

# The Representation of Cultural Content in *Global Elementary Coursebook*

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## ABSTRACT

This study was to find out the types of cultural content source found in the reading and listening texts presented in *Global elementary coursebook* (2012) and the similarities and differences of the types of cultural content source found in those texts. The data were analyzed using the theory of types of cultural content source proposed by Matsuda (2012). The findings of this study showed that the reading texts met 54.9% of global culture, 35.3% of target culture, and 9.8% of local culture while the listening texts met 72.5% of global culture, 25% of target culture, and 2.5% of local culture. All in all, as proposed by Matsuda (2012), a good coursebook is the one that has multiple sources of cultural content; and *Global elementary coursebook* fulfills this criterion as it has three types of cultural content source.

**Keyword:** Culture, Global Culture, Target Culture, Local Culture

“Reinforced by globalization, today English is used on all seven continents, is an official or second language in more than 100 countries, and is used as an official language in more than 85% of international organizations” (Selvi and Yazan, 2013, p. 2). English is also the means of communication of the speakers of the same or different cultural background and the number of non-native speakers of English has outnumbered the native speakers “by a ratio of 3:1” (p. 2).

The rise of English as an international language (EIL) and the resultant status of English as a tool for communication all over the world has raised new challenges to the English language teaching profession in the sense that some of the already dominant concepts, goals, and objectives should be put into consideration (McKay, 2002). Considering the role of EIL, nowadays the teaching of EIL should be based on promoting users to communicate with others within their own cultures and intercultural communication contexts. In other words, McKay (2012), as cited in Selvi and Yazan (2013, p. 16) states “EIL should be taught in a way that respects the local culture of learning”.

In this case, coursebook is also important because it has a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Coursebook guides the teacher in delivering the content of the teaching and learning process. As stated by Bardovi-Harlig (1996) in Matsuda (2012) coursebooks are often considered as a very important source of input by students. Moreover, “English as an International language courses and materials should represent global culture (issues and themes that cut across geographical and national boundaries), culture(s) of future interlocutors, and learners’ own culture” (Selvi and Yazan, 2013, p. 15).

In this present study, the writer chose *Global* coursebook to be analyzed. *Global* coursebook is “a general English coursebook which provides a sophisticated, cultured experience for its users” for different levels (Macmillan Publishers, 2015a, para. 1). For this study, the writer chose *Global elementary coursebook* because the writer supported Cakir’s opinion (2006) that the introduction of cultural value of the language can be started at the elementary level with discussion of the daily life of the peer group in other language community.

The theory of culture as proposed by Matsuda (2012) was used in this study. According to Matsuda (2012), there are three types of cultural content source that can be used in language coursebooks:

“The first source of cultural content is global culture” (p. 176). Global culture means that the topics include the global society as a whole and the cross-cultural such as world peace and environment conservation (2012). The activities can be in the form of readings, class discussion, and course assignments to create the sense of global citizenship among students (2012). The teachers among the department (inter-subject/departmental) might also collaborate and coordinate to create

topic from multiple perspectives and reinforce learning in two languages. For example, English teacher and science teacher can develop a unit on world ecology collaboratively (2012). The benefit of having global culture in the material is that learners are aware in dealing with others in global purposes or in encountering for trade, tourism, and social contact (McKay, 2004).

“The second source is the culture(s) of the future interlocutors” (Matsuda, 2012, p. 177). As English is now the language mostly used in the world, the culture of the speakers has become part of the English-speaking world (2012). As students do not know whom they will meet in the future as their interlocutors, the teaching materials must include not only countries and regions from different part of the world but also specific functions of English in a certain community in which English is used for communication (Matsuda, 2012).

“The third source of cultural content is the learner’s own culture” (Matsuda, 2012, p. 177). English is not only about the culture of British and American. The use of English is not limited to exchanges between native and non-native speakers of English. There is a need to build and maintain a mutually respectful relationship with others so it will be equal (2012). Therefore, to be familiar with outsider’s perspective should be part of teacher’s teaching goal. Furthermore, culture is not limited to traditional and stereotypical, such as “sushi” for Japan (2012). The practices and beliefs that students experience in school, family, and community are also considered as local culture. The teaching material should have the local culture so that learners can reflect and describe their own culture (2012).

