reflective. Findings provide basis for reconsideration of intercultural dimension in future EFL textbook development.

²² Dihliza Basya, Siti Nur Halizah, and Nur Diawati, 'Does The EFL-Multimodal Textbook and Culture In The Independent Curriculum Represent Character Education?: A Critical Discourse Analysis', *SELL (Scope of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature) Journal*, 10.1 (2025), 66–87 <<https://doi.org/10.31597/sl.v10i1.1220>>.

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