

Preserving Cultural Identity: The Imperative of Prioritizing Indonesian Character Values in English Textbooks to Safeguard Against Cultural Hegemony in Language Learning

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Abstract:

This article discusses the need to prioritize Indonesian cultural character values in English textbooks as a strategy to maintain cultural identity and counter the hegemony of Western cultural values in language learning in Indonesia. In the context of this research, the phenomenon is based on English textbooks for high school students in grades XI and XII in Indonesia. This research method uses library research. The main instrument of this research is the researcher himself as a "human instrument." The data analysis technique is descriptive qualitative, including data collection, display and discussion, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show the following. Firstly, this study notes several trends that may be troubling, including the lack of representation of local values and the dominance of Western elements. Secondly, the factors causing this slide to involve both external and internal aspects. Externally, relating to the theory that language learning is inseparable from cultural learning provides a foundation for internalizing Western culture in English language learning. Internally, the influence of modernism and the syndrome of being a former Western colony led to an inferiority complex in cultural awareness, reinforcing the adoption of Western cultural values as the inevitable ideal standard. By exploring concrete strategies to promote Indonesian cultural values, this article advocates for a profound change in English teaching approaches to build a sense of identity and cultural diversity amidst the challenges of global values hegemony.

Keywords: preserving cultural identity; prioritizing Indonesian character values; safeguarding against cultural hegemony; English textbooks in language learning

Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape in Indonesia, the acquisition and mastery of English has seen a significant increase (Zacharias, 2010; Manara, 2014); (Sugiharto, 2014; Zein, S., Sukyadi, D., Hamied, F. A., & Lengkanawati, 2020), reflecting a diverse response to global connectedness and the perceived economic benefits associated with English proficiency. The prevalence of English language learning in the archipelago is increasingly evident, as evidenced by the widespread integration of English language education in various educational institutions, ranging from primary schools to tertiary institutions (Zacharias, 2003; Altbach, 2007; Kirkpatrick, A., & Liddicoat, 2017). This increase is partly due to the recognition of English as an essential tool for participating in the global economy, fostering international collaboration, and enhancing academic and professional opportunities (Bui, T. T. N., & Nguyen, 2016; Ortiz-Marcos, I., Breuker, V., Rodríguez-Rivero, R., Kjellgren, B., Dorel, F., Toffolon, M., ... & Eccli, 2020; Liaqat, 2022). Moreover, the government's proactive measures to improve English language proficiency, as seen through policy initiatives and curriculum revisions, underscore the importance of linguistic competence in shaping the nation's educational landscape.

However, along with the growing enthusiasm for English language acquisition comes concerns regarding the unintentional assimilation of Western cultural values into society (Rumbaut, 1999; Dörnyei, Z., & Németh, 2006; Bonnett, 2017), including in Indonesia, potentially posing a threat to the preservation of the identity of indigenous cultural values. This deep concern forms the crux of the imperative to critically examine and redefine the parameters of English language education, ensuring a balance between linguistic proficiency and the preservation of rich cultural heritage



values (Nieto, 2001; Baker, 2011; Byrd, D. R., Hlas, A. C., Watzke, J., & Valencia, 2011; Leung, C., Davison, C., & Mohan, 2014).

Within the dynamic framework of Indonesia's evolving linguistic pedagogy, there is a palpable concern characterized by growing worries around the latent implications of cultural hegemony within the field of language education. As English language proficiency increases in various fields of education, there is an underlying concern in scholarly discourse and policy-making centered on the unintentional spread of Western cultural values (Ricento, T. K., & Hornberger, 1996; Ding, S., & Saunders, 2006). This concern is based on recognising that language is an elaborate container for transmitting cultural nuances, societal norms, and ideologically based paradigms (Blommaert, 1999; Coupland, N., & Jaworski, 2004; De Costa, 2016).

Ideology plays an important role in perpetuating ideas about culture, nationalism, and identity, which can be constructed through language materials, including those in English as a Foreign Language textbooks (Pavlenko, 2003; Shah, S. W. A., & Pathan, 2016; Babaii, E., & Sheikhi, 2018). Language materials are often used to perpetuate certain ideologies related to self-perception, cultural identity, ethnicity, and nationalism. Embedding ideologies in ELT textbooks can influence how learners perceive themselves and others about culture and identity (Shin, J., Eslami, Z. R., & Chen, 2011; Weninger, C., & Kiss, 2015). Representations of cultural values, norms, and beliefs in linguistic materials often reflect certain ideological messages, which can negatively impact learners' sense of cultural diversity, national identity, and their place in the global context (Lee, J. S., & Anderson, 2009; Xu, 2013).

Many studies have shown that language textbooks can be deliberately exploited to reinforce dominant cultural ideologies, thus shaping learners' perspectives on cultural issues. A few of them are as follows: Xiong, T., & Qian (2012), through their research, entitled "Ideologies of English in a Chinese High School EFL textbook: A Critical Discourse Analysis," criticises the concern of how Western Anglo-centric language ideologies are very hegemonic, and even assumed as a treasure of "neutrality" in sociolinguistics. Li (2016) also conducted a study to examine the cultural values conveyed through texts and illustrations in EFL textbooks in China. The results showed that many Western cultural values in the textbooks reflected the editors' and writers' intention to implement them in English language teaching for Chinese learners. Likewise, juga Ait Aissa, M., & Chami (2020) conducted a micro-analysis of cultural topics in Algerian English foreign language textbooks designed for third-year secondary school students, showing Western culture's dominance over the target culture.