Matsuda’s ideas inspired the present writer to find out:

- a. What are the types of cultural content source found in the reading texts presented in *Global elementary coursebook*?
- b. What are the types of cultural content source found in the listening texts presented in *Global elementary coursebook*?
- c. What are the similarities and differences of the types of cultural content source found in the reading texts and listening texts presented in *Global elementary coursebook*?

## **METHODS**

In this study, the writer used qualitative approach particularly documentary analysis in the form of material evaluation. The focus was in analyzing the entity of reading texts and listening texts of a coursebook entitled *Global elementary coursebook*, published by Macmillan Education in 2010 in London and written by Lindsay Clandfield and Kate Pickering, in term of the types of cultural content source.

This coursebook is sold worldwide including in Indonesia and other Asia countries projecting the coursebook can meet the needs of different culture users, not only Europe but also Asia. For this study, the writer considered the learner’s own culture as Asian culture and the culture(s) of the future interlocutors as countries and regions from different part of the world except Asia whereas for global culture she adhered Matsuda’s definition (2012).

In order to collect the data, the writer located all the reading texts and listening texts published in *Global elementary coursebook*. The order of both the reading texts and listening texts was determined by the coursebook. The writer only listed them down while numbering them. For all of these texts, the writer applied two digits numbering system such as, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, and etc. The first digit represents the unit of the texts and the second digit refers to the order of the texts found.

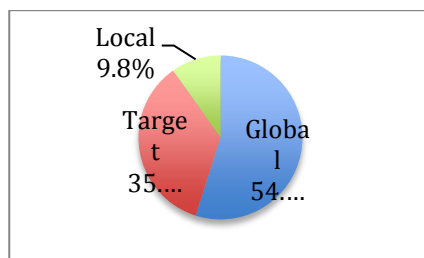
In analyzing the data, first the writer read the reading texts and the listening texts published on the coursebook to find statements or words that showed the cultural representation of the texts. To determine the types of the culture that each text had, the present writer referred back to the main theory particularly on what Matsuda (2012) stated about the types of cultural content source.

After that, the writer counted the total of each type of cultural content source in the reading texts and listening texts. Third, the writer counted the percentage of each type of cultural content source in the reading texts and listening texts. After getting the percentage score of the types of cultural content source in reading texts and listening texts, the writer tried to find the similarities and differences of each type of cultural content source in the reading texts and listening texts.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The writer found that there were three types of cultural content source in the reading and listening texts of the coursebook. Moreover, the writer found two texts that contain more than one type of cultural content source. The general findings were presented below.

Chart 1 Types of Cultural Content Source in Reading Texts



Related to the first research question about the types of cultural content source found in the reading texts presented in *Global* elementary coursebook, the writer found that the reading texts presented on *Global* elementary coursebook met 54.9% of global culture, 35.3% of target culture, and 9.8% of local culture.

One of the examples of global culture in the reading texts can be seen from *Global English Fact* (unit 1, page 6). *Global English Fact* contains social global culture because it tells about English as an international language as follows:

- “English is the first or second language for more than 500 million people in the world” (line 1-2).
- “English is an official language in more than 50 countries” (line 3).
- “There are many international words in English” (line 6-7).
- “People know a lot of English because it is connected to the world of music, travel, business, fashion, or computers” (line 14-16).

The facts above are in line with Matsuda (2012) statement that one example of a global topic is that of the role of EIL itself.

One of the examples of target culture in the reading texts can be seen from *The UK and US telecommunication* (unit 1, page 12). *The UK and US telecommunication* tells specifically about what happen in UK and US. Some sentences that show the target culture can be found in the following lines:

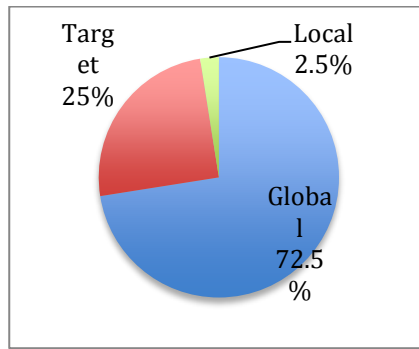
- “In the UK it is called a *mobile phone* and in the US it is called a *cell phone*” (line 1-2).
- “The international phone code for the UK is 44. For the US it is 1” (line 11-12).
- “The information number (the number to find other numbers) is 118 in the UK. In the US it is 411.” (line 15-16).

