

The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools

^{1,2}Seth Soy, ¹Safnil, ¹Syafryadin*

¹Postgraduate Program of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

²Techo Hun Sen Kalaom Phluk High School, Cambodia

***Corresponding Author**

Email: syafryadin@unib.ac.id

Received:
04 June 2022

Revised:
08 January 2023

Accepted:
01 February 2023

Published:
28 February 2023

Abstract

It is generally recognized that the representation of foreign culture in textbooks is pivotal for effective language learning, and successful cross-cultural communication. With this regard, the present study investigates the representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. The current study employs content analysis (CA) approach to analyze three English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. Three different frameworks were used as the checklists. To investigate how foreign culture is introduced, and the proportion of subcategories in culture introduction, the framework of Zu and Kong (2009) was employed. The researchers also used the framework of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) to see the percentage of the target culture and international culture within the cultural categories. The last framework is the one proposed by Yuen (2011), which was applied to measure the distribution of cultural elements. The findings show that all two approaches to culture introduction namely direct and indirect introduction are included, but the direct introduction is predominant (61%). For the direct introduction, among four subcategories, the highest proportion is on Texts Depicting Cultural Events (51%) followed respectively by Situational Dialogues (30%), Words Accompanied by Pictures (14%), and Cultural Notes (5%). For the indirect introduction, between two subcategories, Cognitive Approach (80%) is dominant over Behavioural and Affective Approach (20%). Furthermore, regardless of source culture, target culture (66%) covers predominantly in the textbooks compared to international culture (34%). Related to cultural elements, Products account for 74% followed by Practices 13%, Persons 12%, and Perspectives 1%. The results suggest that textbook developers should consider the appropriate proportion of these cultural components, and English teachers should exploit the importance of these cultural contents in their teaching.

Keywords: Culture Introduction; Cultural Categories; Cultural Elements; Source Culture; Target Culture; International Culture

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafryadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

INTRODUCTION

After the civil war ended in 1993, English has increasingly gained importance in Cambodia due to its multifaceted benefits. First, English is necessary for educational aspiration because it is a gateway to provide learners with the potential to win an oversea scholarship, reach grade promotion, access higher education, and join national or international events. English also helps researchers conduct research easily thanks to technological advancement. Second, English is not only crucial in the academic journey but also pivotal in the profession. For instance, English offers Cambodians a chance to get high-income jobs through being employed by NGOs or international organizations, and to obtain career advancement. Third, people can take many advantages of English for everyday amusement as they can enjoy television or radio programs, and books in English (Mao, 2014). Besides in schools and workplaces, English is preferred by Cambodian youths in their everyday connection such as sending instant messages or emails (Narith, 2008). Given its necessity, English is introduced formally in the national curriculum since primary school, specifically from fourth grade onward (see Mao, 2014). In addition to public schools, English private tutoring also becomes popular in Cambodia (Soeung et al., 2019).

Despite the fact that English instruction in Cambodia gains much attention, several challenges in teaching and learning have been reported. Although English is introduced early, teachers of English at the primary level lack proper training (see Mao, 2014). Similarly, teachers of English in lower secondary schools seem to have problems in planning lessons efficiently, and teaching the four-macro skills communicatively (Vira, 2002). Furthermore, the shortage of competent English curriculum and materials developers is another challenge for Cambodia. Consequently, learning materials somehow fail to facilitate learners' needs. Moreover, poor educational institution setting including insufficiency of equipment or relaxed classrooms, too large class sizes, mixed-ability classes, and learners' shortage of inspiration impede English teaching and learning quality (Mao, 2014; Hasanah & Utami, 2019). The negative learning attitude of students is also a key issue in learning English in addition to inspiration (Phon, 2017). Additionally, it is difficult for teachers to balance standard English teaching in Cambodia as there are new diversities of English to consider while they have to ensure that learners possess a wide range of English competence. For instance, teaching English as a foreign language focuses mainly on four macro-skills whereas teaching English as an international language does not only focus on skills but also demands independent learning, multilingual proficiency, and cultural awareness (Moore & Bounchan, 2010).

It is widely recognized that cultural awareness brings success in terms of English instruction and cross-cultural communication. There is a correlation between cultures and linguistics, so they cannot be isolated as teaching or learning language means teaching or learning culture (Purba, 2011; Syaputri et al., 2021). In addition, cultural depiction in the universal scope is useful as it strengthens students' sociocultural knowledge, positive perspectives, and universal citizenship (Davidson & Liu, 2020). Mastering linguistic components without cultural knowledge may not ensure the possibility of communication (Purba, 2011; Syaputri et al., 2021). The mistakes of non-native English

speakers in grammar or phonology when contacting indigenous people might be acceptable; however, there might be intolerance in terms of cultural errors which can cause major issues impeding successful communication (Ahmed et al., 2019). Communication without understanding cultural matters leads to unintentional humour or cultural violation that contributes to misinterpretation and confusion (Chlopek, 2008). Therefore, today's language education is switching its goal by changing the focus from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence (Ghavamnia, 2020). Emmitt & Komesaroff (in Soomro et al., 2015) added that to reach this language teaching and learning goal, students should expose to collaborative or communicative learning activities. Likewise, texts involving cultural awareness have to be included in order to help students use the target language competently. Abusyairi (as cited in Syaputri et al., 2021) argued that by focusing on cultural components in teaching, learners can communicate by using language patterns. Through English cultural comprehension, learners are going to learn listening and reading texts better. In addition, Hinkel (2014) asserted that all language skills are learned effectively if teaching considers the inseparable interrelation between culture and language utilization as the major criteria.

