SOCIAL CONFLICT IN CUSTOMS AND VALUES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

The background of this research is the assumption that a gap exists, causing cultural conflict represented by Customs and Values (Culture) in English textbooks used in Junior High Schools, especially in grade 7. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to determine whether the gap is indeed true. Moreover, it will also be clear why the gap occurs and what the solution to the problem is. The research method employed is a qualitative approach using a content analysis research instrument to analyse the visualisations contained in English textbooks for grade 7 students in Junior High School. The visualisations are obtained from two selected English textbooks, namely English for Nusantara and English in Mind. The results of the study revealed social conflict in English textbooks used by 7th-grade junior high school students in the Customs and Values entity, which is part of the Culture sector. Based on a comprehensive data analysis, this study provides several conclusions. Referring to Berelson's content analysis steps, there was social conflict in terms of customs and values in both English textbooks, namely English for Nusantara and English in Mind. After comparison, social conflict related to customs occurred more frequently than others, with a percentage of around 70% to 30%. Therefore, social conflict arose in both customs and values. This study contributes to the discourse on culturally sensitive English language teaching, offering practical guidance for curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers to enhance intercultural competence and contextual relevance in language learning.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Cultural Conflict, Culture, Custom, Value,

INTRODUCTION

English textbooks are technically books. It could happen with the English textbooks within four different curriculum eras: Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK) in 2004, Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan

Pendidikan (KTSP) in 2006, Kurikulum 2013 (K-13) in 2013, and Kurikulum Merdeka in 2022.

With that long range of time, the impact of the English textbook is inevitable. Especially when the book resonates with the reader's culture, the impact is even stronger. Kim and Paek (2015) concluded that culture-related content is a distinct entity in terms of knowledge transfer, based on their research findings.

Fieser (2000) confirmed that custom refers to practices, traditions, or beliefs that are specific to a particular group of people. These can include social norms, cultural rituals, and ways of life that have been passed down through generations. The custom must be reasonable and not contrary to fundamental principles of morality, justice, or public policy. It shouldn't be oppressive or harmful.

The transition from a social context to an educational setting presents distinct challenges, resulting in a significant disparity. Kirkebaek (2013) confirmed that when a gap exists, namely the absence of representative customs and values in English textbooks, students will not feel safe during class. They will feel extraneous, or in other words, they are not directly connected with or related to something. Joseph (2003) considered social conflict as one of the causes leading to disharmony in many aspects. It can promote disagreement, tension, and antagonism.

Even though Wieviorka (2013) believed that social conflict has both pros and cons, this perspective only applies to communities that are too heterogeneous to control or manipulate. However, in terms of textbooks, it is really feasible. The feasibility does not guarantee an easy process. Shukurdinovna and Kizi (2021) opined that producing an English textbook is like a customised order. Customisation varies based on the students, especially their cultural background.

Kim and Paek (2015) opined that the integration of culture-related content in English textbooks plays a significant role in shaping students' perspectives and understanding of both their own and foreign cultures. The study argues that English teachers need to play an important role in selecting English textbooks that are applicable to teaching practices under multicultural perspectives, and that textbook publishers should address the existing imbalances in the representation of cultural content.

English textbooks play a crucial role in developing students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by integrating cultural content and fostering awareness of diverse perspectives. Research indicates a positive correlation between the use of culturally rich English textbooks and the enhancement of students' ICC.

Ashrafi and Ajideh (2018) noted that cultural values play a pivotal role in shaping the content of English language textbooks by integrating various forms of cultural representation, which enhances language acquisition, fosters intercultural understanding, and promotes inclusive learning practices. Furthermore, the cultural content in EFL textbooks influences students' attitudes towards diversity, maintains their cultural identity, and advances their language proficiency. Incorporation of cultural background increases students' awareness and acceptance of different cultures, supporting their independent learning processes

The research studies above are the references for the writer's current research. However, this writer's current research does not only focus on the English textbook and social conflict but also on culture, which is built by customs and values. With

more focus, the enrichment in the analysis is expected more as well.

At last, aligning English textbook necessaries with students' culture creates a meaningful learning experience, fosters identity development, builds intercultural competence, and ensures balanced cultural representation, especially for 7th Graders who have not met English as a subject with low expectation as A1 in CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Moreover, with the newest curriculum in place, the latest English textbooks are available; however, as a result, the English textbooks have not been analysed yet. Thus, the researchers chose this topic to work with the English textbook to answer the research questions. Social conflict in culture which has been divided into custom and value and the newest edition of English textbook used at schools are the main topic in this research. For this reason, the researchers chose to focus on examining the newest edition of English textbooks used in schools, particularly in relation to social conflicts in culture, which in this study are divided into customs and values. Based on this focus, the research seeks to answer two main questions: (1) What social conflicts are found in English textbooks used at Junior High Schools specifically in relation to customs and values? and (2) How are these social conflicts delivered, and can they be categorized as belonging to customs or values? Accordingly, the purposes of this study are twofold: first, to identify whether there are any social conflicts in the English textbooks with a focus on customs and values, and second, to understand how these conflicts are identified and classified, confirming whether they belong to customs or values, since culture in this study is understood through these two dimensions.