One of the examples of local culture in the reading texts can be seen from *Rites of passage* (unit 9, page 104). *Rites of passage* is a text that carries attitudinal local culture. Based on the text, a rite of passage is a ceremony to mark an important time in one’s life. This text specifically tells about rites of passage in Mongolia that is child’s first haircut. The typical rituals of Mongolian’s rite of passage are:

- “In Mongolia, the biggest and most important rite of passage for a child is the first haircut” (line 1-2).
- “Boys have the first haircut in an even year (when they are two, four or six years old)” (line 3-5).
- “Girls have the first haircut in an odd year (when they are three or fives years old)” (line 5-6).
- “After the haircut the mother keeps the hair and there is a big party” (line 8-9).

This typical rite of passage only happens in Mongolia, East-Central Asia. That is why this text is considered as a text that carries local culture.

Chart 2 Types of Cultural Content Source in Listening Texts



Dealing with the second research question about the types of cultural content source found in the listening texts presented in *Global* elementary coursebook, the writer found that the listening texts presented on *Global* elementary coursebook met 72.5% of global culture, 25% of target culture, and 2.5% of local culture.

One of the examples of global culture in the listening texts can be seen from text number 1.17 and 1.18 (unit 1, page 152). These texts contain social global culture. The text number 1.17 presents dialog between hotel officer and customer. The hotel officer asks about personal data such as, “Thank you. And your phone number please?” (line 5) and “And finally your email address, please” (line 9). The text number 1.18 presents dialog between nurse and patient. The nurse also asks about personal data such as, “What’s her name?” (line 19) and “What’s your phone number Mr. Morley?” (line 23). Asking about personal data is common worldwide especially when someone does registration such as, booking a hotel, seeing a doctor, enrolling an institution, etc.

An example of a text that represents target culture is text number 1.46 (unit 2, page 153). This text tells about Euro commuter – a person who lives in one country and works in a different country. Character described in this text lives in England and works in Barcelona (the capital city of the autonomous community of Catalonia in Spain and Spain’s second most populated city). The target culture presented can be seen from:

- “Well, my Spanish day is different from my English day” (line 1-2).
- “First of all, in Spain I get up at about 8.00 in the morning, a bit later than in England” (line 2-4).
- “Well in England I eat at 12.30, but in Barcelona that’s very early, I normally eat at about 2.00” (line 4-6).
- “Finally, I go to bed at a different time when I’m in Barcelona. Normally about midnight. Yeah, I normally go to bed at 12.00 in Spain” (line 8-11).

An example of a text that represents the physical local culture is text 3.26 (unit 8, page 156). Some sentences that show the local culture can be found in the following lines:

- “This week I’m in Hong Kong to see a very unusual form of public transport: the Mid-Levels Escalator system” (line 1-3).
- “I’m standing at the top of about 800 metres of escalators, and it’s absolutely impossible to see the bottom from here” (line 3-6).
- “It’s 8am here in Hong Kong and right now the escalators are going down, but at ten o’clock they change direction” (line 7-10).

All of these escalator systems can only be found in Hong Kong, a country on China’s south coast, Asia. That is why the writer considers this text represents local culture.

The writer’s further analysis shows interesting findings that there were two texts carrying two sources of cultural content. The first text is a reading text entitled *Meeting Places Around the World* which brings both target and local culture. This text contains social target culture because it tells about meeting places in Dallas, US and Florence, Italy. The typical meeting place for people in Dallas is at the mall while in Florence is at the main square. This text also presents social local culture as well because it tells about meeting places in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and Hanoi,

Vietnam. Both Abu Dhabi and Hanoi are located in Asia. The typical meeting place for people in Abu Dhabi is at home whereas in Hanoi is at the Hoan Kiem Lake.

The second text which has two sources of cultural content is taken from listening section number 1.69, 1.70, 1.71, and 1.72. The text number 1.69 carries social target culture because it presents dialog that happens in Scotland such as, "Is this your first visit to Scotland?" (line 1). Also, the speakers talk about Romania and Budapest such as, "Romania? What part of Romania?" (line 3), "Really? My cousin works in Budapest." (line 5), and "Budapest is in Hungary, not Romania." (line 6). The text number 1.70 contains global culture because the speakers talk about a baby such as, "Is this little Michael?" (line 11); "Yes, isn't he big now!" (line 12); "He is! How old is he?" (line 13). Those are common questions when people met a baby for the first time. The text number 1.71 also presents global culture because the speakers are describing thirty eight years old man such as, "So, what's Alan like?" (line 17); "Oh, he's very nice, and intelligent" (line 18). Those are common flattering expressions. The text number 1.72 brings global culture as well. The speakers in this text talk about a new job such as, "How's the new job?" (line 24); "I like it" (line 25). Those are common questions when people met someone who got a new job.

