

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 analyzing critical elements in the passages in the textbooks. Fifty-nine passages were analysed quantitatively using Moran's [1] cultural dimensions and qualitatively using a set of guideline questions developed from Fairclough's [2] 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 learning 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.

Keywords—critical discourse analysis, ELT textbook, EIL, ideology, Anglo-centrism

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of paradigms such as English as International Language (EIL), World Englishes (WE), and English as Lingua Franca (ELF) in the last decades have been awakening studies on Critical Applied Linguistics regarding the use of English as an international language. Critically applied linguists have been trying to reveal the unequal power relationship between dominating center countries and dominated periphery countries. The dominating center refers to Anglophone western communities while the dominated periphery is those countries in which English is used as the second or foreign language. In the past, the center maintained their dominance over periphery countries through colonialism. In the modern era, the dominance is maintained by transferring their values and ideologies through English language teaching [1]–[3]. Interestingly, the ideologies are transferred not only by the center but also by local authorities in the periphery. They mostly spread the ideologies unintentionally since they have been taken for granted and followed without being criticized.

As the center in this imbalanced relationship is Anglophone western countries (the 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 center [4]–[6]. The choice of textbooks itself represents Anglo-centrism as textbooks published by Anglophone countries are preferable over locally published ones. Besides, 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 westerns [2], [3], [7]–[9] which indicate imbalance exposure with Anglophone values being emphasized.

While in most periphery countries imported global commercial textbooks are prioritized, in Indonesia, the government has been publishing textbooks for all school subjects, including English. The textbooks are developed by local English teachers based on the latest curriculum revised, under the supervision of The Ministry of Education and Culture [10]. However, although the textbooks are developed by local teachers and authorities, Anglo-centrism might still unconsciously inserted in the textbooks. It is because western values hijacking ELT have been passed down for generations they are taken for granted and seen as normal [2], [7], [11], [12]. Hence, the present study aims at revealing Anglo-centrism embedded in ELT textbooks for senior high schools, published by The Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is based on the theories of Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Applied Linguistics, sprung from Critical Theory. Critical Theory sees domination as a problem [13]; it concerns the imbalance power in society. Accordingly, Critical Applied Linguistics holds a belief that the values and practices in applied linguistics need to be criticized [8]. It concerns the dominance and inequality in ELT [14]. While Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias [11], [15]. The aforementioned theories are used as the theoretical framework in this study since the study focuses on critically analyzing written discourse in the form of passages.

A. Anglo-Centrism as an unquestioned ideology in ELT

Ideology is defined by Eagleton [16] and van Dijk [17] as values and ideas of a particular social group encrypting certain interests related to social power that is legitimating and naturalizing. Ideology and power are intertwined [11], [15], [18]; hence, the presence of ideology is related to social power. The ideologies followed in the society are those of hegemony groups. Hegemony groups are those owning the dominant power and oppress other groups with less power [19]. The hegemony gain and maintain their

social power by convincing and manipulating other minor groups to voluntarily follow their values and ideas [16], [19]. When the ideologies of the hegemony groups are followed for generations without being questioned, they will be seen as normal [16].

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 [3], Canagarajah [2], Phillipson [1], and Pennycook [8]. 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 [20] 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 is their ability to use standardized English, either British or American English [20], while accents other than standardized English are categorized as deviant [21]. Not only standardized English, but the cultural representations attached to English are also those of Anglophone countries [8]. 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 [2], [3], [22] that bring economic advantages to the hegemonic communities [1], [23], such as methodology, human resources, textbooks and other teaching media. Wu & Tarc [24] 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 a human resource. Holliday [3], sharing the similar idea with Phillipson's [7] native fallacy, uses the term native-speakerism to explain the phenomena in ELT where native English teachers are crowned as the legitimate owner of English and the methodology that they have are superior over non-native English teachers.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on analyzing passages in Indonesian ELT textbooks for senior high school students. In the Grade X textbook, there are nineteen passages distributed in eighteen units. In Grade XI there are seventeen passages distributed in eleven units. In Grade XII there are twenty-three passages distributed in fifteen units. Therefore, fifty-nine passages will be analyzed from the textbooks. The study employs Moran's [25] cultural dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, Communities) and Fairclough's [11] three dimensions of critical discourse analysis (description-interpretation-explanation). The three dimensions of discourse analysis are 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 analyze the materials. The first step was general reading aiming at understanding the general ideas of the passages without judgments. The second step is specific reading where suspicious words, phrases, and sentences indicating certain