METHOD

A qualitative research design serves as the framework for this research, as well as the content analysis, as outlined by Berelson (1997). A purposive sampling strategy was used to select English textbooks for 7th grade of Junior High Schools. The first one is English in Mind by Cambridge University Press (2010), and English for Nusantara is from Pusat Perbukuan Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan. Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah (2023).
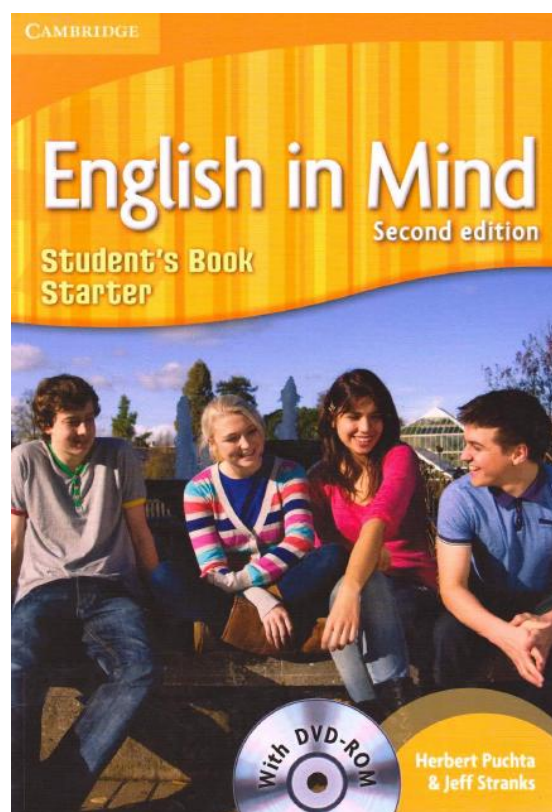

Figure 1. English in Mind Textbook

Figure 2. English for Nusantara Textbook

The researchers employed content analysis as the research instrument in this study, following the following arguments. By implementing the content analysis, it would also improve data enrichment and ensure consistency in data interpretation, ultimately leading to more robust and reliable research findings. The newest English textbooks for 7th graders, titled English for Nusantara and published by Kemendikbud, are the first item to collect. After ensuring its availability, the data will be extracted and displayed in Chapter 4. The first step involves the raw data, which consists of the English textbooks. Then, the next step is to explore the analysed data, leading to interpretations and meanings.

The researchers used Berelson's (1997) content analysis for data analysis. It applies with following steps. The first one is by defining the Research Question. Secondly, the researcher begins by formulating a clear research question that can be addressed through content analysis. The third step is to select the sample. The researchers selected a representative sample of the communication content to be analysed. The fourth one is by developing a coding scheme. This is a crucial step. The researcher creates a set of categories or codes to classify the content. The coding scheme must be clear, precise, and mutually exclusive. The fifth one is coding the content. The researchers systematically applied the coding scheme to the sample, assigning codes to each unit of analysis. Lastly, it is to interpret the results. The researcher interprets the quantitative findings in relation to the research question. In essence, Berelson's (1997) content analysis provides a structured and rigorous method for examining communication content, allowing researchers to draw objective and quantifiable conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The term social conflict itself was so broad that clarity would not exist in the research. It originated from the social idea referring to disagreements, tensions, or clashes that arose between individuals, groups, or within society due to differing beliefs, interests, customs, values, or social structures. Yet it was adapted to an educational setting where a textbook became the topic, focusing on Customs and Values. This was a crucial delimitation.