In this study, the writer also found some similarities and differences of cultural content in the reading and listening texts of the *Global* elementary coursebook. The first similarity is that the majority (more than 50%) of both reading and listening texts focus on global culture.

Another similarity is that both reading and listening texts pay less attention to the local culture (below 10%). Most of the texts contain information of globally used phenomena and expressions which are related to the culture of people around the world. It might be because the coursebook is distributed worldwide so the focus of the authors' and the publisher's is on the topics which are related to the global culture. Such topics might be more attractive to the target audience, i.e. teachers and students worldwide whom the authors and the publisher expect to use the coursebook.

The writer also found that the coursebook presents two texts which contain more than one type of cultural content source. The first text is a reading text entitled *Meeting Places Around the World* (unit 3, page 34). In this reading text, the authors of the coursebook made comparison about meeting places around the world. The second text is listening texts number 1.69, 1.70, 1.71, and 1.72 (unit 3, page 153). In this text, the authors presented cultural contrast in describing so that learners would see the similarities and differences of the types of cultural content source in the coursebook.

Another interesting finding of the present study is that the difference between the representation of the global and the target culture in the reading texts is 20% while in the listening texts is 50%. The significant gap difference shown in the listening texts might be caused by at least two factors.

The first one is that perhaps there were some limitations or constraints of the authors and the publisher in providing various real-life models or speakers coming from different parts of the world. The voices of different models or speakers having different accents, in the present writer's opinion, are essential for bringing the various listening texts carrying various sources of culture into life. If the listening text is related to the culture of Singapore, for example, it might be more appropriate to provide audio file in which the role models or the speakers talk with their Singaporean accents. If the text is on Nigerian culture, then it might be better if the voices of people with Nigerian accents are the ones which are available on the CD. Perhaps it is easier to find speakers with international accents talking about topics on global culture.

The second plausible factor that might be the obstacle for not having more representations of the target (or even the local) culture is because the authors and the publisher know that listening to audio files might not be visible in many places in this world; and that is another reason for giving slightly less attention to the listening section. The audio files or CD is sold separately from the coursebook and the price is much higher than the coursebook. In Indonesia, for example, the price of one coursebook is Rp. 305,000 while the CD is Rp. 523,000. The price of the CD is quite expensive and might not be affordable for some people. There is also a possibility that many schools or courses do not provide good CD players or computers or listening laboratory so audio files might not be necessary for them. In these two cases, the teachers and students will have two possible options, i.e. to read listening transcripts presented on the coursebook by themselves or not to use them at all. In

either case, activity of listening to audio files or CD is not conducted; and that could be one of the reasons why the authors and the publisher drew less focus on the listening part.

## CONCLUSION

The writer focused her analysis on the cultural content of the book entitled *Global elementary coursebook* written by Lindsay Clandfield and Kate Pickering, published by Macmillan Education in 2010. The writer used the theory of the types of cultural content source as proposed by Matsuda (2012). The writer got the data by evaluating the types of cultural content source of the coursebook focusing on the reading texts and listening texts.

The study found out that there were three types of cultural content source in the reading texts and listening texts of the coursebook: (1) the global culture met 54.9% in the reading texts and 72.5% in the listening texts, (2) the target culture met 35.3% in the reading texts and 25% in the listening texts, and (3) the local culture met 9.8% in the reading texts and 2.5% in the listening texts. There were one reading text and one listening text that contain more than one type of cultural content source, i.e. target and local culture and global and target culture.

In conclusion, *Global elementary coursebook* is a good coursebook because it presents three types of cultural content source. This is in line with Matsuda (2012) statement that a good teaching material (coursebook) must be taken from multiple sources of cultural content.

The writer hopes that the findings of this present study would give contribution to the studies of cultural content of coursebooks and increase the teachers' and students' awareness of the culture in language teaching and learning process. The writer also hopes that further study on cultural content in other language coursebooks would be conducted in the future. Another suggestion for the further study is to get classroom teachers or students involved in analyzing the cultural content of a coursebook.

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