

Anglo-centrism in Indonesian ELT Textbooks

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Abstract: The objective of the study is examining to what extent is Anglo-centrism embedded in ELT textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia. The textbook was developed by local English teachers, supervised and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. The study focuses on analysing critical elements in the passages in the textbooks. Fifty-nine passages were analysed quantitatively using Moran's (2001) cultural dimensions and qualitatively using a set of guideline questions developed from Fairclough's (2001) three dimensions of discourse analysis. The findings show that Anglo-centrism is the second major ideology after Indonesia-centrism. It is found in thirteen passages; four passages in Grade X, three passages in Grade XI, and six passages in Grade XII. Out of five dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, Communities), only persons and products are found in the passages. The products presented include infrastructure, literature, places, and food. The findings are presented descriptively with assorted excerpts from the passages followed by discussions for each excerpt. Suggestions on how to lessen Anglo-centrism transfer are presented on the conclusion.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, Critical Applied Linguists have been interested in revealing the unequal power relationship between dominating centre countries and dominated periphery countries in the use of English as an international language. Dominating centre refers to Anglophone western communities while dominated periphery are those countries in which English is used as the second or foreign language. The centre maintain its dominance by transferring their values and ideologies through English language teaching (Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 2012; Holliday, 2005). Interestingly, the ideologies are transferred not only by the centre, but also by local authorities in the periphery who spread the ideologies unintentionally since they have been taken for granted and followed without being criticized for generations.

As the centre in this imbalance relationship is Anglophone western countries (UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), the present study focuses on Anglo-centrism which is foregrounded in all aspects of English language teaching (ELT) pedagogies, including ELT textbooks as the main source of materials. ELT textbooks used in most periphery countries are global commercial textbooks published by the centre (Fitzgibbon, 2013;

Litz, 2005; Melliti, 2013). As global textbooks are marketed internationally, the contents are potentially do not suit local values and contexts. Most of the values presented are those of the westerners (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 2005; Kumaravadevelu, 2012; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson 1992) which indicate imbalance exposure with Anglophone values being emphasized.

While in most periphery countries imported global commercial textbooks are prioritized, in Indonesia the textbooks are developed by local English teachers based on the latest curriculum revised, under the supervision of The Ministry of Education and Culture (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). However, Anglo-centrism might still unconsciously inserted in the textbooks because western values hijacking ELT have been passed down for generations they are taken for granted and seen as normal (Canagarajah, 1999; Fairclough, 2001; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 2007). Hence, the present study aims at revealing Anglo-centrism embedded in an ELT textbooks for senior high schools, published by The Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We strongly encourage authors to use this document for the preparation of the camera-ready. Please follow the instructions closely in order to make the volume look as uniform as possible (Moore and Lopes, 1999).

Please remember that all the papers must be in English and without orthographic errors.

The study is based on the theories of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Applied Linguistics, sprung from Critical Theory. As Critical Theory sees domination as a problem (Fuchs, 2015), it concerns the imbalance power in the society. Accordingly, Critical Applied Linguistics concerns the dominance and inequality in ELT (Pennycook, 2001). While Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on analysing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, in equality and bias (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 1998). The theories are used as the theoretical framework in this study since the study focuses on critically analysing written discourse in form of passages.

2.1 Anglo-centrism as an Unquestioned Ideology in ELT

Ideology is defined by Eagleton (1991) and van Dijk (2003) as values and ideas of a particular social group encrypting certain interests related to social power that are legitimating and naturalizing. Ideology and power are intertwined (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 1998), hence, the presence of ideology is related to social power. The ideologies followed in the society are those of hegemony groups, or groups with higher social power (Gramsci, 1971).

Anglo-centrism refers to ethnocentric beliefs that Anglophone western countries (North America, Britain, New Zealand, and Australia) are more dominant over non-Anglophone countries, especially the ones outside the West as stated by Holliday (2005), Canagarajah (1999), Phillipson (2012), and Pennycook (1994). In fact, before EIL, WE, and ELF become concerns in ELT, Anglo-centrism has been seen as normal in ELT. One example of Anglo-centrism in ELT is the use of standardized English. It reflects the dominance of Anglophone countries over English (Lippi-Green, 1997) which implies that English speakers and learners have to follow the rules and norms of the native English countries. One of the measurements of proficient English speakers are their ability to use standardized English, either British or American English (Lippi-Green, 1997), while accents other than standardized English are categorized as deviant (Baker, 2015). Not only standardized English,

the cultural representations attached to English are those of Anglophone countries (Pennycook, 1994). When students learn English, they are commonly exposed to the cultures of the West rather than their own local cultures.