Table 1. Findings of Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

Number	The Name of the English Textbook	Content		Social Conflict	
		Chapter	Page	Custom	Value
1	English for Nusantara	1	16	Yes	No
2	English for Nusantara	1	27	Yes	No
3	English for Nusantara	2	77	No	Yes
4	English for Nusantara	2	83	Yes	No
5	English for Nusantara	3	101	Yes	No
6	English for Nusantara	3	136	No	Yes
7	English for Nusantara	4	171	Yes	No
8	English for Nusantara	4	194	Yes	No
9	English for Nusantara	5	213	No	Yes
10	English for Nusantara	5	229	Yes	No
11	English in Mind	1	5	Yes	No
12	English in Mind	1	12	Yes	No
13	English in Mind	2	19	No	Yes
14	English in Mind	2	24	No	Yes
15	English in Mind	3	26	Yes	No
16	English in Mind	3	29	Yes	No
17	English in Mind	4	34	Yes	No
18	English in Mind	5	37	Yes	No

Source: Alamsyah et. Al, 2025

Representation of Social Conflict in English for Nusantara Textbook
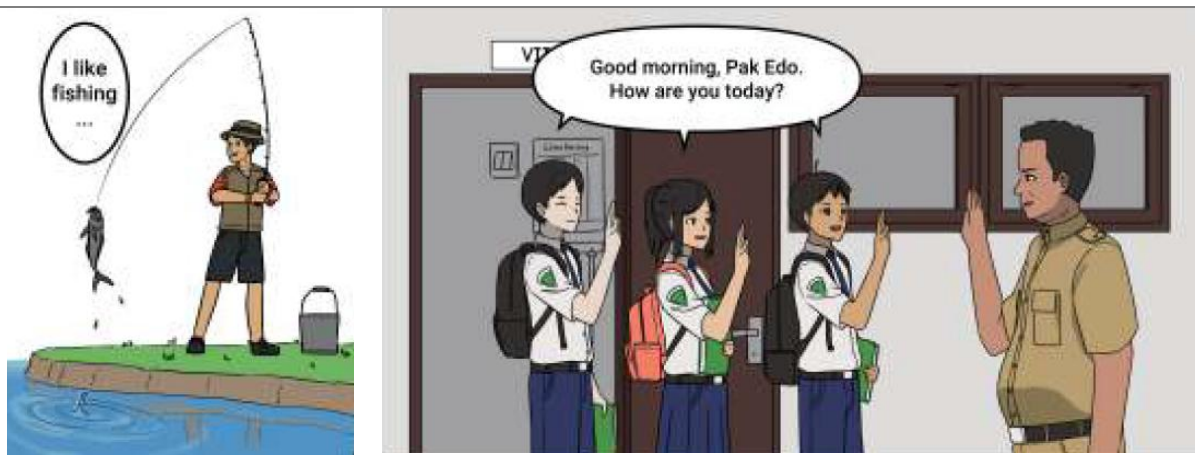
Figure 3. Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

Based on figure 3, For the English texbook named English for Nusantara chapter 1 page 16 in the picture there is a boy around 12 years old who is fishing all by himself next to the river. The fact that he is all by himself is the issue here dealing with custom where river is typically situated in remote areas. It may encourage the male students to do reckless things without any adults' supervision. On the page 27 still with the same chapter, there is a teacher encountering his three students while the students are just waving their hands at the teacher. That kind of gesture is not acceptable in term of custom where students must perform "sun tangan" to the elder ones, especially to the teachers at school.

Figure 4. Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

Moving to chapter 2, page 77, there is a female student holding her expensive gadget to connect with others online. Most students cannot relate to the picture, especially those from rural and underdeveloped areas. The value of humility cannot be emphasised enough in front of Indonesian students. On page 83, in the same chapter, it looks like the boy is cooking too independently in a kitchen. It may give the students the liberty to do anything in the kitchen without the mother's approval.

Figure 5. Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

In Chapter 3 on page 101, there are four students inside a room. It is the cover for Chapter 3. The problem is not that they are together; it is the combination of them. They are one girl and two boys. It rarely happens when opposite genders gather indoors or not in an open area. It is really against the culture here in Indonesia. Still in chapter 3, now it's on page 136, the man is standing to burn the rubbish. The man does not display any wisdom in his actions. It might lead to air pollution and be a bad example to others.

Figure 6. Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

Afterwards, Chapter 4 on page 171 appears to depict a female student participating in an online class, which is contrary to the current fact that school activities typically occur in real-time or not virtually. The custom dictates so, and the picture may lead students to assume that it is acceptable when they prefer an online class without any urgency. Moreover, when discussing the pros and cons of having an online class,

the cons may outweigh the pros, as the presence of a teacher is non-negotiable. Later, dice and pawns appear on page 194. It is rare to have a board game alongside a formal activity, such as a class assignment. Additionally, board games often carry a social stigma. Meaning that to play board games using dice and pawns is just to waste time and to be not productive at all unless you are a professional chess player dealing with the pawns.