Then Köksal, D., & Ulum (2021), through a study entitled "Analysis of cultural hegemony in Touchstone EFL coursebook series," showed that the hegemony of the inner circle (English) is very dominant in the textbooks analysed. Most users of these textbooks want to see the target culture (English) to learn English better. Likewise, Aoumeur, H., & Ziani (2022) conducted a study entitled "Representation of Culture in EFL Textbooks: A Linguistic and Content Analysis of My Book of English", published in *Arab World English Journal*, 13(2), 282-296. The findings show the hegemony of Western values over Algerian cultural values, which is a former French colony.

Likewise, in the Indonesian context, there are similar studies, including those conducted by Yusny (2013), titled "ELT in Indonesian context: Issues and challenges." The results of this study concluded that ELT is a form of Linguistic Imperialism that needs to be considered and anticipated in the practice of ELT in Indonesia. Likewise, through research entitled "Neoliberal Ideology, Faith-Based Higher Education Institutions, and English in Indonesia: Negotiating English Teachers' Ideological Formation", Muhalim (2023) concluded that there is ongoing involvement of neoliberal ideology in higher education institutions in Indonesia, especially through the medium of English language learning.

Therefore, in the context of linguistic metamorphosis in Indonesia, the adoption of English into the educational curriculum, it is imperative to conduct an introspective study of its possible impact: the violation of Western cultural hegemony. For a long time, academics and educators alike have grappled with the complex interrelationship between language acquisition and the unintentional spread of foreign cultural teachings (Kearney, 2015; Garrett-Rucks, 2016), as they realise that unchecked linguistic assimilation is dangerous because it can trigger the weakening of a nation's original cultural values order (Thomason, 2015; Phillipson, 2006). This growing concern underscores the importance of recalibrating the language education paradigm, striking a balance between linguistic competence and preservation of cultural value identity (Kohler, 2020; Lau, S. M.

C., & Van Viegen, 2020), to thwart the dangerous intrusion of cultural (Alford, J., & Kettle, 2020; Fadda, S., & Rezzónico, 2021).

In the complex linguistic and educational landscape in Indonesia, where sharp concerns have crystallised (Chen, 2020; Babaii, 2022; Biswas, 2022) hint at the need for a careful examination of the discourse surrounding the hegemony of Western cultural values embedded in English language learning content. This concern arises from the fact, as asserted by Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino (2013), that language acquisition is essentially a cultural endeavour beyond mere linguistic proficiency to include the assimilation of cultural dimensions.

The educational environment, guided by the necessity of linguistic competence, finds itself at a crossroads where the unintentional spread of foreign cultural paradigms may exacerbate existing disparities (Albury, 2015). This concern is based on the profound realisation that language learning is a profound journey linked to cultural narratives (Kearney, 2010), and negligence in recognising cultural grounding risks perpetuating hegemonic discourses of foreign cultures that overshadow the rich indigenous cultural heritage of a nation (Ennaji, 2005; Macedo, 2019), including Indonesia. In line with the perspectives of Dewey (2012); Hall, G., & Cook (2012); and W. Baker (2015), as the relationship between language culture becomes increasingly prominent, a careful reassessment of English language learning methodologies becomes necessary, to bridge the existing gap and mitigate the adverse impact of cultural hegemony, ensuring a symbiotic relationship between linguistic proficiency and the preservation of a nation's cultural values.

In the complexity of Indonesian linguistic pedagogy, there is also a real gap in the form of a deep concern, where the hegemony of Western cultural values permeates English language learning materials, thus creating a confusing dissonance with the values embedded in the Indonesian cultural environment (Kustati, M., Deswila, N., Besral, B., & Zulfikar, 2023). This concern arises from the realisation that language learning is fundamentally linked to the cultural dimension, and the unintentional assimilation of foreign cultural paradigms poses a major challenge to preserving the identity of Indonesian cultural values.

A real concern arises when educational materials designed to facilitate linguistic proficiency unwittingly become conduits for disseminating Western cultural narratives that may not be aligned with Indonesia's socio-cultural fabric. This can be seen, for example, in existing English textbooks that often emphasise presenting various Western cultural treasures rather than those of Indonesian origin (Albantani, A. M., & Madkur, 2018; Widodo, 2018). Similarly, promoting certain practices, values or historical perspectives inherent to Western societies may inadvertently obscure or marginalise the rich narrative of Indonesian cultural values.

This dissonance, while not malicious, underscores the urgent need for recalibration in the formulation of English language learning content, earnestly aligning with indigenous cultural values to ensure a harmonious synergy between linguistic proficiency and cultural preservation (Cordella, M., & Huang, 2016; Bharadwaj, 2024). As Indonesia faces the complex intersection of global education and the importance of preserving its cultural identity, a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach to English language learning materials emerges as an indispensable condition for the holistic development of its linguistic and cultural landscape.