ideologies were marked for deeper analysis. The third step is critical reading by analyzing the highlighted points and questioning the motives lie behind the word choices.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study reveals that the Indonesian government has done a good job in emphasizing on Indonesian cultural values in most of the passages in the textbooks. There are total fifty-nine passages in three 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.

A. Persons

Persons refer to individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. The notion used in this research refers to members of western communities. 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 a 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 [26], [27]. 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 [28]–[30]. A study conducted by Walkinshaw and Oanh [28] 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 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 initiate the idea that NNES are not able to reach the English proficiency as NES does. It reinforces the belief that NES is 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 [7], [18], [31]. 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 [7] which infer that English competencies are not a birthright and can be achieved by whoever despite their nationalities and races.

B. Products

Products include artifacts (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.

1) *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)

The objective of the unit is to present descriptive texts related to tourism objects. Anglo-centrism can be seen from the writers’ decision to present The Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is a famous tourist 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 the waterfalls in Indonesia that are used as hydroelectric power. For example, Sigura-Gura Waterfalls in Sumatera which is the highest waterfall in Indonesia and is used as 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.

In the same vein, the passage “Six Things To Do If You Visit Seattle” promotes tourism objects in Seattle and explicitly invite the readers to visit Seattle.

There are six must-have experiences that you should do if you visit Seattle where city and nature come together.
(Grade XII, Page 2, Paragraph 1)

You can also stroll around downtown’s galleries, boutiques, coffeehouses, and cafes.
(Grade XII, Page 2, Paragraph 2)

Seattle Center, a premier destination for arts, entertainment and leisure activities.
(Grade XII, Page 2, Paragraph 5)

Anglo-centrism can be explicitly detected right from the title of the passage “Let’s Visit Seattle.” The inviting sentence represents most Indonesians’ dream. As Indonesians are bombarded with the beautiful sides of the West by media, a trip to western countries become one of the luxurious trips they dream of. This passage reinforces the depictions of western countries, in this case, the US, as the top list place to visit for a holiday. The passage describes Seattle as a perfection where visitors can enjoy the city and nature at the same time, with all the attractions it has.

2) *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 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)

“You know Sue; someday I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.”
(Grade XI, Page 47, Paragraph 11)

Despite being taught globally in the English classroom, just like other English and American literature, the story potentially transfers Anglo-centrism. 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 not very 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.

3) *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 that originated from the US. On the other hand, pizza is a worldwide famous food that originated in Italy. However, since the passages do not state the origin of the food explicitly, the researcher does not provide specific excerpts supporting this section.

4) *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 [2] said “rose-tinted, but not entirely false” (p. 12), is very commonly inserted in ELT. Anglophone center 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 [2]. In contrary to the depiction of the center, the periphery countries are exposed to the bad sides and criticized that they should learn from the center countries. The good sides of periphery countries are not frequently discussed. These imbalance imageries between the center 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.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, it can be said that the 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 are 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 are 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 center 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 center countries, the harm of Anglo-centrism could be prevented. As this study is the first study analyzing the ELT textbooks in Indonesia using CDA, there are plenty of aspects to do further research on. First, other researchers can analyze the content of EFL textbooks for a senior high school other than the passages, such as the exercises and images. Second, they can analyze the content of EFL textbooks produced by the government for junior high school level. Further research also can analyze further on the ideology of Indonesia-centrism that the government seems to promote in the textbooks. They can analyze if there is intra-cultural-imperialism in Indonesia-centrism presented in the passages. Other than governmental EFL textbooks, there are various EFL textbooks published by non-governmental publishing houses. It is interesting to analyze the ideologies and cultural representations embedded in those textbooks, under the light of EIL. A survey study on the response of

textbooks users towards ideologies foregrounded in the textbooks also can be taken into consideration.

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