After acknowledging the significance of culture in English education above, it can be inferred that cultural elements within learning materials really matter. It is undeniable that the varieties of culture in the material make the material itself more effective. Better materials facilitate teaching and learning conditions efficiently (Pardo & Téllez, 2009). Cortazzi and Jin (as cited in Aliakbari, 2004) claimed that among the materials, textbooks function mainly as an instructor, a coach, an authority, a map, a deskilled tool, a resource, and an ideology. Language instructors as well as students should be given a systematic and in-depth understanding of cultural perceptions through textbooks because textbooks direct language educators to reach the goal. Therefore, developers of English textbooks have to consider culture inclusion within those books (Zu, & Kong, 2009).

Previous studies conducted in different countries have investigated the cultural representation in English textbooks, such as in Vietnam by Chinh, (2013), in Thailand by Saemee & Nomnian, (2021), and in Saudi Arabia by Alshenqeeti, (2019). On the other hand, the study on cultural representation in English textbooks used in Cambodia is rarely conducted. The past study has explored the identity choices and cultural depictions in English textbooks utilized in Cambodia (e.g., Li et al., 2019). The result of this study showed that the contents of the books, especially the images and people in the dialogue or conversation in the books are mostly concerned with Japanese culture in terms of foreign culture due to the fact that Japan is one of the main educational supporters. However, this study emphasized only on the lower secondary level while the cultural analysis in English textbooks in upper secondary education seems to be ignored.

The study on the representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools is vital in order to explore if the textbooks contain the varieties of foreign cultural aspects or if they still overwhelmingly include Japanese culture. It is unfair to highlight Japanese culture too much in the textbooks because Cambodian students cannot learn

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafrayadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

native English culture since Japanese culture is not the culture of English. In addition, Cambodian learners learn English not only to communicate with Japanese people but to communicate in a cross-cultural setting. As the education level increases, Cambodian students should expose to a wider range of cultural understanding. This is why the present study is necessary to be conducted.

Specifically, this study contains four main objectives. First, it attempts to see how foreign culture is introduced in three English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. Second, it aims to measure the proportion of subcategories in foreign culture introduction. Third, it intends to explore if there is a balanced representation between the target culture and international culture. Last but not least, it seeks the distribution of the elements in cultural dimensions within those textbooks.

METHOD**Materials**

Three English textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of Cambodia have been selected as the materials in this study. These textbooks were entitled English for Cambodia Book Four, English for Cambodia Book Five, and English for Cambodia Book Six, but they are simply called EFC Book 4, EFC Book 5, and EFC Book 6. Each book consists of 20 chapters, and each chapter includes three units. The selection of these textbooks was based on the basics of purposive sampling. First, these textbooks have been selected for this study because they are still in use currently in all public upper secondary schools across the nation. Second, they were developed by both national and international specialists. Therefore, it responds to the main objective of the study which aims at investigating the representation of foreign culture in these textbooks. The last criterion for selecting these textbooks was based on the year of their publication ranging between 2016 and 2017. This implies that the representation of culture in textbooks should be included diversely as suggested and recommended by Alsaif (2016).

Instruments

Three different frameworks were employed as the checklists. To explore how foreign culture is introduced whether it is directly or indirectly introduced, this study used the framework of Zu & Kong (2009). In addition, in terms of foreign culture, the framework of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) was employed in order to measure the balance between the target culture and international culture. This framework categorized culture into three types namely source culture, target culture, and international culture, but source culture is ignored in this study since the researchers mainly emphasize the representation of foreign culture in the textbooks. Furthermore, the framework of Yuen (2011) was applied in order to investigate the elements of cultural dimension. This framework presents four components namely *Products*, *Persons*, *Practices*, and *Perspectives*. To make it easily comprehensible, Table 1 will provide detailed information for each framework.

Table 1. Approaches to culture introduction proposed by Zu & Kong (2009)

A. Direct Introduction			
Nº	Form	Description	Example
1.	Words Accompanied by Pictures	It is a picture or photograph alongside English words which helps learners understand cultural aspects, and remember the word as well as use it in an appropriate context.	On page 30 of EFC Book 6, there is a picture of a map accompanied by the names of geographical locations showing the names of some countries, and rivers flowing from Nepal to Bangladesh.
2.	Situational Dialogues	It is a dialogue in a text that presents a specific situation. It helps learners repeat or memorize sentences, and comprehend the explanation behind the conversation such as the values or beliefs underlying it.	On page 7 of EFC Book 5, the international currency, specifically the dollar (\$) is mentioned in the conversation between Diana and Mark.
3.	Texts Depicting Cultural Events	It is a text which represents cultural events including holidays, geography, historical events, and so on.	In chapter 20, unit 2 of EFC Book 5, page 117, the text mentions Christmas.
4.	Cultural Notes	It is the clarification or extra explanation of cultural information including confusing or unfamiliar cultural expressions.	On page 119 of EFC Book 5, Peter explains to Lucy more about a modern festival called WOMAD as follows: <i>'Lucy: WOMAD? What kind of festival's that?'</i> <i>'Peter: WOMAD stands for Word Of Music And Dance. It's a three-day festival, which will be held next month, during the summer holiday.'</i>
B. Indirect Introduction			
Nº	Form	Description	Example
1.	Cognitive Approach	It refers to the mental process which requires learners to think and complete tasks related to culture by using the target language.	In chapter 2, unit 1 of EFC Book 6, page 11, students are asked to answer the following question: <i>'What is Islam? Who follow Islam in Cambodia?'</i>
2.	Behavioural and Affective Approach	It refers to activities that facilitate learners to perceive the differences between cultures and thus provide learners with opportunities to adjust themselves to those differences.	In chapter 3, unit 3 of EFC Book 4, page 17, the conversation between Monica and Socheata presents how to prepare a birthday party.