Figure 7. Social Conflict in English for Nusantara

Lastly, for the first English textbook, which is English for Nusantara, in Chapter 5 on page 213, the page displays three teachers. They are one female teacher and two male teachers. That one female teacher is standing on the left, a relatively senior male teacher is standing in the middle, and a relatively junior male teacher is standing on the right. It's not that they are in the same frame; the problem is with the pose they do in the frame. It's like models' poses, which they do, it may decrease the standard of teachers' charismatic figures. The real value of teachers, which students must recognise, may drop. The final one is on page 229, where it displays a male student explaining a concept during the P.E. subject. There is no teacher in the picture, as if the explaining student were capable of transferring knowledge. Moreover, there are students raising their hands to initiate questions while the explaining student simply draws a ball on the whiteboard. Our customs won't let students do such a thing.

Representation of Social Conflict in English in Mind Textbook

Figure 8. Social Conflict in English in Mind

The English textbook, "English in Mind," possesses something in common. Starting with the first chapter on page 5, there are three adults wearing typical Western fashion. The situation indicates that it is nighttime, and the adult in the middle is walking the dog. The scene, which is rare to occur in Indonesia, exists. Next, on page 12, there is also a scene which is against the local custom. There are six teenagers queuing to watch a concert or buy a ticket for it. There are many state schools situated in rural or even remote areas, with students who may not be able to relate to the visual description.

Figure 9. Social Conflict in English in Mind

Moving to chapter 2 on page 19, there is a picture of a James Bond actor. The movie character may not be suitable for exposure to young students, especially those from Junior High Schools. That young student cannot find the value coming from the character daily. On page 24, there is also a picture which possesses a social conflict in value. The picture shows a group band called Coldplay performing their music, which is related to adults who have experienced a romance. Being exposed to that kind of music and lyrics is premature for the students.

Figure 10. Social Conflict in English in Mind

Later in Chapter 3 on page 26, there are two very young girls with their dog. The conflict with the culture is so strong since almost 100% Indonesians embrace Islam. The issue of dogs is a sensitive one here, unless there is a strong reason to expose it. Three .

pages after that, on page 29, there are many activities which are not culture-friendly. The activities start from going bowling to hanging out in a café with the internet, and other unrelated activities

Figure 11. Social Conflict in English in Mind

In Chapter 4, on page 34, there are payment tools that students in Indonesia will not likely experience in real life. They are credit cards, pound sterling paper money, and gold coins. In Chapter 5, on page 37, two teenagers are hiking and appear to be lost. The problem is that they are male and female. It's not fine with the culture that the two are spending time together doing the hiking activity. It will be a very different story when it's said that they are brother and sister.

Discussion

Firstly, regarding the case on page 16 in Chapter 1, Sealey (2010) notes that across many cultures, children are viewed as vulnerable and in need of protection. This protective instinct is amplified when they are in an unfamiliar or potentially hazardous environment, such as the quiet woods or rivers. In many traditional or close-knit communities, there's a collective sense of responsibility for the well-being of children. A child wandering alone may be perceived as a sign of neglect or inadequate care from the family and community. Next one, for the case on page 27 with the same chapter, teachers are seen as the custodians of accumulated knowledge, cultural heritage, and values. Lestari (2020) argued that teachers in schools transmit essential information from one generation to the next, ensuring continuity while also introducing new ideas and fostering critical thinking. They ignite curiosity, inspire a love for learning, and equip individuals with the skills to analyse, question, and solve problems. This intellectual growth is vital for personal development and societal advancement. Teachers have dedicated themselves to mastering specific subjects. Their expertise and ability to explain complex concepts make them figures of authority and respect in their chosen

domain. With those facts, teachers should receive more respect, especially from students, and "sun tangan" will never be accommodated.

For the case on page 77 in Chapter 2, Spratt et al (2011) wrote that if the examples are too unrelated or presented without sufficient scaffolding, students may become overwhelmed, confused, or disengaged. They might struggle to see the connection to the core concept. This is especially true for younger students or those with less-developed abstract reasoning skills. Relatable examples are often highly motivating because students can immediately see the relevance and utility. If examples are consistently irrelevant to their experience, it can diminish engagement and the perceived importance of the subject. Later, on page 83 in chapter 2, it's crucial to understand that "independence" itself isn't inherently bad in any culture. Suciati (2016) added that what's often discouraged in collectivist cultures is excessive independence that comes at the expense of group harmony, respect for authority, or communal responsibility. There's a difference between a student being self-reliant and capable and being dismissive of collective norms or assistance. Many cultures are also evolving, and there's often a push to integrate aspects of individualistic thinking, such as critical thinking and innovation, while retaining core collectivist values, including respect and community. The ideal is often a balanced individual who can think independently but also understands and values their role within a larger community.

