



# Multicultural Values Representation in the English Textbook “English in Mind” for Junior High School

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## Abstract

This research aims to look into the multicultural values represented in the Merdeka Curriculum textbook for Junior High School, "English in Mind." The research employed a qualitative method to acquire specific information regarding multicultural ideals and English textbook data. This content analysis study examined multicultural values using Barthes' four multicultural elements. The research revealed findings indicating that all aspects of multicultural values are included in this EFL textbook. Appreciating Other People's Perspectives is mainly covered in this textbook. The textbook only discusses the multicultural value component, which represents the duty of the world community. ELT specialists and English teachers worldwide have welcomed this new paradigm, which theorizes the integration of regional English variations and multicultural elements to improve intercultural communicative skills. The examined textbook expresses a multicultural viewpoint by accepting and valuing the world's varied customs. Regarding the result of this research, further research is undertaken to identify the approaches, strategies, and procedures for teaching multicultural values to students of varying ages.

**Keywords:** *Discourse Analysis; English textbook; Multicultural Value*

## Introduction

Indonesia is recognized as having one of the world's most multicultural populations. It is a nation of various races, cultures, traditions, and religions. According to the collaboration results between BPS and ISEAS (Institute of South

Asian Studies), there are approximately 633 ethnic groups derived from ethnic and sub-ethnic groupings in Indonesia. People within its many ethnic groups speak different dialects. Some people speak Betawi, Batak, Jawa, Bugis, and many other languages; Indonesia has 715 local languages and dialects (Annur, 2022), but they are all referred to as Indonesian. The Indonesian language is indeed diverse.

The national motto of Indonesia, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," which interprets as "Unity in Diversity," is intended to bring together all aspects of Indonesian society, including the merging of the vision and mission of being a family that looks out for one another, cares for one another, and values one another (Nurhayati et al., 2021). While, Indonesia faces differences, one of which is multiculturalism, the main goal of Indonesian tolerance is to remain united. Nonetheless, the Indonesian government needs help managing the country's cultural diversity. Kesuma in Harahap (2022) stated that Indonesia is experiencing both a moral and a cultural crisis. In the same way that Indonesia's landscape reflects the country's cultural diversity, the country's landscape is highly varied. It indicates that Indonesian society is in a state of instability due to a lack of awareness regarding the existence of other cultures. One of the many solutions for peace is the practice of multicultural education (Derico et al., 2019).

The desire for people from diverse backgrounds to develop a deeper understanding of one another will have significant consequences for future generations (Pratama et al., 2021). Strategies for multicultural education must be prioritized in the search for solutions to cultural diversity. The essential part that education plays in the process of advancing multicultural curricula has also been acknowledged on a worldwide scale (Derico et al., 2019).

Furthermore, education is essential in dealing with an ethnically diverse community where prejudices and stereotypes are pervasive and unavoidable. Regardless of differences in culture, religion, linguistics, ethnicity, and ideology, education is one of the most effective ways to shape the minds of the next era toward peace and harmony. According to Dejene (2017), incorporating multicultural education into textbooks is crucial if schools are to achieve their mission of producing citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to function in a multicultural democratic society. It is in line with Arslan (2013) that pupils need to learn about other cultures to have a complete understanding of their own; hence, intercultural ideals need to be integrated into educational systems. One way to introduce cultural differences is through the learning material.

A textbook is one of the classroom learning materials. The textbook contains text and images with value, including multicultural values. Recent research on

putting multicultural values into English language teaching (ELT) textbooks has shown that some things could be improved with students' cultural knowledge and social competence. Setyono and Widodo (2019) stated that multicultural values could be portrayed in a textbook while still honoring Indonesia's rich cultural diversity. According to Utomo in Harahap (2022), culture, language, race, religion, and ethnicity are just some of the many features that compose Indonesian national identity. Setyono and Widodo (2019) also verify that multicultural value interpretation aims to promote a national identity.

Moreover, Weninger and Kiss (2013) conducted a study that was pertinent to the topic by analyzing the texts, visuals, and activities included in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks published by and for Hungarians. Cultural meanings were taught and learned with the help of texts, images, and tasks, with social semiotics as a guiding theory. The images and texts should assist in the growth of focus and the ability to think introspectively about intercultural, individual, and interpersonal comprehension. ELT textbooks help students become more socially competent by introducing them to new cultures and depicting multicultural values.