Hence, the fundamental thrust of this scholarly discourse lies in the necessity of attention and/or careful examination of the intersecting fields of linguistic pedagogy and cultural preservation within the Indonesian educational paradigm. The main objective of this article is to critically explain the importance of a paradigmatic shift in English language education, which emphasises the importance of prioritising Indonesian character values in the content of textbooks. At the heart of this academic enquiry lies the recognition that language, as a channel of cultural transmission, plays an indelible role in shaping people's values, norms and identities (Wang, 2004; Paffey, 2012). As English language learning develops in Indonesia, the relationship between linguistic proficiency and cultural preservation becomes increasingly prominent. This discourse explanation provides a comprehensive understanding of the symbiotic relationship between language acquisition and the preservation of indigenous character values, thus illustrating a scholarly trajectory towards recalibrating pedagogical methodologies.

Based on these points of thought, this research is focused on two issues: to reveal the representation of the hegemony of Western cultural values in the English textbook and 2) Finding the genealogical roots of the hegemony of Western cultural values as intended. This article seeks to illuminate the transformative potential inherent in prioritising Indonesian character values through

an in-depth exploration of the lacunae in English textbooks and earnest advocacy for a more culturally aligned curriculum. The importance of this academic endeavour transcends the boundaries of linguistic competence and has wider implications for Indonesia's cultural resilience and national identity in the evolving contours of global education.

Method

This qualitative study uses the library research method (Lapan, Stephen D., MaryLynn T. Quartaroli, 2011) using the library research method. Library research is the process of finding, evaluating and using information from various sources, such as books, journals, databases, websites and more (Rumsey, 2008; Connaway, L. S., & Radford, 2021). The data sources of this research are several English textbooks in Indonesia for SMA, MA/SMK/MAK Class XI by Bashir (2017) and class XII by (Widiati, U., Rohmah, Z., & Furaidah, 2017), published by the Centre for Curriculum and Bookkeeping, Balitbang, Ministry of Education and Culture. The main instrument of this research is the researcher himself as a "human instrument" (Brown, 2007:71; Yanow, 2015). The data analysis technique is a descriptive qualitative model of Miles, M.B.A., Huberman, M. & Saldaña (2013), which includes activities: data collection, display and discussion, and conclusion drawing.

Result and Discussion

1. Hegemonic Representation of Western Cultural Values in English Language Textbooks

Regarding the issue of hegemonic representation of Western cultural values in EFL textbooks for Senior High School Class XI and XII, based on the available data, it can be conveyed in the form of discourse, both in the form of text and illustrative images, which are used to convey the material content in the textbooks. In another expression, a lot of material content in the domain of language learning in the textbook is expressed by using references from Western cultural settings, even though the material is neutral, for example, related to the ability to teach writing and understanding certain readings. This means that if the disclosure or representation is done by using cultural settings from any place in various parts of the world, including Indonesia, then it will not affect the quality of achieving the substance of the competencies to be taught in the textbook.

The phenomenon, whether consciously or not, seems to have a kind of hidden and often ideological affirmation, namely, there is a kind of belief and obsession, namely that everything that smells and comes from the West, both at the level of the ideofact, sociofact, and artifact system, is interpreted and considered as something better and valuable, considered better when compared to that which comes from within the Indonesian culture on the other hand. This is known as the concept of "Western syndrome" (Dulac, 2001; Pavone, P., Polizzi, A., Marino, S. D., Corsello, G., Falsaperla, R., Marino, S., & Ruggieri, 2020).

The concept of cultural values philosophically forms a society's moral and ethical basis (Haidt, J., 2004; Masolo, 2004). These values reflect the beliefs, norms and principles individuals and groups hold within a culture. Cultural values in a society are often influenced by various variables, including natural conditions, history, religion, politics, social, economic, and so on (Inglehart, R., & Baker, 2000). Natural conditions, for example, can also influence cultural values in diverse ways. Likewise, historical factors, in line with the views of Inglehart, R., & Baker (2000) and Schwartz (2013), also play an important role in the formation of a nation's cultural values. For example, a nation's historical experience of colonisation or war can shape values such as patriotism and nationalism. Cultural values result from a complex interaction between various social variables. They reflect collective identity and beliefs and play a role in shaping patterns of behaviour and interaction between individuals in that society.

Cultural values in society create and shape distinctive characteristics in individuals and groups and become a direction and guide in living life (Agha, 2003; S. Schwartz, 2006). Therefore, the discourse on cultural values in society also often intersects with ideology (Bucholtz, M., & Hall, 2010), the moral and ethical foundation guiding daily actions and interactions. They play an important role in shaping the mindsets, attitudes and behaviours of individuals in society (Homer-Dixon, T., Maynard, J. L., Mildenerger, M., Milkoreit, M., Mock, S. J., Quilley, S., ... & Thagard, 2013).