According to Zu & Kong (2009), there are two main approaches used to introduce culture. The first approach is the direct introduction which is in the form of *Words Accompanied by Pictures*, *Situational Dialogues*, *Texts Depicting Cultural Events*, and *Cultural Notes*. The second approach is the indirect introduction which is in the form of *Cognitive Approach*, and *Behavioural and Affective Approach*. For specific explanation and examples of the components within direct and indirect introduction please refer to Table 1.

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafriyadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

Table 2. The cultural categories proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999)

N ^o	Types of culture	Description	Example
1.	Source Culture	Source culture refers to the native or own culture of learners.	Cambodian culture such as the Ploughing Ceremony is mentioned in chapter 20, unit 2 of EFC Book 4, page 117.
2.	Target Culture	Target culture is the culture of the countries where English is spoken as the first language, for instance, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and so on.	Life in Wellington, New Zealand is discussed in chapter 11, unit 2 of EFC Book 6, page 66 and 67.
3.	International Culture	International culture can be both the culture of English and non-English-speaking countries. It can be identified by virtue of English use and developed language skills within the multicultural environment. In the view of international culture, the target language is used as an international language.	Indian film is addressed in chapter 8, unit 1 of EFC Book 5, page 43.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) categorized culture into three groups. The first group is source culture which refers to the native culture of learners. The second group is the target culture which is the culture of countries where English is the mother tongue. The last one is international culture. It refers to the culture of countries where English is used as an international language. More descriptions and examples of cultural categories are available in Table 2.

Table 3. The elements in cultural dimension proposed by Yuen (2011)

N ^o	Element	Description	Example
1.	Products	Products are related to physical cultural objects that involve artificial products, for instance, movies, songs, books, novels, comics, inventions, food, and so on.	The hijab on page 3 of EFC Book 5, and the spaceship and the space suit on page 36 to 38 of EFC Book 6 are the cultural products.
2.	Persons	Persons are concerned with well-known individuals who represent the specific culture of a nation, for example, famous singers, artists, writers, poets, athletes, heroes, and so on.	Galileo, an Italian scientist, is mentioned in EFC Book 6 on page 34.
3.	Practices	Practices are the cultural components that can be seen within cultural activities or practices such as rituals, celebrations, or traditions.	Christmas celebration has been discussed in chapter 20, unit 2 of EFC Book 5, page 117,
4.	Perspectives	Perspectives refer to the concepts, overviews, or mindset of a specific group of citizens that contribute to forming attitudes, notions, values, myths, and beliefs. Perspectives of people vary from one culture to another, and they can be compared and contrasted.	In chapter 20, unit 2 of EFC Book 5, page 117, it has been mentioned that people in ancient Egypt believe in Ra, who is the Egyptian sun god. Because of this perspective, many ceremonies have been held to offer thanks to Ra

Based on Yuen (2011), there are four cultural elements which are *Products*, *Persons*, *Practices*, and *Perspectives*. Any man-made things are identified as *Products* while famous individuals who represent a specific culture of a nation

are known as *Persons*. Moreover, *Practices* can be identified by virtue of cultural events or practices such as festival celebrations, and so on. The last element is *Perspectives*. People regard it as the thought, belief, or mindset that can be the same and different from one society to another. The examples in Table 3 above can clarify all four cultural elements.

Procedures

The present study used content analysis (CA) to consider the characteristics of foreign culture representation in the analyzed textbooks. Among other data collection and data analysis methods, content analysis was preferred thanks to its benefits and flexibility. This method consists of a systematic procedure that can be employed to infer the texts or transcripts of human interaction validly. It classifies texts into applicable and controllable data (Li et al., 2019).

In analyzing the data, using the checklist, the researchers began by developing coding schemes. Next, the researchers started scanning culture-related content on each page within each unit of those three textbooks. Finally, the researchers analyzed the data. The analysis was calculated into percentages by using Microsoft Excel to count the frequency of each cultural component and illustrated through the tables and pie charts.

The first analysis explores how foreign culture is introduced whether it dominantly falls into the direct or indirect introduction. For the direct introduction, four forms of introduction including *Words Accompanied by Pictures*, *Situational Dialogues*, *Texts Depicting Cultural Events*, and *Cultural Notes* were coded as 1 to 4 respectively. For the indirect introduction, there are two forms of introduction namely *Cognitive Approach* which was coded as 5, and *Behavioural and Affective Approach* which was coded as 6. Then, the researchers counted the frequency of each code in each unit of the textbooks. After that, the researchers categorized these six codes just into two parts. The sum of the frequency of code 1, 2, 3, and 4 was grouped as part A representing direct introduction, while the sum of the frequency of code 5 and 6 as part B representing indirect introduction. By comparing the total frequencies of part A to part B, the percentages of the direct and indirect introduction of foreign culture were revealed. Furthermore, the percentage of the four forms (code 1 to 4) within the direct introduction and two forms (code 5 and 6) within the indirect introduction were also illustrated.

The second analysis looks for the dominant proportion between the target culture and international culture. If the target culture was mentioned or depicted many times in one unit, it was counted only once and it also applied to international culture. In case the target and international culture were included in the same unit, there were separately counted once each. The researchers ignored some foreign cultures if they could not be identified if they fall into the target or international culture.

The last analysis investigates the proportion of cultural elements based on *Products*, *Persons*, *Practices*, and *Perspectives*. The researchers counted the frequency of each element in each unit. A certain element was counted once although it was mentioned many times in one unit. If more than one of the

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafrudin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

elements were included in the same unit, there were separately counted once each.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

How foreign culture is introduced in the textbooks

The following pie chart indicates the approaches to culture introduction and the proportion of each approach.