For the case on page 101 in Chapter 3, gender norms are deeply woven into society, influencing how individuals are expected to think, act, and even dream. From a young age, people can face pressure to conform to rigid gender roles. Dash

(2004) believed that education about gender enables students to critically analyse these norms, challenge harmful stereotypes, and understand that gender is a social construct, not solely determined by biology. It also helps them understand the distinction between sex (biological) and gender (a social construct). Later, on page 136 in Chapter 3, the discussion of value involves the ability to see situations from multiple viewpoints, considering the feelings and needs of others. This leads to more empathetic and inclusive decision-making, reducing misunderstandings and disputes. Stenberg and Gluck (2021) also stated that an individual with values understands the importance of established rules, laws, and social norms for maintaining order and fairness within a community.

Moving to the case on pages 171 and 194 in Chapter 4, Nucholiq (2025) opined that routines are the bedrock of a school's unique identity. When something that is genuinely abnormal to a culture is forced into "normality," it can dilute or erase these distinctive elements, leading to a loss of cultural heritage. Customs often carry historical significance, linking current generations to their past. Normalising deviations can sever this connection, weakening a sense of shared history and collective memory. In a globalised world, there's already pressure towards cultural homogenization. Deliberately normalising things that are outside of custom can accelerate this, leading to a less diverse and vibrant world. For the case on page 194 in the same chapter. While games can be incredibly powerful tools for learning and engagement in the classroom, adapting them without careful consideration can lead to a host of negative consequences. It's not about avoiding games altogether, but about being strategic and thoughtful in their integration. MacKenzie and Stanzione (2010) agreed that the "throw it in and see what happens" approach, without considering alignment with learning goals, student needs, classroom dynamics, logistical realities, and cultural traditions, is likely to be ineffective, distracting, and potentially harmful.

For the case on page 213 in Chapter 5, a strong, confident pose and charismatic presence naturally command respect. Singh (2016) added that students are more likely to listen, follow instructions, and adhere to classroom rules when they perceive their teacher as a capable and authoritative figure. Charismatic teachers have an almost magnetic quality that draws students in. Their enthusiasm, dynamic delivery, and clear affect can make even seemingly dry subjects come alive, holding students' attention for longer periods. Next, for the last case of the English textbook named English for Nusantara on the page 229 with the same chapter, Garmston and Mckanders (2024) stated that peer learning is a valuable supplementary tool, the teacher's role in knowledge transfer is multifaceted and requires a unique blend of deep subject matter expertise, pedagogical skill, experience, and professional responsibility that students, by definition of their role as learners, do not yet possess. While students can certainly learn from each other through peer teaching and collaborative learning, a student generally cannot substitute a teacher in the fundamental term of knowledge transfer.

As for the other English textbook, English in Mind, the discussion is condensed into a single passage, as the problems share a common theme: excessive exposure to Western culture and values. Al-Makin (2015) wrote that Western culture often emphasises individualism, consumerism, and a more liberal approach to social norms. This can clash with Indonesia's collective, communal, and often more conservative values rooted in

Pancasila, local customs, and religious teachings. Students might start to view their own traditions as "outdated" or "less sophisticated. When students primarily consume Western media and adopt Western lifestyles without critical discernment, it can lead to a diminished sense of nationalism and pride in their own diverse Indonesian heritage. This can manifest as a preference for foreign products, music, or fashion over local ones. Aizid (2018) stated that certain Western values, particularly regarding sexuality, personal freedom, and gender roles, might conflict with the deeply ingrained religious and moral frameworks in Indonesia, leading to confusion, internal conflict, and potentially behaviours considered inappropriate within the local context. Students who readily embrace Western culture, often those with greater access to technology and urban environments, may inadvertently create a social gap with peers who maintain more traditional values. This can lead to feelings of superiority or inferiority and divisions within social groups. Lastly, Western media often portrays idealised lifestyles that are not attainable for many Indonesian students, potentially leading to dissatisfaction, envy, and social pressure.

CONCLUSION

This study provides some conclusions and suggested recommendations. Referring to Berelson's content analysis steps, there are social conflicts in terms of custom and value in both of the English textbooks, namely English for Nusantara and English in Mind. After comparing, the social conflict in terms of custom occurs more often than the other one by a percentage of around 70% to 30%. The conclusions drawn from this study suggest several recommendations to enhance the upcoming English textbooks. Involving local writers

with an Indonesian background is a solid foundation for starting a project to write an English textbook. Involving local editors who possess an Indonesian background is also a great step to confirm the quality and appropriateness of the English textbook. Entities such as local customs and values should be strong consideration in the process of writing an English textbook.

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