The concept of the relationship between values and ideology involves understanding how cultural values become the basis or foundation for the formation of a society's ideology (Freeden, 2003). Cultural values refer to the beliefs, norms, and principles held by individuals and groups within a culture (Ives, C. D., & Kidwell, 2019). Meanwhile, ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs or views that form a larger framework or system of thought (Freeden, 2003), which can influence the way

individuals and societies understand and organise the world around them mereka (Homer-Dixon, T., Maynard, J. L., Mildenberger, M., Milkoreit, M., Mock, S. J., Quilley, S., ... & Thagard, 2013; Van Dijk, 2013).

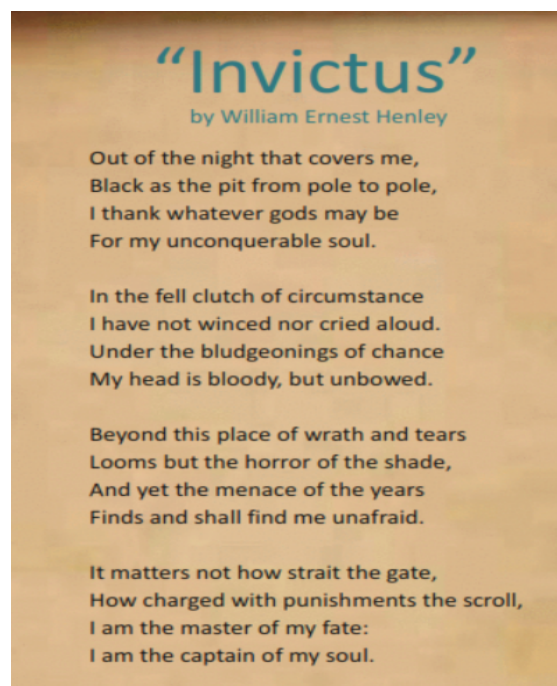
Cultural values are often a major component in the formation of ideologies. Ideologies tend to reflect and reinforce existing cultural values in society, and provide structure and direction for interpreting those values in a broader context. However, ideologies can interpret cultural values differently or manipulate them to achieve certain political or social goals. Thus, the relationship between values and ideology is complex and interrelated. In line with Rohan, M. J., & Zanna (2001) and Van Dijk (2001) views, cultural values provide the foundation for forming ideologies, while ideologies can also influence how these values are interpreted and applied in society.

In the context of this research discourse, the difference in cultural values is mainly contextualised between Indonesia, which is part of the entities that exist in Eastern culture, and foreign or other cultural entities, especially the West (both in the sense of mainly Europe and America), which is the origin where English exists. The differences in cultural values between the West and the East form different orientations of knowledge and consciousness in their societies. This difference affects how people in these two cultures perceive and treat themselves, as well as how they interact with others and the world around them. However, it is important to note that the differences between the West and the East are not absolute and that there are nuances and variations within them, as well as cultural shifts that occur over time and globalisation.

The available data related to the subject matter of the hegemonic representation of Western values in Indonesian high school textbooks is shown in Figures 1 to 10.

Figure 1.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Poem by William Ernest Henley, entitled "Invictus"



(Source: Bashir, 2017:93)

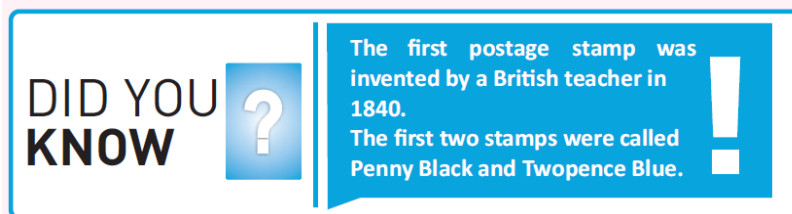
The data in Figure 1 presents content material about poetry, which is used as text input to train reading skills. The poem *Invictus* is one of the input texts in Chapter 7 of this grade XI English textbook. Similar to the poetry or song texts presented in this chapter, it is a text input used to train the skills of understanding the text's main idea and overall meaning. The poem featured is by William Ernest Henley, entitled "*Invictus*". William Ernest Henley (23 August 1849 - 11 July 1903), was an English poet, writer, and critic. He is best known for his poem "*Invictus*," written in 1875 (Atkinson, 2016). This poem became famous and is often quoted because it expresses passion and determination in the face of trials and tribulations.

Figure 2 is one of the representations of English learning content about additional information on knowledge treasures to introduce Western culture, namely by presenting the history of the

invention of stamps in the West, precisely in England in 1840, known as "Penny Black" and "Twopence Blue" (Gray, 2023). In 1837, Sir Rowland Hill, a British postal reformer, proposed introducing a prepaid stamp system. The concept involved using stamps as a payment token for postage, which would be affixed to letters before they were sent. On 6 May 1840, the prepaid stamp system was introduced in the UK, and the first stamp issued was the "Penny Black." This stamp was worth one "penny" and featured a portrait of Queen Victoria (Golden, 2012).