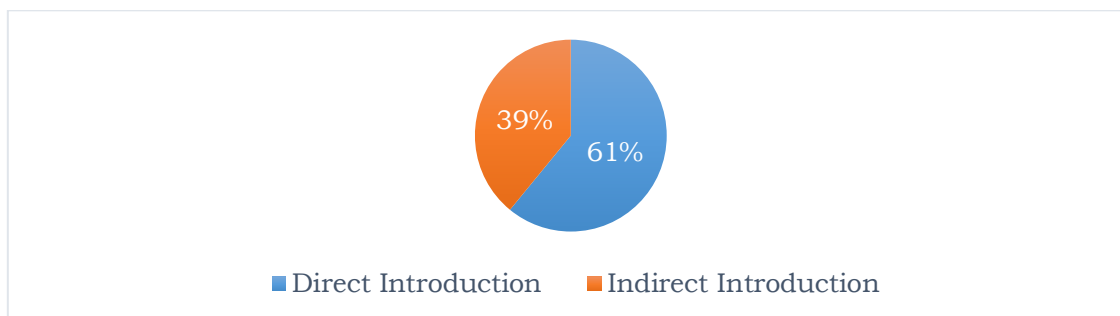


Figure 1. The proportion of the approaches to culture introduction

According to Figure 1, foreign culture is most frequently introduced directly in the sampled textbooks, which accounts for 61 percent. Direct introduction can be found in the dialogue of EFC Book 5, chapter 6, unit 3, page 35 as the following example:

Example 1:

Kimseng: I don't know either when students in England go to school or how long they go to school for? Monica: Well, they start school when they're five year old and finish when they're about sixteen.

The example above indicates the direct introduction approach in the form of situational dialogue. The conversation presents the administration as well as the social organization of England by mentioning the education system in England.

On the other hand, only 39 percent of foreign culture is introduced indirectly in the analyzed textbooks. The indirect introduction approach can typically be seen in a question within EFC Book 6, chapter 19, unit 1, page 76, as illustrated in the example below:

Example 2:

London is one of the largest cities in the world. Do you think that you would like to live there? Why?

The question in example 2 is the task that employs the cognitive approach as learners have to think and use the target language to deal with the task by trying to provide personal opinions, and reasons relevant to living in London.

Obviously, direct and indirect culture introductions are found in the textbooks. However, there is not a balanced proportion between both of them since the direct introduction is predominant. The imbalance of these two approaches may affect learning because learners have different learning styles and preferences. Some of them learn best through direct introduction where as

some learn best by indirect introduction. According to Zu, & Kong (2009), both direct and indirect introductions are equally important. On one hand, the direct introduction offers learners the cultural and language contents in a comprehensible and explicit way. It provides learners with cultural realization through textbooks in a direct manner. On the other hand, the indirect introduction helps students learn hidden and implicit cultural contents together with the language in use. Thus, balanced inclusion between them is suggested.

The proportion of the subcategories in foreign culture introduction

Table 4. The proportion of subcategories in the direct and indirect introduction

N ^o	Approaches to Culture Introduction	Percentage
A. Direct Introduction		
1	Words Accompanied by Pictures	14%
2	Situational Dialogues	30%
3	Texts Depicting Cultural Events	51%
4	Cultural Notes	5%
B. Indirect Introduction		
5	Cognitive Approach	80%
6	Behavioural and Affective Approach	20%

Based on Table 4, for direct introduction, it is pointed out that *Texts Depicting Cultural Events* which account for 51 percent are most frequently used to directly introduce foreign culture across the selected textbooks. *Texts Depicting Cultural Events* are texts which represent cultural events including holidays, geography, historical events, and so on. The specific example taken from the text in EFC Book 5, chapter 20, unit 2, page 117 is illustrated as follows:

Example 3:

Nowadays, even in the countries where the main religion is Christianity, many of the people who celebrate Christmas are either not Christians, or don't understand much about the religious aspects of the festival.

Example 3 above is in the form of *Texts Depicting Cultural Events* since the text mentions Christmas which is celebrated by people in Christianity and other religions. Through the text, students can understand, and learn both English and the facts of Christmas in a meaningful context.

The second highest percentage lies in *Situational Dialogues*, which contribute to 30 percent. *Situational Dialogues* are conversations in a specific situation. These conversations help learner repeat and memorize sentences, and comprehend the values or beliefs underlying them. The example of *Situational Dialogues* can be found specifically within the dialogue in EFC Book 4, chapter 3, unit 3, on page 17:

Example 4:

Monica: I see, Socheata, my birthday party is next week. Could you help me prepare the food? Socheata: Yes, of course, but won't you buy take-away food?

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafriyadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

The conversation in example 4 is one of *Situational Dialogues* because it presents a foreign culture, specifically a birthday party celebration. This dialogue provides learners with an opportunity to learn linguistic aspects, and comprehend the characteristics of a birthday party through an authentic text.

The third predominant proportion is *Words Accompanied by Pictures*, which account for 14 percent. *Words Accompanied by Pictures* are pictures or photographs alongside English words that help learners understand cultural aspects, and remember those words as well as use them in an appropriate context. Specifically, most pictures in the selected books are in the form of maps depicting geographical locations.

