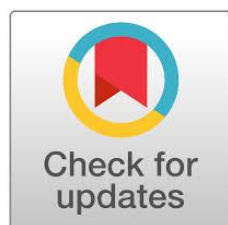


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Inner Circle Ideology Domination in a National Commercial EFL Textbook: A Case of Indonesian Islamic-affiliated Schools

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Abstract

This study employs an analysis of visual images in English textbooks used in Islamic-affiliated schools through the lens of Kachru's three-circle model of English, which categorizes English-speaking countries into Inner, Outer, and Expanding circles. This study aims to explore how these images reflect and reinforce linguistic and cultural ideologies associated with each circle. A qualitative content analysis was implemented, focusing on the visual images within English textbooks, which were categorized based on the representation of cultural elements. Data analysis was implemented using a coding scheme and Critical Discourse Analysis framework, examining the power relations and ideological influences represented by the visual content of the textbook. Results show that inner circle culture was dominantly represented (67.9%) in the textbook of its visual use. Western-looking people, outfits, movies, and food represent the images used in the textbook. The finding suggests that textbooks used in English teaching at Islamic affiliated schools, or *madrasas*, must be carefully designed and selected to adjust students' needs and school context, as teaching a foreign language can carry others' ideologies and power.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; English textbook; Islamic-affiliated school

Introduction

In recent years, studies have explored the complex connection between ideologies and power dynamics embedded in English textbooks. Some scholars in the area of applied linguistics have critically assessed how ideologies and hegemonic practices are integrated with educational materials through the lens of a critical perspective (Liu, 2020; Ulum & Köksal, 2019, 2021; Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). The results of these studies highlight that English textbooks used in English teaching have exhibited ideological biases and augmented hegemony. Also, the representation of gender, multicultural values, and power dynamics in EFL textbooks has undergone serious attention from several scholars (Ekowati et al. 2021; Prastikawati & Yonata, 2022). Other studies highlighted that it is imperative to scrutinize the way textbooks can reflect values and social norms, particularly in academic settings like Indonesian Islamic schools (Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Yanti & Wirza, 2022). The exploration of textual and visual discourses in English textbooks is important to describe what ideologies are perpetuated and how power relations are infused in teaching materials (Ekowati et al., 2021; Emaliana & Tusita, 2019; Kirana & Methitham, 2022).

Several studies analyzing English textbooks used in Indonesian schools between 2018 and 2024 have been investigated by many scholars. For example, the analysis of 2013 English textbooks for grades 7 and 8 shows that the books do not provide a balanced and equal representation of Indonesian cultural diversity. Teachers are advised to include materials that consider students' cultural sensitivity and appropriation (Parlindungan et al., 2018). Other micro-semiotic analyses of Indonesian Ministry of National Education-Endorsed secondary school English textbooks have been criticized for their use of the dominant culture. Teachers and students must be skillful in critical thinking and reading and critical language awareness analysis (Widodo, 2018). In addition, the analysis highlights the need to include multicultural materials from outer and expanding circle regions (Setyono & Widodo, 2019).

Further, Pathway to English books used in high school also criticized for their unbalanced cultural information, mainly on the pictures, recordings, and cultural awareness topics. Thus, this study suggests the use of more local cultural values and norms (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). Also, unbalanced representations of sociological, semantic, and pragmatic sense were found in *When English Rings the Bell* and *English*

for Nusantara's book (Lasmita et al., 2024; Ramadhani & Refnaldi, 2024). Lastly, English for Nusantara was also studied using different lenses, and cultural stereotypes regarding appearance, gender, behavior, and lifestyle were found (Nizar, 2024).

However, among those previous studies, the exploration of English textbooks adopted in Islamic high schools remains under-explored, mainly in schools with boarding systems (*pesantren*) where religious values and norms are under great emphasis. Thus, the research questions formulated in this study are: (1) What specific visual representations are used to depict the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles? (2) How do these images construct or deconstruct power relations between the Inner Circle and the Outer/Expanding Circles? This study will contribute to the insight on how teachers should consider materials with cultural sensitivity for classroom activities. By considering students' cultural norms, English learning will be of greater benefit to students' learning success.