Another case of Anglo-centrism in ELT is the great one-way flows of ELT resources from the Anglophone communities to the periphery countries (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 2005; Phillipson 1992) that bring economic advantages to the hegemonic communities (Crystal, 2003; Phillipson 1992), such as methodology, human resources, textbooks and other teaching media. (Wu & Tarc, 2016) state that Anglophone communities successfully distribute and market their pedagogies to non-Anglophone countries, especially in the East. Another resource that Anglophone countries have benefitted from ELT is human resource. Holliday (2015), sharing similar idea with Phillipson's (1992) native fallacy, uses the term native-speakerism to explain the phenomena in ELT where native English teachers are crowned as legitimate owner of English and the methodology that they have are superior over non-native English teachers.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on analysing fifty-nine passages in Indonesian ELT textbooks for senior high school students. The study employs Moran's (2001) cultural dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, and Communities) and Fairclough's (2001) three dimensions of critical discourse analysis (description-interpretation-explanation). The three dimensions of discourse analysis is used as a framework to construct a set of guideline questions to detect the indications of Anglo-centrism by critically observing the use of pronouns, wording, metaphors, semantic relations, genre, and the representation of ethos, values, and cultures in the passages. Three steps of reading are taken to analyse the materials: 1) general reading, aiming at understanding main ideas; 2) specific reading, marking suspicious words, phrases, and sentences indicating certain ideologies; 3) critical reading, analysing the highlighted points and questioning the motives lie behind the word choices.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study reveals that Indonesian government emphasizes Indonesian cultural values in most of the passages in the textbooks. Indonesian-centrism is the major ideology found in twenty-three passages; nine passages in Grade X textbook, seven passages in Grade XI textbook, and seven passages in Grade XII textbook. However, Indonesian-centrism is not discussed further since the study focuses on Anglo-centrism in the textbooks.

Anglo-centrism is the second major ideology found after Indonesia-centrism. It is found in thirteen passages; four passages in Grade X, three passages in Grade XI, and six passages in Grade XII. Out of five dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, Communities), only persons and products are found in the passages. The products presented include infrastructure, literature, places, and food.

Persons. Persons refer to individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. The depictions of persons from Anglophone communities are found in six passages. Three passages holistically highlight the superiority of persons from the West. The passages “Interview with the Wright Brothers” and “Harold Pinter Won a Nobel Prize” present figures from the UK. One passage of job application portrays persons from the UK in professional setting. Three other passages inserted Anglo-centrism of the persons in small portions. In the passage “An E-mail from Hannah”, Anglo-centrism in term of persons can be seen in the following excerpts:

“I know your name from my friend, Caroline. She told me that you sent her an email telling her that you would like to have more pen pals from the US. I’d like to be your E-pal. You sound really cool!”

(Grade X, Page 4, Paragraph 1)

The excerpt implies that students in Indonesia can improve their English by communicating with only native English speakers (henceforth referred to as NES), which support the idea of Anglo-centrism. Like in other periphery countries, in Indonesia people believe that communicating with native speakers, or living in native speakers communities will accelerate English communicative competence (Chun, 2014; Wu & Ke, 2009). This belief has been lasted for generations and is somehow seen normal for Indonesian people. The fact is that recent studies reveal that both NES and NNES have their own strengths in improving students’ English (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). A study conducted by

Walkinshaw and Oanh (2014) shows that NESs are superior in terms of pronunciation and cultural knowledge, while non-native English speakers (henceforth referred to as NNES) are dominant in grammars since they learn the language explicitly.

At school, I have many Hmong friends who were not fully fluent in English. Their family moved here from Asia. I enjoy talking to them about our different cultures.

(Grade X, Page 4, Paragraph 3)

Referring to Hmong as influent English speakers might initiates the idea that NNES are not able to reach the English proficiency as NES does. It reinforces the belief that NES are fluent and competent in English, while NNES are influent and incompetent in English. This, again, leads to Anglo-centrism in a way that speakers from Anglophone countries are declared as the legitimate speakers of English while NNES are illegitimate over English (Bourdieu, 1991; Holliday, 2006; Phillipson, 1992). This kind of perception might demotivate students because they think it is impossible for NNES to speak as fluent and as natural as NES, and that there is nothing they can do about it because they are not born as NES. Those thoughts are not absolutely right. There are possibilities for NNES to reach native-like or native-near proficiency as argued by Phillipson (1992) which infer that English competencies are not a birthright and can be achieved by whoever despite their nationalities and races.