Previous studies have shown that Indonesian ELT textbooks will be more helpful in portraying Indonesian culture if they incorporate multicultural values. Considering the central role that multicultural values play in language teaching, it is essential to explore how they are conveyed in English textbooks. Nevertheless, the studies cited above concern how multicultural topics are presented in English textbooks according to the Curriculum for 2013. Therefore, it is interesting to find out about the Curriculum Merdeka textbook. In addition, the promotion of multiculturalism must be encouraged at all times. Because of this, the most recent research on incorporating multicultural values into the English as an English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook, "English in Mind," is crucial for educational institutions. The following research question served as the basis for this study: What multicultural values are embodied in the English Textbook "English in Mind" for Junior High School?

## **Literature Review**

### *Textbook in Language Learning*

Textbooks are essential components of a curriculum since they direct teaching and learning (Widodo, 2014). Textbooks are compilations of a variety of

texts that have been selectively selected to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Curriculum, as well as the intentions and agendas of policymakers and writers (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Moreover, they noted that curriculum ideology greatly influences textbook authors' selection of books and assignment creation. Consequently, textbooks link ideologies ingrained in curricula (Dijk, 2001), transmit ideas and values to form the identities of students (Bishara, 2015), and impart both universal and local importance to students (Gebregeorgis, 2017).

Moreover, when it comes to teaching foreign languages in Indonesia, incorporating new textbooks into an existing curriculum is always one of the most critical steps (Rowland, L., & Barrs, 2013). Lessons and activities can be designed and carried out both within and outside of the classroom using textbooks as a guide. Educators are not required to accept the specified instructional materials and teaching methods in textbooks without considering the cultural and social context within which English is used or taught (Widodo, 2014). In this situation, teachers must adapt textbooks to their specific institutional situation to achieve optimal compatibility between material, strategy, students, targets, target language, and the teacher's personality and teaching style (Tomlinson, 2013). It is to maximize the effectiveness of instruction. Because the textbook has a few different tasks, it can occasionally assist instructors with less experience.

Furthermore, textbooks are used as resources for language acquisition since they contain a variety of texts that have been meaningfully selected to meet the goals and agendas of policymakers, authors, as well as the targets of the Curriculum (Benham & Mozaheb, 2013). Curriculum principles impact textbook authors when selecting text and setting assignments. Consequently, textbooks are initially perceived as instructional materials containing ideological agents (Dijk, 2001). *Secondly*, the core route for spreading ideas and beliefs that determine student identity is the classroom (Widodo, 2018). Students should be taught universal and community-specific values through the media (Gebregeorgis, 2017). In other words, textbooks teach language subtly and overtly promote various cultural objectives.

The number and type of cultural references in textbooks vary. Others are developed to deliver content consistent in terms of cultural depictions from cultural sources, targets, and aspects from other cultures (Samsudin et al., 2021). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) classified textbook cultural factors as source culture, target culture, and foreign culture. The following section cites a few study papers on how textbooks reflect culture.

### *Multicultural Values in Textbook*

Education is one method for fostering the development of intercultural ideals in society. In Indonesia, a multiethnic country, respecting and accepting cultural diversity has been prioritized in character education. (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Therefore, teachers and students must have access to materials that encourage intercultural education, such as textbooks. Textbooks play a considerable part in teaching and learning a foreign language as physical objects that aid teachers and students (Pratama et al., 2021).

Textbooks are compilations of various materials prepared to suit the requirements of the Curriculum, policymakers, writers, and other programs. The textbook's authors used theoretical frameworks based on the Curriculum when deciding which texts to include and which activities to include. The textbook's goals entail communicating the ideals of the official Curriculum (Dijk, 2001), sponsoring the development of concepts that shape the personalities of the learners (Bishara, 2015), and sponsoring specific values required by society (Gebregeorgis, 2017). It is in line with Efron (2020) that textbooks significantly manifest policy goals that enable and restrict teachers' efforts to foster multicultural understanding.