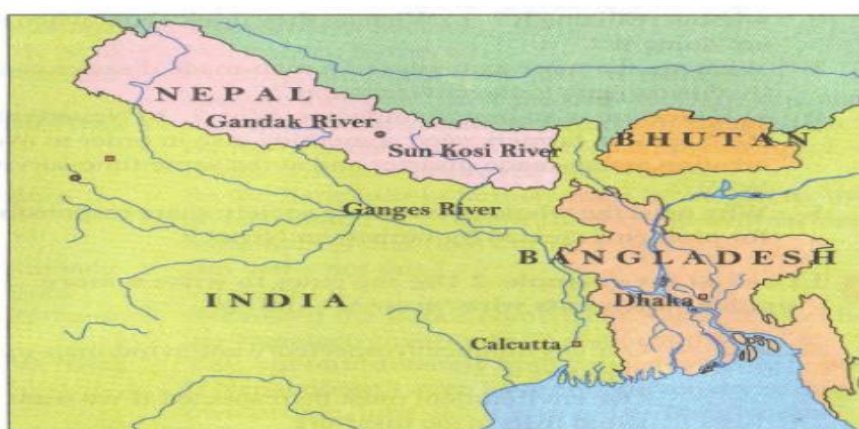
Example 5:

Figure 2. The map showing rivers flowing from Nepal to Bangladesh

The map in exercise 5 can be found in EFC Book 6, chapter 5, unit 2, page 30. It depicts the names of some foreign countries and the names of rivers flowing from Nepal. This picture attached with the words helps students identify geographical locations and use those words in the spoken and written text better.

The lowest contribution is *Cultural Notes* which accounts for only 5 percent. *Cultural Notes* are clarification or extra explanations of cultural information including confusing or unfamiliar cultural expressions. It is available in EFC Book 5, chapter 20, page 119, as in the example below:

Example 6:

Lucy: WOMAD? What kind of festival's that? Peter: WOMAD stands for World Of Music And Dance. It's a three-day festival, which will be held next month, during the summer holiday.

Example 6 is *Cultural Notes* as it defines, and explains more about the WOMAD festival. Through this explanation, learners have a clear understanding of this festival.

From Table 4, for indirect introduction, it is illustrated that the percentage of *Cognitive Approach* (80%) is higher than the percentage of *Behavioural and Affective Approach* (20%). *Cognitive Approach* refers to the mental process which requires learners to think and do tasks related to culture by using the target language. In the selected textbooks, *Cognitive Approach* can be seen in many activities which require learners to use English to do culture-related tasks. The

following task which is selected from EFC Book 6, chapter 2, unit 1, page 11 is the example of *Cognitive Approach* activity.

Example 7:

What is Islam? Who follows Islam in Cambodia?

Cognitive Approach can be evidenced in example 7 since the task requires students to use English (target language) to define the word “Islam” and to identify people who follow this religion in Cambodia. Thus, the students will have the opportunity to develop their English and knowledge about Islam at the same time.

Similarly, *Behavioural and Affective Approach* refers to activities that facilitate learners to perceive the differences between cultures and thus provide learners with opportunities to adjust themselves to those differences. Evidently, some activities in the sampled textbooks incorporate *Behavioural and Affective Approach*. The activity selected from the text of EFC Book 5, chapter 20, page 117, is indicated in the following example:

Example 8:

Most people in England now focus on such activities as giving and receiving presents, decorating their houses, watching special Christmas television shows and eating lots of rich food.

Behavioural and Affective Approach is seen in example 8 above because activities as mentioned in the example point out how to prepare Christmas celebration. Through these activities, learners are able to understand about Christmas celebration and adjust themselves when they celebrate or are invited to join this event.

Based on the results, the textbook developers should consider an appropriate distribution of each subcategory in the direct, and indirect introduction since each component in these two approaches is uniquely important. For the direct introduction, Zu, & Kong (2009) explained that *Words Accompanied by Pictures* help students remember and learn both language and culture effectively. For *Situational Dialogues*, learners are not only repeating and memorizing the target language but comprehending the value behind the conversation. For *Texts Depicting Cultural Events*, learners are provided with the awareness of cultural aspects by means of holidays, historical events, or geography. Last but not least, *Cultural Notes* assist learners in understanding unfamiliar cultural expression as it provides clarification or more explanation for confusing or unfamiliar cultural expression. Concerning indirect introduction, Zu, & Kong (2009) argued that *Cognitive Approach* allows students to use the target language to deal with culture-related tasks. Similarly, *Behavioural and Affective Approach* directs students to adjust themselves to the differences between source culture and foreign culture.

The proportion of the target culture and international culture

According to the findings, the proportion of the target and international culture is revealed in the pie chart below:

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafrayadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

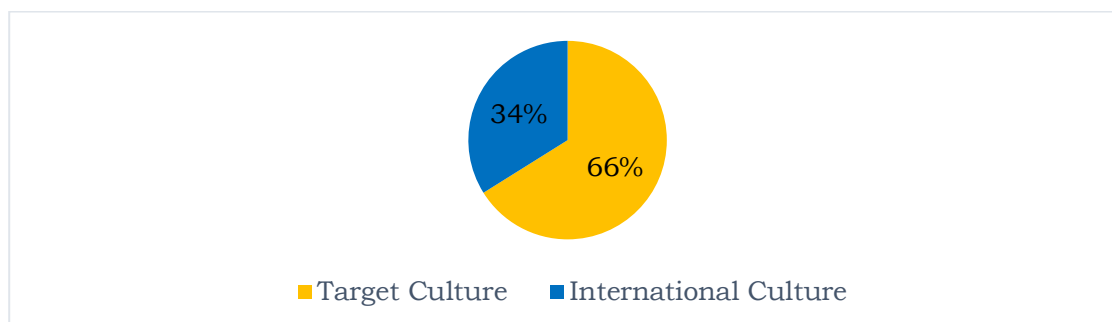


Figure 3. The distribution of cultural categories

Regardless of source culture, it can be shown that the authors of the selected textbooks include target culture (68%) more than international culture (34%). The target culture is the culture of the countries where English is spoken as the first language, for instance, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and so on (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Specifically, it can be seen in a dialogue of EFC Book 5, chapter 2, unit 1, page 7 as the following example:

Example 9:

Diana: What can the farmers do when the earth's too dry? Mark: they can get pumps but they cost \$200 each.