Figure 2.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on History of the Invention of Stamps in Britain

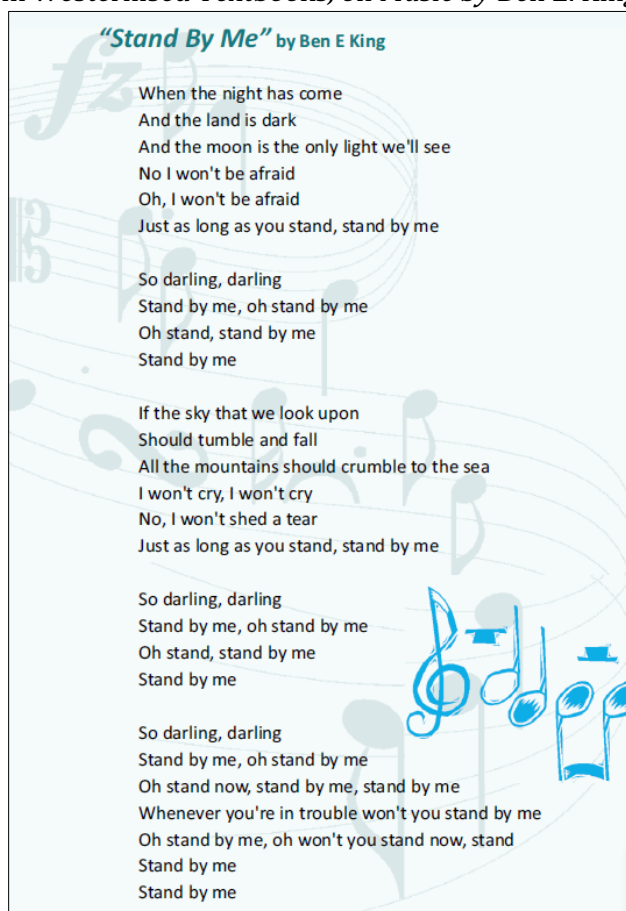


(Source: Bashir, 2017:72)

Figure 3 shows the information content in a Westernised textbook about Ben E. King's song "Stand by Me". Ben E. King was an American singer, songwriter and record producer. He was born on 28 September 1938, in Henderson, North Carolina, and died on 30 April 2015, in Hackensack, New Jersey. The song "Stand by Me" was released in 1961, and became a landmark classic in popular music of its day (Akella, 2020). The lyrics reflect themes of loyalty and support in relationships. The song has been immortalised in numerous films, adverts, and television shows and earned awards and acclaim throughout the decades. The lyric of Stand by Me is the opening text for Chapter 7, which is themed Meaning through Music. The song was used as a text input to practice guessing the meaning based on the context of the reading.

Figure 3.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Music by Ben E. King Titled "Stand by Me,"



(Source: Bashir, 2017:87)

Figure 4.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Classic Short Story with Title "Last Leaf"

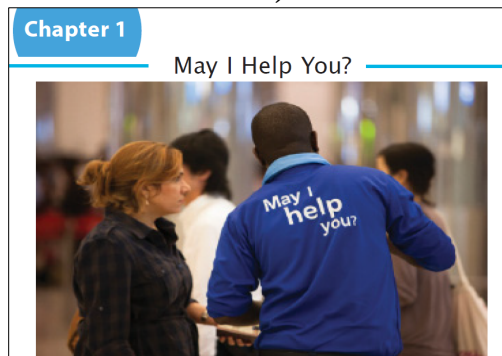
<p style="text-align: center;">The Last Leaf</p> <p>Many artists lived in Greenwich Village in New York City. Sue and Johnsy, two artists, also lived there in a studio apartment. Their rooms were at the top of an old building in Greenwich Village.</p> <p>In November, it was very cold and with it a cold unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked the city, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. The icy fingers of Pneumonia also touched Johnsy. She was very ill, lying in her bed and not moving at all. A doctor visited her every day but Johnsy was not getting better. One morning, the doctor spoke to Sue outside Johnsy's room.</p> <p>"I can't help her," the doctor said. "She is very sad and has no desire to live. Someone must make her happy again. What is she interested in?"</p> <p>"She is an artist," Sue replied. "She wants to paint a picture of Bay of Naples."</p> <p>"Painting!" said the doctor. "That won't help her!"</p> <p>Sue was distressed by this news and didn't know what to do to help Johnsy. She went into the workroom and cried and then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime. Johnsy lay silently in her bed with her face towards the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking Johnsy was asleep.</p> <p>Sue arranged her board and began drawing to illustrate a magazine story. As Sue was sketching a figure of a hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.</p> <p>Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting—counting backwards.</p> <p>"Twelve," she said, and a little later "eleven"; and then "ten," and "nine"; and then "eight" and "seven", almost together.</p> <p>Sue looked out of the window wondering what was there to count. There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house</p>	<p>twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.</p> <p>"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.</p> <p>"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. My head ached when I was counting them but now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."</p> <p>"Five what, dear? Tell me."</p> <p>"Leaves on the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"</p> <p>"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'till I come back."</p> <p>Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor of the same building. He was sixty years old and had always dreamed of painting a masterpiece, but unfortunately till now he was not able to fulfill his dream. Sue found Behrman in his dimly lighted apartment sitting in his chair. She told him of Johnsy's condition. Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.</p> <p>Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window sill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning, she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.</p> <p>"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper. Wearily Sue obeyed.</p> <p>"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time."</p> <p>"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow. "think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?" But Johnsy did not answer. The leaf stayed on the vine all day. That night, there was more wind and rain. When it was light enough, Johnsy commanded that the shade be raised. The ivy leaf was still there.</p> <p>"I've been a foolish girl, Sue," said Johnsy. "I wanted to die but the last leaf stayed on the vine to teach me a lesson. Please bring me some soup now." "You know Sue, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."</p>
<p>The doctor visited the girls in the afternoon. "Take good care of your friend," he said. "She is going to get well. Now I have to go downstairs. I have to visit Mr. Behrman. He has pneumonia too. I must send him to the hospital."</p> <p>The next day, the doctor said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now - that's all." And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a woolen shoulder scarf. "I have something to tell you, dear," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colors mixed on it, and - look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece - he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."</p> <p><i>(Adapted from The Last Leaf by O. Henry, 1907)</i></p>	