Moreover, textbooks are the media of the Indonesian educational system and raise numerous issues about the nation. Purba et al., (2019) argued that the manifestations of social problems linked to diversity constantly transmit the understanding to sustain national cultural identity. Their research stressed the multicultural depiction of social phenomenon disparities in language education textbooks that permit children to develop nationalism. The presentation of English textbooks also affects the academic competence of students. The textbook can teach students additional information, such as cultural values. It is in line with Sulistyono et al., (2020) that moral principles and the material (skill) are supplied in language textbooks. It implies that they stressed in the textbook that moral worth is offered and that the targeted ability is related to linguistic skills, such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing. In the research conducted by Li et al., (2019), it was concluded that implementing English language textbooks is vital not only for influencing linguistic knowledge but also for learning the cultural variety aspects of English. In brief, the material covered in ELT textbooks typically includes linguistic principles and various hidden cultural programs.

This research adopted Barthes' dimension (1977) of multicultural values to analyze visual aspects in the textbook that include multicultural values. They are

Respecting Other People's Traditions (ROPT), Appreciating Women's Equal Rights (AWER), Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products (AOPCP), and Appreciating Other People's Perspectives (AOPP).

## **Method**

### *Research Design*

The research employed a qualitative approach to acquire specific information regarding multicultural ideals and English textbook data. Analysis of critical discourse was the approach that was utilized to respond to the study topics. This approach was selected because it was deemed the most appropriate option since it provides the right analytical tool for evaluating how texts can portray and cultivate social realities through verbal and nonverbal elements (Widodo, 2018). It is also an integrative approach to the study of discourse in which the use of language is viewed as a social practice that bears a set of values and interpretations (Fairclough, 2001). In this regard, textbooks provide many verbal and nonverbal language elements that depict specific cultural values for students to comprehend, motivating and inspiring pupils to acquire a certain level of multicultural awareness in ELT classrooms.

### *The Technique of Data Collection*

Data collection is the primary step in the research procedure. According to Mirhosseini (2020), to obtain appropriate data depending on the subject of the study, researchers must evaluate the complete data collection process. In addition, the researcher was the right instrument. Consequently, the principal instrument used in this investigation is a human subject (Ary et al., 2010) since the researchers participated in all aspects of the research, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Zahra & Arianti, 2022).

### *The Technique of Data Analysis*

The researchers employed a variation of Barthes' visual semiotics to examine the intercultural value demonstrated through the visual aspects of a textbook. Their characteristics enable the investigator to evaluate the multicultural value of the textbook. The elements must be incorporated into visual and non-visual artifacts encoding. According to Barthes (1977) there are two meaning phases in visual semiotics. The first component is the denotation, which describes the persons or objects depicted in images. The second is the implication, which shows the concealed meanings and conceptions of the persons or things depicted in

pictures and how they are represented in illustrations.

Moreover, the data collecting involves various methods. The data was gathered by reading a comprehensive English textbook to determine the multicultural values latent in the visuals. The pages containing multicultural values were then highlighted to identify each feature. The researchers selected multicultural qualities in visuals and text depending on the instrument's theoretical criteria. In addition, the data were prepared for analysis following Barthes's theories (1977).

A variety of approaches was utilized in this study to investigate the implications of Barthes' study of the visual qualities of an EFL textbook concerning multicultural values. The textbook's graphic themes were first chosen to signify tradition, women's equality, cultural product, and point of view. Second, four groupings of the selected visual elements were created: Respecting Other People's Traditions (ROPT), Appreciating Women's Equal Rights (AWER), Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products (AOPCP), and Appreciating Other People's Perspectives (AOPP). Thirdly, we evaluated the visual aspects. The results of the analysis were subsequently interpreted.

**Results**

In this research, examinations of the multicultural values depicted in photographs were conducted utilizing Barthes's visual semiotic theory (1977). This research identified twelve artifacts in the English in Mind textbook that illustrate multicultural principles. The textbook "English in Mind" has four welcome sections, 14 chapters, and 133 pages. Almost every chapter contains a visual representation of multicultural values. Four artifacts (as mentioned in Table 1) representing each category of intercultural values were investigated.