Literature Review

ELT in Indonesian Islamic-affiliated Schools

English Language Teaching (ELT) at Islamic-affiliated schools in Indonesia has been done following the standardized curriculum applied by the Ministry of Education. However, many researchers have explored that Islamic values are tailored and integrated with the curriculum (Agustina et al., 2024; Alfian et al., 2022; Irwansyah, 2018). This incorporation spans various subjects such as languages, mathematics, and science (Maesaroh et al., 2022). Also, reading skills should be emphasized in such integration (Nurkamto et al., 2021). This notion is congruent with research results, revealing that Islamic content infusion in ELT has increased students' learning experiences (Cahyo et al., 2019).

English teaching with Islamic content has been implemented using technologies. Farah (2020) has integrated Islamic materials such as history, the Quran, hadith, fiqh, and Islamic belief into trivia cards. In addition, Farah et al. (2021) have designed a workbook with five Islamic topics like prophets, prayers, manners, the Quran, and believing in Allah and Rasulullah. Other researchers have also applied digital tools to integrate Islamic values (Djamdjuri et al., 2023).

Integrating Islamic values has been highlighted for several reasons. First, Iswan and Zaitun (2020)

contended that Islamic values should be given priority to be integrated into all subjects, aiming to instill a well-rounded personality and a strong foundation of knowledge in students. Second, infusing Islamic values in all subjects goes beyond mere academic achievement to build students' strong characters, attitudes, and behaviors following Islamic principles and national values (Afriana & Rokhimawan, 2022; Kasmawati et al., 2023). Lastly, Maesaroh et al. (2022) pinpointed that the incorporation of Islamic materials is to create a learning environment that aligns with the school's vision and mission.

Despite its positive aspect, Islamic value integration into English teaching brings its challenges. For example, resources such as textbooks and digital materials are limited, so teachers need to allocate more time and energy to tailor materials that meet students' English levels (Safitri et al., 2023). Other problems raised are in balance between the secular and Islamic milieu (Iswan & Zaitun, 2020) amidst the push from school management to infuse Islamic elements in all subjects (Madkur & Albantani, 2017).

ELT in Indonesian Islamic-affiliated schools needs to be revisited as it needs collaborative work among policymakers, educators, parents, and stakeholders. The effort put in ELT, which attempts to incorporate Islamic elements, was done to provide learners with a more environmentally friendly Muslim curriculum; thus, learners are accentuated to be religiously and culturally sensitive. With this infusion, students are expected to accelerate not only in their academic accomplishments but also in their moral and ethical. Thereby, the young Muslim generation can have a wider impact on society with Islamic values.

Language Ideology

Language ideology encompasses ideas not only about the linguistic elements of a language but also its use in language practices, as it has social and political implications. This concept delves into the beliefs, attitudes, and values attached to language and its usage within society. Various studies have explored the intricate relationship between language ideologies and social structures. For instance, Rosa (2016) presented how ideologies of language standardization can stigmatize certain linguistic practices, while ideologies of "languagelessness" can challenge linguistic competence and personhood. In addition, Khan and Zaki (2022) emphasized the importance of understanding language ideologies within the socio-political contexts from which they emerge. These ideologies are not static but evolve within specific

discourses and societal frameworks.

Critical discourse analysis has been a valuable tool in discovering the complexities of language ideologies. It allows for an in-depth examination of how language is used to construct and perpetuate ideologies. Fenyi and Sapaty (2021) utilized Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how language contributes to the creation and reinforcement of ideologies within political contexts. Similarly, Yang (2023) highlighted the close relationship between ideology and power, illustrating how ideologies function as thought systems embedded in discourse and practices aimed at acquiring and maintaining power.

In conclusion, language ideology is a multifaceted concept that influences how we perceive and engage with language in various contexts. By understanding and critically analyzing language ideologies, we can uncover the underlying power dynamics, challenge oppressive practices, and promote linguistic diversity and equity in society.

CDA and ELT Textbooks

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a methodological approach that has been widely used to analyze various aspects of English textbooks. Researchers have applied CDA to investigate different themes within textbooks, such as moral values (Mahrudin et al., 2023), multicultural values (Setyono & Widodo, 2019), gender equality (Maesaroh et al., 2022), gender representation (Prastikawati & Yonata, 2022), ideological constructions (Afzal et al., 2021), native-speakerism (Kirana & Methitham, 2022), cultural representation (Fauzi & Dewi, 2024), and Islamic values (Muslim et al., 2022). Through CDA, these studies have uncovered how these values and representations are portrayed and constructed within the textual and visual content of the textbooks.