Example 9 highlights the target culture by means of depicting the currency of English-speaking countries, specifically dollars (\$).

On the other hand, international culture can be both the culture of English and non-English-speaking countries. It can be identified by virtue of English use and developed language skills within the multicultural environment. In the view of international culture, the target language is used as an international language (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). The example of international culture is available in EFC Book 6, chapter 18, unit 1, page 18 as follows:

Example 10:

Susan first saw poverty in West Bengal during the 1970s. She remembered returning home from India after her first trip and telling her husband, George, about the scenes of poverty she had retained in her memory ever since her time in Calcutta.

Since English is not the mother tongue of India, it can be said that the example above includes international culture as it discusses Indian culture by addressing geographical location, and describing the livelihood of people there.

As the findings indicated that the target culture presents predominantly compared to international culture, the balanced representation between both of them is needed because each of them has its own positive aspects. McKay (2002) asserted that target culture and international culture help students learn a language better. With this respect, Ghavamnia (2020) argued that the goal of today's language education is changing the focus from communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence. McKay (2002) mentioned that the existence of target culture in textbooks motivates students and shapes their attitudes toward English learning as the majority of contents involve the features of English-speaking countries. For international culture, students may develop their English as they can use it as an international language. Exposing learners to a culture outside the target culture is pivotal because they might not only interact with people who are from a country where

English is used as L1, but may communicate with foreigners who are from a country where English is used as the lingua franca. For instance, English is used mutually when they communicate with French people. Additionally, through the medium of English, they can develop intercultural communicative competence because they are able to internalize the cultural standards of non-native speakers' cultures rather than those of native speakers of English when conveying their thoughts and cultural comprehension. Davidson & Liu (2020) also stated that cultural depiction in the global scope is useful as it strengthens students' sociocultural knowledge, positive perspective, and global citizenship.

The domination of the culture of English-speaking countries over the others found in the present study is similar to the studies conducted in Indonesia by Ayu (2020), and Silvia (2015), in Korea by Kim, & Paek (2015), and in Saudi Arabia by Alshenqeeti (2019). One possibility that these studies in different places have similar results is because the countries where the studies have been conducted share the same status of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and as a lingua franca for cross-cultural communication. In Cambodia's context, there are two possibilities that the target culture is included in the textbooks more than international culture. First, it is probably because of the influence of the culture of the United Kingdom as the United Kingdom is one of the main educational supporters. Second, it may be possible that Cambodian textbook team members used to study or live in countries where English is used as the first language, or perhaps the international members of the textbook team are from the country which possesses the target culture. Ultimately, based on the results, the contents relevant to international culture should be included more in these textbooks.

The distribution of the elements in cultural dimensions

Table 5. The distribution of the elements in the cultural dimension

The elements in the cultural dimension	Percentage
Products	74%
Persons	12%
Practices	13%
Perspectives	1%

Table 5 presents the distribution of the elements of the cultural dimension in the textbooks. *Products* which have the highest percentage (74%) are the most elements that are used by the authors in selecting the content materials. Typically, the cultural product presents in the text of EFC Book 5, chapter 18, unit 3, page 107 as follows:

Example 11:

Many of London's buildings are famous all over the world. Although it is hard to select one particular building as a symbol of London, few people would dispute that chief among the City's famous building is Saint Paul's Cathedral.

Example 11 mentions a cultural product by virtue of depicting London's building which is culturally related to England. Through this representation, the architecture as well as the symbol of England is widely known by learners.

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafryadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

Practices are the second highest proportion (13%) of the elements of the cultural dimension. The authors use them to indicate situations such as birthday party celebrations, wedding parties, international sports competitions, and Christmas celebrations. Specifically, the cultural practice can be found in the text of EFC Book 5, chapter 20, unit 2, page 117 as the following example:

Example 12:

Christmas is celebrated by many people around the world, both in Christian countries and by citizens of other societies as well.

Example 12 reveals the fact of Christmas which has been celebrated since the past. This indicates the cultural practice which is integrated into the selected textbooks. By learning from the textbook, students will have a clear understanding related to Christmas.

Persons share similar distribution with practices. *Persons* account for 13 % and are in the third position of cultural dimension. They are used in textbooks to present well-known individuals. This cultural element can be seen specifically in EFC Book 6, chapter 6, unit 1, page 34, as the example below:

Example 13:

The first real research came in the early 17th century with the invention of telescope by Galileo, an Italian scientist.

Galileo is mentioned in the text, and he is a well-known Italian scientist who invented the telescope. He represents the culture of Italy. Through this individual, students may learn and value Italian culture. Especially, the positive aspect of the culture of Italy including invention for mankind possibly inspires learners to study hard and invent useful things for society.

Perspectives are the lowest percentage (1%) among all elements of the cultural dimension. They are mentioned in the text of EFC Book 5, chapter 20, unit 2, page 117, as follows:

Example 14:

Christians observe December the 25th as the birthday of Christ, though there is evidence that the festival had been held at this time for thousands of years before Christ. Some of this evidence links the introduction of a festival at Christmas time to ceremonies held in ancient Egypt to offer thanks to Ra, the Egyptian sun god.

Example 14 is considered to have presented the cultural perspectives as people in ancient Egypt believe in Ra as the Egyptian sun god. Because of this belief, many ceremonies have been held in order to offer thanks to Ra. This view, or concept of people in ancient Egypt contributes to forming attitudes, notions, values, and beliefs toward those ceremony celebrations. Actually, their perspectives can be compared to other cultures of different countries.

It can be assumed from the results that the analyzed textbooks are not good enough in terms of cultural elements. Therefore, the textbook developers should consider an appropriate proportion of those elements since each element has its uniqueness. Yuen (2011) & Moran (2001) defined *Products* as cultural objects created by humans, and language itself is one of the cultural products. Inevitably, people use language to name, describe, or manipulate those products which identify or symbolize a certain culture. Therefore, products contribute implicitly to language learning and one nation's identity.