Products. Products include artefacts (food, documents, language, money, tools), places (buildings, cities, houses), institutions (family, law, economy, religion, education, politics), and art forms (music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture). The products of the Anglophone communities found in this research include places, literature, food, infrastructure, living quality, education, and knowledge as presented and discussed below.

Places. Anglo-centrism found in this research is revealed to promote places in Anglophone communities. Western centrism in term of places is found in four passages. The passage “Visiting Niagara Falls” promotes Niagara Falls as a multipurpose tourist destination.

The Niagara Falls are renowned both for their beauty and as a valuable source of hydroelectric power. Managing the balance between recreational, commercial, and industrial uses has been a challenge for the stewards of the falls since the 19th century.

(Grade X, Page 84, Paragraph 8)

Anglo-centrism can be seen from the writers' decision to present The Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is a famous tourism destination that most Indonesian students know. They even know Niagara Falls better than numerous beautiful, yet infamous waterfalls in Indonesia. Anglo-centrism can be lessened by: 1) juxtaposing the Niagara Falls with one of waterfalls in Indonesia that are used as a hydroelectric power. For example, Sigura-gura Waterfalls in Sumatera which is the highest waterfall in Indonesia and is used as a hydroelectric power. However, not many students in Indonesia know about this waterfall; 2) juxtaposing the Niagara Falls with waterfalls from periphery countries other than Indonesia; 3) choosing natural tourism objects from periphery countries to give students new knowledge.

Literature. Anglo-centrism can also be identified from literary works chosen. There are three literary works reflecting Anglo-centrism featured in the textbooks. The Last Leaf is an Anglophone literature written by O. Henry, depicting Anglophone communities.

Many artists lived in Greenwich Village in New York City. Sue and Johnsy, two artists also lived there in a studio apartment.

(Grade XI, Page 47, Paragraph 1)

The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

(Grade XI, Page 47, Paragraph 7)

A persistent, cold raining was falling, mingled with snow.

(Grade XI, Page 47, Paragraph 9)

The story potentially transfer Anglo-centrism as the names, setting, and condition depicted in the story are related to western communities. However, since the story portrays the disadvantage of winter, as it can cause pneumonia, the Anglo-centrism presented is less strong. This contradicts the portrayal of beautiful winter and autumn in the West that is commonly found in English short stories that reflect Anglo-centrism.

Food. Anglo-centrism highlighting western food can be seen in three procedure passages: How to Make Cheese Toast and How to Make Chocolate Dipped Strawberry. The passage 'How to Make Cheese Toast' reflects the Anglo-centrism as cheese toast is originally from the UK. In the same vein, chocolate dipped strawberry is a typical valentine's gift originated from the US. On the other hand, pizza is a worldwide famous food originated from Italy.

Infrastructure. There is one excerpt of a passage 'An E-mail from Hannah' that reflect the developed, civilized infrastructure in the US that can be seen as follows:

I haven't got much interest in fashion, although we have 'Mall of America,' the biggest mall in Minnesota. We can reach the mall very easily. A commuter train runs every 15 minutes, buses also come from different directions. We can also drive to the mall. It's much faster than going there by train or by bus.

(Grade X, Page 4, Paragraph 4)

The excerpt shows the depiction of how developed and efficient Hannah's life in America is. This kind of portrayal of Anglophone countries, which Canagarajah (1999) said "rose-tinted, but not entirely false" (p. 12), is very commonly inserted in ELT. Anglophone centre countries are framed by media, and perceived by periphery countries, as economically more developed and civilized than periphery countries. What presented in the textbooks is all about the good sides of western countries, while the existed bad sides remain unrevealed (Canagarajah, 1999). In contrary to the depiction of the centre, the periphery countries are exposed on the bad sides and criticized that they should learn from the centre countries. The good sides of periphery countries are not frequently discussed. These imbalance imageries between centre and periphery countries are what often depicted in ELT textbooks might make the students either motivated to be the part of it by learning English, or demotivated because they feel inferior of their own condition.

5 CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings, it can be said that Indonesian government has developed the materials well by emphasizing on Indonesia-centrism. However, Anglo-centrism is found to be the second major ideology after Indonesia-centrism. The phenomena is probably seen as normal in ELT as they have been naturalized for generations in ELT process in Indonesia. Therefore, this study reveals that those 'natural and normal' phenomena in ELT is neither natural nor normal. The transfer of Anglo-centrism can be lessened by: 1) providing Indonesian cultures or other cultures from periphery countries in line with the cultures of the centre countries; 2) providing the roles of Indonesians and other important figures from the periphery countries so that they are not marginalized. By giving equal importance to

Indonesia, the periphery, and the centre countries, the harm of Anglo-centrism could be prevented.

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