Moreover, CDA has been instrumental in uncovering how English textbooks can perpetuate or challenge societal norms and power structures. For instance, studies have explored how textbooks represent ideologies such as imperialism and communism (Khan & Ali, 2022), gender stereotypes (Wilfitri & Suganda, 2023), gender (in)equality (Curaming & Curaming, 2020), and cultural dissemination (Dar & Masroor, 2019). By employing CDA, researchers have been able to analyze the discourses present in textbooks critically and shed light on the underlying messages and values being

communicated to students.

Furthermore, CDA has been utilized to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of English textbooks. Researchers have used CDA to assess language components, tasks, activities, language skills, and critical discourse analysis features within textbooks (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2015). By employing CDA alongside other analytical frameworks, such as quantitative content analysis and thematic approaches, researchers have been able to provide comprehensive evaluations of textbook content (Kim & Lee, 2023; Kusramadhani et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis in studying English textbooks has allowed researchers to uncover the implicit ideologies, values, and representations embedded within these educational materials. By critically analyzing the discourses present in textbooks, researchers have been able to provide valuable insights into how these materials shape students' perceptions, beliefs, and understanding of various social, cultural, and political issues.

Ideologies and Power Relations

For most people, the text does not carry political interest. Nonetheless, the extensive production of a textbook is not value-free; it may contain a hidden curriculum. As Apple (2012) has stated, literacy, or textbooks, encompasses hidden curriculum as they are the transmitters of values that have been widely decided to approve the actual social order. A study at one university in Taiwan revealed that the global ELT textbook is biased toward UScentrism as it has few representations of Europe and Latin America yet disregards Taiwan and Chinese speakers (Chao, 2011). Further, this researcher explains that the hidden curriculum lies in the textbook content that shows Westerners are the only ones who have humanitarian movements. In addition, the textbook content presents skilled and famous people limited to English-speaking Westerners. Lastly, the researcher suggests teachers and students of the local school can produce their textbooks to avoid the dominance of Inner Circle models of English.

Previously, the ELT curriculum and its textbook have been examined from critical perspectives. It is shown that the ELT curriculum is formed by considering various social factors that can be addressed using the theories of critical applied linguistics and critical pedagogy.

Another study done by Camase (2009) found that the ELT textbooks used in Romania's schools

from 1983 until 1990 contained communist ideologies that were transmitted to students. This research opens the discourse that textbooks have successfully created divisions among people through ideological means. Further, Camase (2009) claims that the cultural divide between Western and Eastern Europe can be seen as a discourse that shapes perceptions of each other and reinforces unequal relationships, positioning some as needing to catch up with others.

English Textbook Visual Representation Analysis

English textbooks are integral to language education, influencing students' perceptions and attitudes through visual and verbal content. Numerous studies have examined cultural and gender representations in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks. Research has revealed gender stereotypes and the under-representation of women in textbooks (Damayanti, 2014; Wulandari et al., 2024). Studies have stressed the importance of assessing the harmony of image-text-task components from the viewpoints of students, teachers, and educators (Derakhshan, 2024). Visual elements in textbooks have been scrutinized for their equilibrium, utilization, and ornamental purposes, highlighting the significance of visual materials in educational settings (Roohani & Sharifi, 2015). Moreover, the interpretation of visual images and their alignment with written messages has been a subject of analysis in English textbooks (Qoriah, 2020).

The depiction of gender in textbooks has been a focal point in various regions, including Indonesia (Liannita et al., 2023) and Iran (Tafazoli & Egan, 2022). These studies have emphasized how visual representations impact students' comprehension and engagement with the content. Furthermore, the utilization of visual grammar and semiotic approaches has been recommended for the analysis and interpretation of visual content in textbooks (Wang, 2022; Yazdanmehr & Shoghi, 2014). Visual analyses of gender roles and characters in textbooks have provided insights into the portrayal of diverse identities and cultural perspectives (Sui, 2022). The evaluation of visual representations in English textbooks is a multifaceted task that necessitates attention to cultural, gender, and semiotic dimensions. By critically analyzing the visual elements in textbooks, educators can improve the inclusivity, relevance, and efficacy of language learning materials.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design by exploring the visual images of an English textbook. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework was also implemented to explore the association between socio-cultural context and discourse, power, dominance, and social inequality (van Dijk, 2008).

Research Data

The object of this research was to use the Pathway to English textbook for SMA/MA Grade XII published by Penerbit Erlangga. This book claims to use the 2013 curriculum. The authors of this book are Theresia Sudarwati and Eudia Grace. The book was selected as it was one of the books that is widely used in English teaching at Islamic-affiliated schools in Indonesia.