For *Practices*, Moran (2001) & Yuan (2011) claimed that language either in spoken or written form is unavoidably needed for communication in cultural practices. For example, language is necessarily needed for facilitating activities in wedding ceremony protocol, and other types of social events. To sum up, the contents of cultural practices improve language competency as learners have to consider linguistic functions together with speech acts and speech events based on kinds of cultural practices.

For *Persons*, Yuan (2011) identified it as a well-known individual such as the character or figure who holds or represents the culture of a nation. It is a fact that textbooks somehow include a cultural person who has uniqueness even in the way he or she uses the language to communicate. Additionally, Moran (2001) claimed that *Persons* inspire and enhance students' language acquisition as they can learn about or learn from their role models who are representatives of the culture of a nation.

For *Perspectives*, Yuan (2011) identified this element as concepts, views, or mindsets of a specific group of individuals that contribute to the formation of attitudes, notions, values, myths, and beliefs. Moran (2001) defined perspectives as the way that environmental, social, and cultural factors shape people's thoughts. Therefore, cultural perspectives actually influence how people think and may impact their communicative competence.

The most frequent occurrence of *Products* in this study is the same as the studies by Kim, & Paek (2015); Silvia (2015); Putra, et al. (2020); Ayu (2020); and Saemee, & Nomnian, (2021). On the other hand, the least representation of *Perspectives* in this study is in line with the previously mentioned studies of Ayu (2020), Silvia (2015), and Putra, et al. (2020). The similar distribution of *Practices*, and *Persons* in this study is compatible with the study by Saemee, & Nomnian, (2021). Lee (2009) confirmed that concrete culture such as *Products*, *Persons*, and *Places* is the superficial and unambiguous culture that learners are able to notice or acquire comprehensibly. In contrast, Saemee, & Nomnian (2021) reported that *Perspectives* are less frequently found in textbooks because it is difficult to illustrate or present them concretely. However, the studies by Nomnian et al. (2020); Phumpho & Nomnian (2019); and Suebwongsuwan & Nomnian (2020) (as cited in Saemee, & Nomnian, 2021) mentioned that implicit cultural groups like *Practices*, and *Perspectives* are beneficial in language education as they contain certain cultural thoughts, specific cultural knowledge, and cultural words, or expression which require learners to realize appropriate language use.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates four aspects of foreign culture in selected English textbooks. Specifically, it intends to explore how foreign culture is introduced, the proportion of the subcategories in culture introduction approaches, the distribution between the target culture and international culture, and the proportion of the cultural elements in cultural dimensions. The findings show that two main approaches to culture introduction are found, but the direct introduction is predominant over the indirect introduction. In addition, each subcategory in the main approaches mentioned above is not a balanced inclusion. Furthermore, target culture is included in the textbooks more than

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafradin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

international culture. Moreover, each cultural element is not in good balance either as *Products* have the highest proportion followed respectively by *Practices*, *Persons*, and *Perspectives*. It can be inferred that the analyzed English textbooks are not good enough in terms of foreign culture representation as all related cultural components are not in a balanced distribution. Therefore, these textbooks should be developed further.

The limitation is that the current study only emphasizes the representation of foreign culture in the textbooks, but it does not focus on teaching and learning those cultural contents. Therefore, the next study should compare teachers' attitudes toward teaching foreign culture to students' perspectives on learning foreign culture to see whether teaching matches learning needs or not. Another limitation is that the results cannot be used to generalize other English textbooks because this study is conducted only at the upper secondary school level. Thus, the future study can further investigate the representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used at the tertiary level to see whether students are provided with a broader knowledge of foreign culture while their educational level increases.

For English textbook developers, an appropriate proportion of the approaches to culture introduction, cultural categories, and cultural elements should be taken into account. For English teachers, the representation of foreign cultures in the textbook should be considered to be a vital part of their teaching because language and culture cannot be separated. With this respect, they should take an active role in selecting better textbooks, and teaching culture explicitly in order to help students learn the language effectively and communicate in cross-cultural settings successfully.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Seth Soy: Conceptualization, data collection and analysis, writing the abstract, introduction, method, results and discussion, and conclusion. **Safnil:** Supervision, draft revision, and proofreading. **Syafradin:** Editing and refining the manuscript, and corresponding author.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher would like to express his deep gratitude and sincere thanks to the Postgraduate Program of English Education, University of Bengkulu who have supported this research.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. T. S., Qasem, B. T., & Pawar, S. V. (2019). Integrating culture into EFL teaching: A study of Yemeni EFL teachers' perceptions and actual Practices. *Language in India*, 19(4), 1-16. <http://www.languageinindia.com/april2019/index.html>
- Aliakbari, M. (2004, August). The Place of culture in the Iranian ELT textbooks in high school level. In *9th Conference of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*. Seoul, Korea. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358141744_The_Place_Of_Culture_In_The_Iranian_EL_Textbooks_In_High_School_Level