(Source: Bashir, 2017:154-156)

Figure 4 presents one of the classic short stories titled "Last Leaf" by American writer O. Henry, whose real name is William Sydney Porter. It was first published in 1907 (Ravanes, D. R. A., Flores, S. L. V., Dingal, D. S., & Diones, 2022). This title text is the opening text of Unit 6 of the English book for grade XI. This text is the input or main text to practice understanding detailed information from reading. "Last Leaf" tells a story in Greenwich Village, New York, full of emotional and aesthetic elements. "Last Leaf" depicts themes of friendship, sacrifice, and the meaning of life and explores the concept that one person's simple actions can have a profound impact on the lives of others (Mehdi, M., & Zahra, 2020).

Figure 5.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Places with Western Settings and People



(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:1)

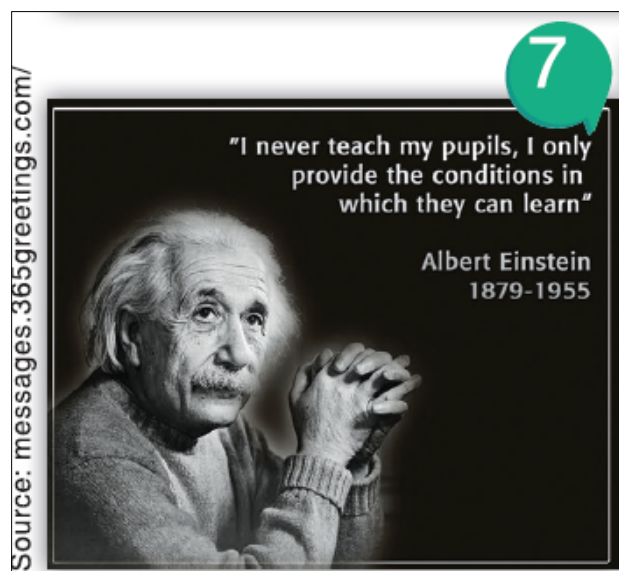
Figure 6.
Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Place in Seattle, United States of America.



(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:15)

Likewise, the presentation of material in the form of illustrations in Figure 6 above also uses the setting of a place in the West, especially the United States, as a Seattle city. This picture is the opening illustration for unit 2 of the English textbook for class XII as well as an illustration to convey the purpose of the main theme or learning objectives of the chapter, which is related to applying social functions and composing oral and written transactional interaction texts related to the act of giving and requesting information related to suppositions followed by commands or suggestions with social functions, text structures, and correct linguistic structures according to context.

Figure 7.
Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Quotations on Values Important for Life Learning



(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:33)

The landscape presented in Figure 7 above also confirms the same issue, namely the existence of Western hegemony about presenting materials to support learning in this book. This image is one of the main text inputs used in the learning activities in unit 3 of the English textbook for class XII with the theme Caption. In this context, the source is a quote from Albert Einstein. The short quote reads, "I never teach pupils; I only provide the conditions in which they can learn". This phrase reflects an educational philosophy that emphasises the role of the teacher as a facilitator or provider

of conditions that support the learning process, not just a teacher who passively provides information to students (Hayes, 2007).

Figure 8.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Interview Applying for a Job

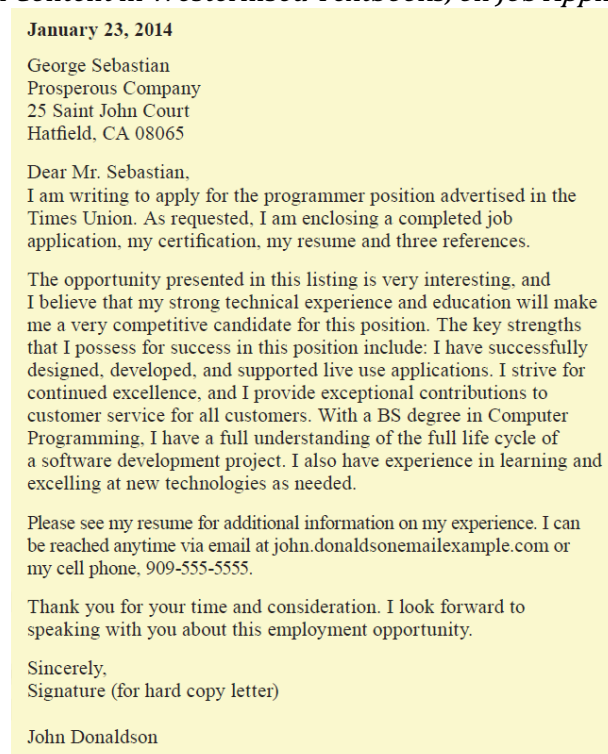


(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:43)