Data Collection

The data used in this study were collected through several stages. The first was selecting the textbook. The textbook Pathway to English for SMA/MA Grade XII, published by Penerbit Erlangga, was selected as the primary source of data. This textbook was chosen because it claims to align with the 2013 curriculum and is widely used in Indonesian Islamic schools. The second was identifying relevant texts. The sections of the textbook that potentially reflect Western power, dominance, and cultural influence were identified. These may include images that depict cultural norms, ideologies, or perspectives that align with Western paradigms—lastly, segmenting texts. The identified sections were broken down into smaller units of analysis, such as images and texts, depending on their relevance and the scope of the discourse being analyzed.

Instruments

The instruments implemented to analyze the data driven by this study were formulated as follows: The instrument for this research was a textual analysis framework based on Van Dijk's concept of Critical

Discourse Analysis (CDA). This framework guided the identification and interpretation of discourse elements related to power, dominance, and social inequality within the text. Next is the coding scheme, which was developed to categorize the discourse features identified in the text. The scheme included categories such as representation of power, cultural dominance, social inequality, and the portrayal of Western ideologies.

Data Analysis Technique

CDA was implemented to analyze visual images. The analysis will focus on how visual representations construct ideologies related to language, culture, and power dynamics across the three circles of English.

Findings

This research has shown that some images used in the textbook have a clear association with the inner circle culture.

Coding Restraints for cultural variables are categorized into three variables. First, it is *race or ethnicity*, which includes physical features (e.g., skin and eye color, hair and other facial features);

Names of countries and languages (e.g., Indonesia, Indonesian); for coding restraints, include a) If pictures represent cultural variables, counted; b). If pictures do not represent any cultural variables, they will not be counted; c). If a cultural variable is mentioned more than once, it will be counted once; d). If a cultural variable is mentioned several times in the text under one topic, it will be counted once. The second category is *gender/sexuality*, which includes male, female, and the pronouns he and she. The third category is three circles of English, which includes very wealthy people, like doctors, teachers, and managers, as well as poor and homeless people. For coding restraints, inferences were made from texts.

The Depiction of Visual Representation of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles

Among the 142 pictures used in the textbook, there were 109 classified into an Inner Circle,

Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. Seventy-four coded pictures were associated with Inner Circle cultures, 3 coded pictures were associated with Outer Circle cultures, and 32 coded pictures were linked to Expanding Circle cultures. The rest of the pictures were coded as not counted as many of 27 pictures and counted once as many of 6 pictures.

Table 1. Coded data in each book chapter

Chapters	Coded Items				
	IC	OC	EC	Nc	Co
Chapter 1	3	1	3	0	0
Chapter 2	3	0	2	2	0
Chapter 3	1	0	5	0	0
Chapter 4	14	0	6	6	0
Chapter 5	11	1	2	1	0
Chapter 6	5	0	0	1	0
Chapter 7	9	0	6	11	0
Chapter 8	8	1	4	6	0
Chapter 9	17	0	4	0	6
Chapter 10	3	0	0	0	0
Total	74 (67.9%)	3 (2.8%)	32 (29.4%)	27	6

109

*Note

IC: Inner Circle; OC: Outer Circle; EC: Expanding Circle

Nc: Not counted; Co: Counted once

Images Construction or Deconstruction of Power Relations between the Inner and the Outer/Expanding Circles

Inner Circle culture has dominated the textbook used. Some indicators of inner circle cultures were found in the pictures that display the inner circle look people indicated through their physical appearance, such as blonde, white-skinned, blue and brown eyes, and pointed nose. However, some of the people shown belong to Afro-Americans. Some famous figures were also displayed in the book, such as Albert Einstein, Angelina Jolie, David Beckham, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, etc. Other associations with Inner Circle culture are also indicated by their outfit. In addition, food such as pizza, fries, burgers, and cola were other cultures associated with inner circle countries.