Table 1: Visual representations of multicultural values in the textbook

Chapter	Topic	Page	Multicultural values
XI	Special Days	P.80, P.85	ROPT
XI	Special Days	P.84	AOPCP
II	We're New	P.18	AOPCP

	Band			
<b>XI</b>	Special Days	P.85	AOPCP	
<b>D</b>	Welcome Section D	P. 8	AOPP	
<b>II</b>	We're New Band	P.20	AOPP	
<b>IV</b>	Where's the Café?	P.34	AOPP	
<b>X</b>	A Bad Storm's Coming	P.77	AOPP	
<b>XIV</b>	Things Change	P.101	AOPP	
<b>A</b>	Welcome Section A	P.3	AWER	
<b>VIII</b>	Don't Do That!	P.64	AWER	

### Respecting Other People's Traditions

The artefact for "Respecting other people's traditions (ROPT)" can be found on pages 80 and 85 of Chapter XI: Special Days. The custom depicts how people spend their time preserving their traditions. Notting Hill Carnival in North London and Highland Games days in Scotland are both celebrated.

### Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products

The artefact for "Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products (AOPCP)" can be found on page 18 of Chapter II: We are new band, and on pages 84 and 85 of chapter XI: Special Days. The illustration in chapter II depicts people showing and playing traditional music, such as Fiedel. Then, the picture in chapter XI depicts people playing traditional music, such as Bagpipe, and young people playing steel band music in Notting Hill Carnival. It means that young and old generations continue to maintain and preserve musical instruments made in their own country as a national product.

### Appreciating Other People's Perspective

The artefact for "Appreciating Other People's Perspective" can be found on pages 8, 20, 34, 77, and 101 of welcome section D, chapter II: we are new band,

Chapter IV: where is the café? chapter X: A Bad Storm's Coming, and chapter XIV: Things Change. The illustration in welcome section D shows that the teacher and students discuss the learning material. The image in chapters II and IV shows a group of students discussing something. The illustration in chapter X shows people discussing something at a Birthday party. The last picture in chapter XVI shows that student expresses their opinions in the classroom.

### **Appreciating Women's Equal Rights**

The artefact for "Appreciating Women's Equal Rights" can be found on pages 3 and 64 of welcome section A and chapter VIII: Don't Do That. The illustration in welcome section A shows two girls dressed in different styles in hijab and not. Then, the image in chapter VIII shows female students wearing hijabs at school in different colors and styles.

Provided the preceding explanation, it can be concluded that all elements of multicultural values are included in this textbook. Appreciating Other People's Perspective is mainly found in English in Mind textbooks. They can be found in four different chapters. They are welcome to section D, chapter II, Chapter IV, chapter X, and chapter XIV. Moreover, this EFL textbook needs to reflect Indonesia's cultural diversity appropriately. Topics such as "Respecting Other People's Traditions" and "Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products" are essential in Indonesia, but they are not adequately covered.

### **Discussion**

The findings above showed the indicators of the instrument related to the multicultural values embodied in the English Textbook "English in Mind" for Junior High School. The results of the goal's analysis have been presented, and a subsequent debate will focus on their repercussions.

This study's visual content was created utilizing Barthes' (1977) aspects of multicultural values to analyze multicultural values in a textbook. There are all elements of multicultural values expressed through images were carried out through the visual semiotic in the textbook. The first is respecting other people's traditions. To increase pupils' awareness to other people traditions through artefacts, it is necessary to stimulate their interest in learning more about a foreign culture, which can be accomplished by directing them to the source of the artefact. The teacher can then ask pupils to identify the variety of traditional carnival

depicted in the photograph or inquire about the physical appearances of groups in images. It is in line with Zhang (2007) that a teacher can assist pupils in improving their ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) by enhancing their ability to comprehend the world through the pursuit and organization of information in order to make sense of evidence pertaining to their own culture as well as cultures from other countries. ICC requires a comprehension of both human differences and similarities (Y. Zhang, 2017). The importance of intercultural education has grown, particularly in plurilingual contexts such as Indonesia, because it helps achieve educational goals (Hapsari, 2021).

The second is Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products. Cultural product can be distinctiveness in a country. Aiello & Cacia (2014) stated that many cultural products require physical manifestation in order to be distributed to publics. It can take the form of musical instruments, food, traditional clothing, and so on. It is in line with Mutiara Ayu (2020) that cultural products are physical representations of cultural aspects, such as historical sites, musical compositions, folktales, books and novels, comic books, and meals. This type of product is comprised of distinctive elements of a community's or an individual's traditionally developed and maintained artistic heritage (Aiello & Cacia, 2014). We can learn about and appreciate other cultures by appreciating their products. The illustration exemplifies AOPCP's multicultural values by representing an act of appreciation for other people's cultural products, in this case, Bigpipe as a cultural product. It is considered a Source Culture due to the fact that the identities of the figures and the ideas shown in the image reflect a particular culture that is indigenous to Scotland.