Similarly, the representation of the material in Figure 8 above confirms the same issue. This picture is the opening illustration for Unit 4 of Class XII's English textbook. It is an illustration used to introduce the main topic as well as the learning objectives of the unit, which is about distinguishing social functions and capturing meaning contextually related to social, text structure, and linguistic elements of special texts in the form of job application letters that provide information related to identity and educational background/work experience.

Figure 9.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Job Application Letter.



(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:57)


Figure 9 above is an example of learning material in an English textbook about the content of a letter to apply for a job. The letter was sent by John Donaldson from Hatfield, CA, in California, Klamath, Oregon, in the United States. This picture shows an example of a job application letter used as text input for learning activities to train students' reading skills related to the social function and text structure of job application letters in unit 4 in the English textbook for grade XII.

Figure 10.

Information Content in Westernised Textbooks, on Humber Bridge, The Oldest Suspension Bridge on the River Humber in North East England.

Text 1

Since 1981, the Humber Bridge in England has been the world's longest-span (1,410 meters) bridge. Like most other long-span bridges, it is a suspension bridge. In a suspension bridge, the bridge deck hangs, or is suspended, from thick steel cables. They are made of tens of thousands of kilometers of thin steel wires bound together.



The cables go up and over tall towers on either side of the gap to be spanned. They are anchored firmly at each end. In the largest suspension bridges, the towers have to be built slightly out of parallel to allow for the curve of the Earth!

(Source: Children's First Cyclopedia, compiled by M. Dempsey)

(Source: Widiati, Rohmah, Furaidah, 2018:64).

The next presentation of Information Content in Western Image Textbooks is shown in Figure 10 above. This image is an illustration of input text 1 in unit 5, a reading text with the theme of the Humber Bridge. This text is the main input for learning activities to practice students' reading-aloud and pronunciation skills. "Humber Bridge", is a suspension bridge that crosses the Humber River in northeastern England (Harrison, 2004). This bridge connects the city of Kingston upon Hull in East Yorkshire with Barton-upon-Humber in Lincolnshire (Martin, 2014), it was inaugurated on 24 June 1981, and was one of the longest suspension bridges in the world at that time (Cocksedge, C. P. E., Bulmer, M. J., Hill, P. G., & Cooper, 2011).

Based on these data, it can be said that there is a need for a balance between preserving national cultural values and embracing global cultural and social realities. However, existing data shows how these textbooks represent Western cultural values, especially from Europe and America. As the data in this textbook suggests, it tends to overemphasize sources of Western culture, potentially limiting students' exposure to more diverse cultural representations. With another similar expression, based on the analysis of the structures and symbolic forms in the text, it shows that the content of the book is primarily centred on source culture or Western culture, which reveals the author's intention to build a form of construction of uniformity of Western cultural values as an ideal standard of world culture, for learners in a collective identity that is quite hegemonic.

It cannot be denied how the existence of English textbooks plays a very significant and vital role in internationalization and globalization. Still, excessive emphasis on the source culture can limit students' exposure to understanding the diversity of existing cultural representations. Therefore, what needs to be underlined is the importance of presenting the complexity of cultural values in balancing traditional cultural values with the need for openness to global perspectives in EFL material on future occasions.

An in-depth analysis of teaching materials reveals the dominant presence of Western cultural values, which is unbalanced compared to Indonesian culture. Therefore, there is an imbalance in the representation of culture in teaching materials, giving rise to a fundamental inequality in the influence of culture in the context of English education in Indonesia. This phenomenon indicates the need for adaptation and adjustment in the curriculum to ensure that textbooks reflect cultural diversity and uphold local character values. This research critically evaluates these examples and raises essential questions regarding cultural appropriateness in English education, encouraging

readers to reflect on the potential impact and formulate more inclusive and harmonious solutions for future curriculum development.

Identifying significant gaps highlights the lack of representation of Indonesian character values in current English textbooks. This creates a substantial imbalance in cultural influence, with the risk of shifting the focus to local cultural heritage. In addition, the lack of integration between English learning content and Indonesian socio-cultural realities is an important finding, indicating the need for better alignment between the curriculum and students' daily lives. These findings encourage formulating more effective and inclusive strategies for improving teaching materials and learning methods. By detailing these gaps, this research summarizes the crucial challenges that must be overcome to create a more dynamic, relevant and engaging approach to English education. In deep reflection on these results, this article seeks to provide constructive direction for future curriculum development that is more in line with contemporary Indonesia's cultural characteristics and needs.

