

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of Study**

In the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning, textbooks play a crucial role as a primary source of language exposure and cultural knowledge, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language. According to Richards, (2001), textbooks serve as the foundation of language instruction, providing structured lessons that facilitate language acquisition. In such contexts, textbooks often serve as the primary resource for students to acquire linguistic skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as a foundational understanding of grammar and vocabulary. Cultural representation in EFL textbooks is essential in helping students understand not only the linguistic aspects of English but also the cultural context in which the language is used (Kramsch, 1993). Moreover, textbooks provide a structured framework for teachers to deliver lessons effectively, ensuring consistency in instructional materials across different classrooms. As a result, evaluating the content of English textbooks becomes essential to ensure that they meet students' educational needs, align with curriculum standards, and support the development of their language proficiency in both linguistic and cultural aspects.

Indonesia, as a multicultural country, recognizes the importance of integrating local cultural elements into its educational curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Culture has developed English textbooks that aim to reflect both global and local cultural identities. However, studies have shown that the representation of Indonesian culture in English textbooks is often limited or overshadowed by Western cultural elements (Yuen, 2011). This imbalance raises concerns about whether students are adequately exposed to their own cultural heritage while learning English. Given the crucial role of culture in shaping identity and fostering mutual understanding, ensuring that students engage with cultural aspects of their own country while learning English is fundamental.

Beyond linguistic skills, English textbooks are also a medium through which cultural values and knowledge are transmitted. Language and culture are inherently linked, as learning a language inevitably involves exposure to the culture in which that language is used. According to McGrath (2002), language learning materials can carry cultural content that helps learners understand both the language and the cultural contexts in which it operates, fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural nuances and diversity. Furthermore, exposing students to various cultural perspectives through textbooks can enhance their critical thinking skills and prepare them to engage in cross-cultural communication.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

As stated in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, this verse emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity, encouraging individuals from different backgrounds to engage with one another (Fakhriah et al., 2025). In the context of language learning, it highlights the necessity of fostering intercultural awareness and sensitivity among students, which is crucial for effective communication in a multicultural environment. The principle conveyed by this verse directly aligns with the aim of integrating cultural content into English textbooks, enabling students to not only learn the language but also appreciate and respect diverse cultural perspectives (Suardi et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the inclusion of cultural content in educational materials has become increasingly significant, particularly with the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, flexibility, and the integration of local cultural values. The Ministry of Education and Culture mandates that textbooks used in schools should reflect not only the target and international cultures but also the local or source culture, which represents the students' own cultural background (Wardiyah et al., 2023). This approach aims to foster a sense of national identity and pride while promoting cultural diversity.

Numerous researchers have conducted studies on cultural representation in English textbooks used in Indonesian schools. Most of these studies apply Yuen's (2011) framework, which categorizes culture into four dimensions: products, practices, perspectives, and persons. Salwa Putri's study, for example, reveals that Western culture dominates the textbooks, while Indonesian culture appears only marginally. However, her research does not provide a detailed explanation of how each of the four dimensions is distributed within the materials.

A similar conclusion was reached by Ariffianty Ika Noorfauzi, (2023), who also employed qualitative content analysis to examine cultural content in Indonesian EFL textbooks. Her findings highlight that although there is some inclusion of local culture, international elements remain more prominent. While she did analyze all four dimensions in Yuen's framework, the study lacks a balanced breakdown of each element's presence. As a result, the overall picture of how culture is embedded in the textbooks remains incomplete.

Diah Ayuni Ariawan's (2022) research takes a slightly different approach by comparing multiple English textbooks for senior high school. This previous study findings show an imbalance, with cultural products being the most frequently represented, while perspectives and persons are rarely featured. This indicates a surface-level inclusion of culture, dominated again by Western content. In contrast, the current study focuses on a single textbook

from the Kurikulum Merdeka to offer a more focused and up-to-date exploration of Indonesian cultural elements, especially within the dimension of cultural products.

Nevertheless, previous studies have shown that the representation of local culture in English textbooks is often limited compared to the representation of target cultures. The dominance of target and international cultures in textbooks can lead to a lack of awareness and appreciation for local cultural values among students. Therefore, there is a need for more studies that specifically focus on the representation of Indonesian culture in English textbooks.

This present study addresses the gap by conducting a content analysis of an English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris: Train of Thoughts” for 12th Grade Senior High School students, specifically one published by the Ministry of Education and Culture for Kurikulum Merdeka. The analysis focuses on how Indonesian culture is represented in the textbook using Yuen's (2011) framework, which categorizes cultural content into four dimensions: products, practices, perspectives, and persons.

By analyzing these cultural products, the study aims to determine the extent to which the textbook promotes Indonesian cultural values. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, textbook developers, and policymakers in improving the cultural relevance of English learning materials in Indonesia. Additionally, this

research seeks to contribute to the broader discussion on cultural representation in ELT materials, ensuring that students not only develop language proficiency but also gain an appreciation for their own cultural identity while learning English.

## **B. Definition of Key Terms**

To prevent misunderstandings, several research-related terms are defined.

### **1. Cultural Content Analysis**

Cultural Content Analysis is a qualitative method used to examine how culture is represented in texts, especially educational materials. In this study, it is applied to analyze how Indonesian culture is portrayed in the English textbook entitled “*Bahasa Inggris Train of Thoughts*” for 12th grade students, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

### **2. Advance English Textbook**

Advanced English Textbook refers to an English language textbook designed for learners at a higher secondary or upper-intermediate level, typically used by senior high school students. This study focuses on the textbook “*Bahasa Inggris Train of Thoughts*” for 12th grade, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, with emphasis on formal and tangible representations of Indonesian culture found in the material.

### 3. Indonesian Culture

Indonesian culture encompasses the diverse traditions, customs, beliefs, and values practiced by various ethnic groups in Indonesia.

## C. Research Questions

The following are the main issues that become the focus of this research:

1. What types of cultural dimensions are presented in the English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris Train of Thoughts” for 12th-grade senior high school students, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture?
2. How are the cultural dimensions presented in the textbook?

## D. Objectives of Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the types of cultural dimensions presented in the English textbook entitled “Bahasa Inggris Train of Thoughts” for 12th-grade senior high school students, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
2. To find out how the cultural dimensions are presented in the textbook.

## E. Significance of Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions:

### 1. Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the existing literature on cultural representation in English language teaching (ELT) textbooks, particularly in the Indonesian context. By applying a cultural framework to analyze textbooks, this study offers insights into how local cultural values are integrated into language learning materials. It highlights the importance of balancing cultural content to foster both linguistic competence and cultural awareness. The findings may also serve as a reference for future research on culturally responsive ELT materials.

### 2. Practical Significance

- a. For teachers: This study can help English teachers to become more aware of the cultural products in the textbooks they use, enabling them to supplement lessons with additional cultural materials when necessary. It also encourages teachers to foster students' critical thinking and cultural sensitivity through more diverse and inclusive learning resources.
- b. For textbook developers: The findings can serve as feedback for publishers and authors to improve future editions of textbooks by ensuring a balanced representation of cultural elements, especially local cultures. This can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of textbooks in promoting both language skills and cultural identity.



- c. For policymakers: The results can inform educational policymakers in designing guidelines and standards for textbook development that promote both language proficiency and cultural awareness. This ensures that educational materials align with national values while preparing students for global engagement.