The third is Appreciating Other People's Perspective. It was represented by students seated in a circle negotiating, which is the ideal style of conversation in which each participant speaks and listens to grasp the ideas of the others. People describe their desires and aspirations pertaining to work, motivations, work relationships, their organization, their community, and so on (Cojocar, 2005). This stage tries to develop a common image of "what they aspire to be" as an idealized depiction via communication. The purpose of communication is to facilitate the exchange of positive emotions and the enjoyment of one another's company, both of which are fulfilled through speaking or playing together (Y. Zhang, 2017). Relationship-building depends heavily on verbal communication. The majority of conversations bridge cultural differences. Each culture has a distinct mode of thought; therefore, understanding the modes of thought of other cultures assists the communicator to achieve effective communication.

The last is Appreciating Women's Equal Rights. Due to space limits and the

global trend of female wearing the hijab, one of the symbolic images representing the values of AWER is an illustration of female students wearing the hijab. According to Benham and Mozaheb (2013), that wearing a hijab is an important component of Muslim adult women's religious identity because it is a requirement in Islam for girls who attain the age of nine or obtain their period to wear a hijab. Hijab also represents Muslim identity because it is an attire established by the Holy Quran and threatened by Indonesian law for adult Muslim women (Isnaini et al., 2019). They also noted that through activities such as problem solving, role-playing, and/or case studies, teachers can lead pupils in examining the differences and similarities between other cultures and countries, which can develop pupils' multicultural awareness and enhance their ICC. It will assist pupils in developing respect for pupils of other religions, and it coincides to the cultural and character education developed by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture. Similarly, Shain (2003) indicated that wearing non-Western clothing to school is a crucial site for Muslim girls' disputes of mainstream school identities, that they achieved by merging Western and Muslim styles to create new ethnicities. However, the textbook only discusses the multicultural value component, which represents the duty of the global community. In accordance with the globalization of the English language, the way culture is taught in EFL/ESL situations has undergone a paradigm shift (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). ELT specialists and English teachers worldwide have welcomed this new paradigm, which theorizes the integration of regional English variations and multicultural elements to improve intercultural communicative skills. This research assessed how multicultural ideas are portrayed in the ELT textbook provided by the government in a country where English is a foreign language. The examined textbook expresses a multicultural viewpoint by accepting and valuing the world's varied customs. It is in line with Labtic & Teo (2020) that the multicultural values of worldwide culture must be included in English textbooks so that pupils can learn about world culture in preparation for interactions with people from every country. Pupils could learn English from international sources as part of cultural representation in English textbooks, so enhancing their language comprehension (Alsaawi, 2021). The cultural content in EFL textbooks is crucial to pupils' mastery of the target language, achievement of cross-cultural communication skills, and development of understanding of connected cultural information and value (Xiong et al., 2022). Hence, the multicultural values included in English textbooks could aid pupils in

mastering the English language and culture.

## Conclusion

The evidence came from how the multicultural values in the English in Mind textbooks backed by the Indonesian government are explained in the findings and discussed. Images showed how multicultural values are lived out. It demonstrates that the official government textbook in a nation where English is considered a foreign language contains some multicultural values to help pupils learn to be more appreciative of other cultures. Using Barthes' four dimensions of multicultural values, this study analyzed the visual contents of the textbook to determine multicultural values.

The values are Respecting Other People's Traditions, Appreciating Women's Equal Rights, Appreciating Other People's Cultural Products, and Appreciating Other People's Perspectives. Appreciating Other People's Perspectives is mainly covered in this textbook. It means the textbook demonstrated freedom to express one's opinion, and the acceptance of differing viewpoints is strongly supported in order to promote multicultural awareness.

The textbook only discusses the multicultural value component, which represents the duty of the global community. ELT specialists and English teachers worldwide have welcomed this new paradigm, which theorizes the integration of regional English variations and multicultural elements to improve intercultural communicative skills. The examined textbook expresses a multicultural viewpoint by accepting and valuing the world's varied customs. Regarding the result of this research, further research is undertaken to identify the approaches, strategies, and procedures for teaching multicultural values to students of varying ages.

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