2. Factors or Genealogical Roots of the Hegemony of Western Cultural Values in English Textbooks

The issue of hegemony in the representation of Western cultural values in English textbooks in Indonesia involves complex factors, both external and internal. Externally, this hegemony is related to the theory that language learning cannot be separated from cultural learning. In this context, learning English can lead to Western culture's internalisation because the language reflects the culture used. Apart from that, the influence of modernism also plays a role, where the West is often seen as a symbol of progress for all nations.

Meanwhile, this problem is internally related to the syndrome of being a former Western colony, which experiences an inferiority complex in its cultural awareness. In the Indonesian context, the influence of Western colonialism in the past can increase self-distrust towards local cultural values and give rise to a tendency to adopt Western cultural values as idolized standards. This combination of external and internal factors strengthens the dominance of Western cultural values in English textbooks, giving rise to concerns about the loss of local cultural identity and making Western culture a norm that is followed automatically.

Therefore, real efforts are needed to balance Western cultural representations with an emphasis on local Indonesian cultural values in language learning, which is crucial in strengthening cultural identity and protecting the nation's cultural heritage. In other words, this phenomenon is not something natural or natural but rather a cultural engineering.

Cultural engineering, as referred to, is primarily related to constructing the hegemonic truth of Western knowledge in the modern world. As is known, modern nature is an era which is a symbol of the victory of Western civilization, especially one based on rationalism (Chong, 2005:8; Wiessala, 2011:78), which produces various advances in science and technology, so that everything that comes from the West, is always considered to be better, so that the West becomes a centre of cultural model for the universe of world civilization (Stauffer, 2018:2; Dutkiewicz, P., Casier, T., & Scholte, 2020). In fact, from here, a widespread understanding developed in society that when the term modernization is mentioned, it is often identified with westernization or Westernization (Shiva, 2000:198; Bošković, 2022:149). In this context, it can then be understood that there is a dialectical quality of unequal cultures between nations, where the West becomes very superior (Albrow, M., & King, 1990:200; Tang, 2016:27), in front of other nations in all parts of the world.

This problem is even further aggravated when it is contextualized, especially with Eastern nations, including Indonesia, which, for the most part, has a historical history as a Western colonial nation, in the past for a very long time. The asymmetrical relationship between the colonizing nation and the colonial victims has resulted in a complex social hierarchical structure between one party, the colonizer as the master, while on the other side, the colonized nation as the slave. The colonial phenomenon that occurred over a very long stretch of space and time, even reaching hundreds of years in the past, has given rise to a form of personality model that is inferior, especially that experienced by almost all former colonial nations (Marsh, J. S., & Hodgins, 1998:199; Moraru, C., Terian, A., & Matei, 2021:151), even though they have entered the realm of independence. This phenomenon was termed by Edward W. Said (1979) as colonialism in the era after colonialism or known as "postcolonial".

However, what needs to be emphasized and paid attention to is that neocolonialism in the postcolonial era does not use coercive methods and power at all (Mir, R., Bobby Banerjee, S., & Mir,

2008) as in the classic era of colonization. Physical in the past. But rather through persuasive methods, especially through all cultural institutional systems (Gilbert & Tompkins, 2002:276). In practice, neocolonialism is carried out by influencing the mental realm of people's consciousness through the determination of the ideological cultural apparatus, especially the language system including language course (Bush, 2006:50-52), including through advertising in the mass media of course (Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, 2006; Huggan, 2002; Tadjewski, M., Higgins, M., Denegri-Knott, J., & Varman, 2018). From a cultural perspective, this problem is often termed a colonial mentality symptom (Decena, 2014; Rafael, 2015).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the issue of the hegemonic representation of Western cultural values in English textbooks for High School Classes XI and XII in Indonesia gives rise to an understanding of the complex domination of the content of learning materials. Even though the material presented is neutral and not tied to a particular cultural setting, the use of references from Western culture in the form of text or graphic illustrations is common practice. However, the use of Western cultural references should not be considered the only valid option, considering that language learning materials can be delivered with cultural references from various parts of the world, including Indonesia, without sacrificing the quality of the substance of the competencies being taught. The factors that cause this hegemony involve external and internal aspects.

Externally, the theory that language learning is inseparable from cultural learning provides a basis for the internalization of Western culture in English language learning. The influence of modernism also strengthens the position of the West as a symbol of progress. At the same time, internally, the syndrome of being a former Western colony causes an inferiority complex in cultural consciousness, strengthening the adoption of Western cultural values as the standard to be idolized.

Therefore, the recommendations put forward include diversifying cultural references in textbooks, emphasizing local Indonesian cultural values in language learning, and strengthening awareness of cultural identity and appreciation for the nation's cultural heritage. These steps are expected to reduce the influence of Western cultural hegemony and strengthen local Indonesian cultural identity in the context of English language learning in Indonesia in the future. By aligning language learning with cultural identity, Indonesia can build a generation rich in local knowledge, respectful of differences, and ready to interact productively on the global stage.

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