Data also show that chapter 9 was the chapter that contains the highest number of Inner Circle cultures, as many of 17 counts. The topic of this chapter is 'Overall, It's an Excellent Movie,' which discusses a lot about movies. The distribution of the coded data is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Images construction or deconstruction of power relations

Chapter	Kachru's Three Circles		
	Inner Circle	Outer Circle	Expanding Circle
I	3 Description of associated culture: <i>American-look people, Pointed noses, Western look model, open dress, Western typical musical concert</i>	0 Description of associated culture: <i>Malaysian people (Upin Ipin icon)</i>	3 Description of associated culture: <i>Indonesian map, Indonesian batik, Indonesian food (Lumpia)</i>
II	3 Description of associated culture: <i>Blond, the whites Western look house Fruits arrangement, blond seller, prices are in dollars.</i>	0 -	2 Description of associated culture: <i>Indonesian train Indonesian look people</i>
III	1 Description of associated culture: <i>Dollar, a man with a nice suite</i>	0	5 Description of associated culture: <i>Logo of KPK Logo of ICW</i>
IV	14 Description of associated culture: <i>The Whites Einstein, an Afro-American man/woman, has a pointed nose, is blond, has white, blue eyes, is a Mexican woman, Nort Pole, is a US figure, and is a US police car.</i>	0 -	6 Description of associated culture: <i>Asian typical girl, Asian fruits, Mandarin writing, Japanese-look student</i>
V	11 Description of associated culture: <i>Western figures, US athletes, Afro-American man/woman</i>	1 Description of associated culture: <i>European figure</i>	2 Description of associated culture: <i>Indonesian athletes, Indonesian-look people</i>
VI	5 Description of associated culture: <i>Western typical road and car, gadgets, English written signs, snowy mountain, US nuclear, burger, fries, Coca-Cola</i>	0 -	0 -
VII	9 Description of associated culture: <i>Miss Universe, blond man/woman, English pamphlet</i>	0 0	6 Description of associated culture: <i>East-Asian people, Jakarta busway shelter, Asian typical class</i>
VIII	8 Description of associated culture: <i>Blond man/woman, animals with snow, US bus type, US theatre</i>	1 Description of associated culture: <i>Utrecht Univ- Netherland</i>	4 Description of associated culture: <i>China, Panda, Orangutan in Indonesian forest</i>
IX	17 Description of associated culture: <i>US figures, western movies, Walt Disney, games</i>	0 -	4 Description of associated culture: <i>Korean movie, European movie, Indonesian movie/show</i>
X	3 Description of associated culture: <i>Blond and white man/woman</i>	0 -	0 -
Total	74	2	32