- Alsaif, O. (2016). A variety of cultures represented in English language textbooks: A critical study at Saudi university. *Sociology Study*, 6(4), 226-244. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5526/2016.04.003>
- Alshenqeeti, H. (2019). Representation of culture in EFL textbooks and learners' preference. *Pedagogy Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(20), 127-135. <https://doi.org/10.32332/pedagogy.v7i2.1647>
- Ayu, M. (2020). Evaluation cultural content on English textbook used by EFL students in Indonesia. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 6(3), 183-192. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v6i3.1925>
- Chinh, N. D. (2013). Cultural Diversity in English Language Teaching: Learners' Voices. *English Language Teaching*, 6(4), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n4p1>
- Chlopek, Z. (2008). The Intercultural Approach to EFL Teaching and Learning. *English teaching forum*, 46(4), 10-27. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1096289.pdf>
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). *Cultural Mirrors, Materials and Method in the EFL Classroom in Hinkel, Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge University Press, 196-219.
- Davidson, R., & Liu, Y. (2020). Reaching the world outside: Cultural representation and perceptions of global citizenship in Japanese elementary school English textbooks, language. *Culture and Curriculum*, 33(1), 32-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2018.1560460>
- Emitt, M. P. J., & Komesaroff, L. (2003). *Language and Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Ghavamnia, M. (2020). Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs and perspectives on incorporating culture in EFL classes. *Intercultural Education*, 31(3), 314-329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2020.1733862>
- Hasanah, N., & Utami, P. T. (2019). Emerging challenges of teaching English in non-native English-speaking countries: teachers' view. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 2(3), 112-120. <http://journal2.uad.ac.id/index.php/eltej/article/view/1134>
- Hinkel, E. (2014). Culture and pragmatics in language teaching and learning. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, 4, 394-408. http://ww.elihinkel.org/downloads/Culture_and_Pragmatics.pdf
- Kim, S. Y., & Paek, J. (2015). An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks. *Linguistic Research*, 32(1), 83-104. http://isli.khu.ac.kr/journal/content/v32_S.php
- Lee, K-Y. (2009). Treating culture: what 11 high school EFL conversation textbooks in the South Korea. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 8, 76- 96. <http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/files/2009v8n1dial1.pdf>
- Li, J., Dong, J., & Duan, W. (2019). Identity options and cultural representations in English textbooks used in Cambodia. *Asian Social Science*, 15(11), 60-74. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v15n11p60>
- Mao, S. (2014). *Education and policy on English language in Cambodia: Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) Education Strategic Plan (ESP) Cambodia*, Phnom Penh.
- McKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford University Press.

How to Cite (APA Style):

Soy, S., Safnil, & Syafryadin. (2023). The representation of foreign culture in English textbooks used in Cambodian upper secondary schools. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 8 (1), 33-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.8.1.33-51>

- Moore, S. H., & Bounchan, S. (2010). English in Cambodia: Changes and challenges. *World Englishes*, 29(1), 114-126. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01628.x>
- Moran, P. (2001). Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice. Heinle & Heinle. <http://tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume6/ej21/ej21r7/?wscr=>
- Narith, K. C. (2008). English language variety in Cambodia. In *CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching: Selected Papers Volume 4*, 2008 (p. 98).
- Pardo, N. A., & Téllez, M. F. (2009). ELT materials: The key to fostering effective teaching and learning settings. *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 11(2), 171-186. <https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/11449>
- Phon, S. (2017). Factors affecting the English language proficiency of students majoring in English at a rural university in Cambodia. *UC Occasional Paper Series*, 1(1), 69-92. https://www.uc.edu.kh/userfiles/image/2017/10.%20UCOPS%20Vol%201_Iss%201_Final%20draft.pdf#page=75
- Purba, H. (2011). The importance of including culture in EFL teaching. *JET (Journal of English Teaching)*, 1(1), 44-56. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v1i1.51>
- Putra, T. K. et al. (2020). Cultural representation and intercultural interaction in textbooks of English as an international language. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 10(1), 163-184. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v10i1.1766>
- Saemee, K., & Nomnian, S. (2021). Cultural representations in ELT textbooks used in a multicultural school. *rEFLections*, 28(1), 107-120. <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/reflections/article/view/251027/170161>
- Silvia, A. (2015). The representation of culture in English textbooks prescribed for high schools in Indonesia. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 2(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v2i1.1432>
- Soeung, S. et al. (2019). *The Relationship between Private Tutoring and English Achievement: A Case of Four Cambodian High Schools*. *University of Cambodia Occasional Paper Series*, 3(1), 133-154. [https://uc.edu.kh/Occasional_Paper_Series/5.%20The%20Relationship%20between%20Private%20Tutoring%20and%20English%20Achievement%20A%20Cas](https://uc.edu.kh/Occasional_Paper_Series/5.%20The%20Relationship%20between%20Private%20Tutoring%20and%20English%20Achievement%20A%20Case%20of%20Four%20Cambodian%20High%20Schools.pdf)
- Soomro, S., Kazemian, B., & Mahar, I. (2015). The importance of culture in second and foreign language learning. *Dinamika Ilmu: Journal of Education*, 15(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/j.dl.joe.2015.15.1.1.10>
- Syaputri, W., Theresia, F., & Yuniarti, F. (2021). Cultural understanding in English language learning. *SIGEH ELT: Journal of Literature and Linguistics*, 1(1), 27-34. <https://doi.org/10.36929/sigeh%20elt.v1i1.354>
- Putra, T. K., Rochsantiningasih, D., & Supriyadi, S. (2020). Cultural representation and intercultural interaction in textbooks of English as an international language. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 10(1), 163-184. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v10i1.1766>
- Vira, N. (2002). Teaching English in Cambodian secondary schools: With a special focus on teachers' preferences towards the improvement of their professional careers in language teaching. *Bulletin, Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University Part II*, 51, pp. 197-206. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/197282791.pdf>

- Wang, J. (2011). Culture differences and English teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 223-230. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n2p223>
- Yuen, K.M. (2011). The representation of foreign cultures in English textbooks. *ELT Journal*, 65(4), 458-466. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccq089>
- Zu, L., & Kong, Z. (2009). A Study on the approaches to culture introduction in English textbooks. *English language teaching*, 2(1), 112-118. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1082238.pdf>

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2023 Soy, Safnil, and Syafryadin. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.