Figure 2. Examples of textbook content representing inner circle culture

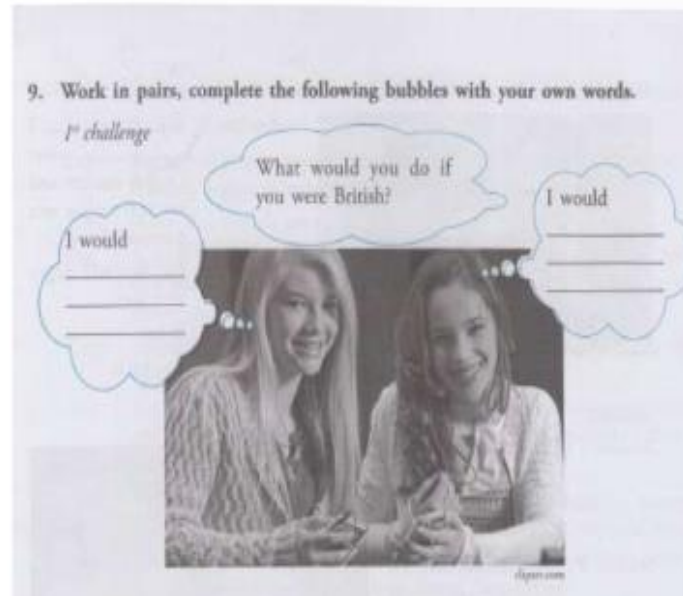


Figure 3. Representation of inner circle culture in the textbook

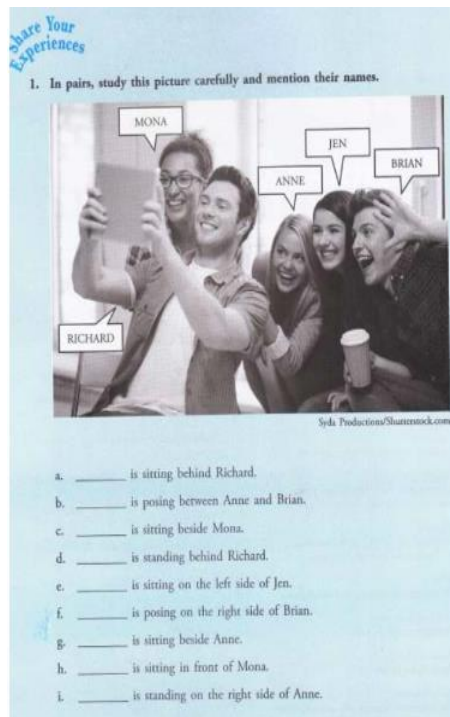


Figure 4. Representation of inner circle culture actress in the textbook



Discussions

The research draws on the dominant image used in Indonesian EFL commercial textbooks. It shows that the images presented in the textbook are primarily dominated by the Inner Circle cultural representation over the Extended and Outer Circle, which is counted at 67.9 %, 29.4%, and 2.8%, respectively. The cultural representation was shown through Western-looking people, outfits, movies, and food. The Inner Circle culture is linked to the US, UK, and Canada.

Liu (2020) found that American and British culture's dominance in the textbook is prevalent, while the culture of the outer and expanding circle is ignored. Furthermore, the students' local culture, the Chinese culture, is not well presented. Similarly, in the Turkish textbook, cultural representation is dominant, with the inner circle culture having less exposure to local culture (Arslan, 2016; Ulum & Köksal, 2021). In the Mongolian context, the English textbook received criticism as it does not represent a multicultural perspective. Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw (2021) asserted that such a textbook could bring tension in power relations among nations, ethnicities, social classes, and genders because of its unbalanced cultural representation. Another context was an Iranian school that examined its textbook, which has been a carrier of Western culture and values (Bahrami, 2015).

This issue has received strong criticism from ELT experts, such as Pennycook (2017), who argued that English teaching is an industry for profit-making through the development of teaching materials and proficiency tests, which is also linked to colonialism. Pennycook (2006) and Phillipson (2012) asserted that the expansion of ELT as a market is tightly linked to finance, politics, and cultural aspects due to economic concerns in both the US and the UK. In reviewing the global commercial ELT industry, textbooks published by international publishers are the primary carrier of ELT throughout the world. However, textbook producers need to ensure the sensitivity of the social culture of a country.

For most people, the text does not carry political interest. Nonetheless, the extensive production of a textbook is not value-free. It may contain a hidden curriculum. As Apple (2012) has stated, literacy or textbooks encompass hidden curricula as they are the transmitters of values widely decided to approve the actual social order. In addition, the textbook content presents skilled and famous people limited to English-speaking Westerners. Lastly, the researcher suggests that teachers and local students can produce

their textbooks to avoid the dominance of the Inner Circle models of English. In addition, the textbook content presents skilled and famous people limited to English-speaking Westerners. Lastly, the researcher suggests that teachers and local students can produce their textbooks to avoid the dominance of the Inner Circle models of English.

However, English textbooks can be a wide-open door for Western value dissemination. Although not all values should be restricted, some values contradict the Muslim lifestyle, such as the way how Western people dress, celebrate their special day, food, and many more. Still, teachers at Islamic-affiliated schools can infuse Western culture through English, yet the materials should be carefully selected. Otherwise, instead of building Muslim youth to be a good ambassador of Islam, without mindful material selection, the Muslim young generation will be easily assimilated to Western values. Huntington (2000) emphasized that, indeed, there is a clash of civilizations between the West and the East, which is caused by, among others, economic and cultural entities and ideology.

This study is still limited to analyzing the images of the textbook. Further researchers can delve into the text or other aspects of the textbook. Also, the English textbook analysis can be done through a comparative study so that a more comprehensive conclusion and the complex interplay between the English textbook and ideology can be drawn.

This research contributes to understanding the complex intersection between discourse markers used in the text and the language ideology associated with it. The figure below formulates the Critical Discourse Analysis model of the EFL textbook used in Islamic-affiliated schools.

Conclusion and Implication

This study concludes that a textbook used in Islamic-affiliated schools brings more inner circle culture, i.e., American, British, and Australian culture. It accounts for 67.9% of images used in textbooks that bring Western ideologies. Thus, the textbook serves to transmit other ideologies into the ideology of the periphery students. Therefore, schools in the Indonesian context, particularly those affiliated with Islamic schools, should design English materials on their own. The main reason is that Western cultural entities can be contradictive to Muslim values. English teaching materials should be culturally responsive to

Muslim students' values and norms. This research finding suggests that teachers teaching at Islamic-affiliated schools should design their teaching materials to cater to culturally responsive content. With this, students are expected to learn English contextually.

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