

Non-Anglo-Centrism in Indonesian ELT Textbooks

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Abstract—Non-Anglo-centrism is a term coined in this study to refer to the superiority that non-Anglophone, developing western countries have upon non-western countries. The objective of the study is examining to what extent is non-Anglo-centrism embedded in ELT textbooks for senior high school students in Indonesia. The textbooks were 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 analyzed 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 non-Anglo-centrism is found to be minor ideology embedded in two passages. Out of five dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, Communities), only products are found in the passages. The results are presented descriptively with assorted excerpts from the selected passage followed by illustrated scenario and discussions for each excerpt. Suggestions on how to lessen non-Anglo-centrism transfer are presented on the conclusion.

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

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of English Language Teaching as a result of English succeed in being the first international language [1] is, directly and indirectly, spread certain ideologies in it. Sprung from Critical Theory, Critical Applied Linguists have concerned hidden ideologies embedded in ELT as the result of unequal power relationship in it [2]–[5]. Previously conducted studies revealed that ELT contains hidden ideology benefitting the West as the dominating center countries, and oppressing the non-West as the dominated periphery countries [2]–[6].

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 [2], [3], [5], aiming at creating the perception that the West is the most superior. 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.

It cannot be denied that language and culture are intertwined. The term target culture [7] is often to refer to the culture of the native countries. In another word, the target culture of English is the culture of Anglophone countries, where English is spoken as the first language.

Thus, it is perceived to be normal to present and represent Anglophone countries cultures in ELT. However, not only Anglophone countries, non-Anglophone western countries are often commonly presented in ELT. This happens as the result of the non-western view that western cultures are monochrome and homogenous [8], and that western communities are more superior compared to non-western communities.

Although several studies investigating Anglophone countries' dominant power in ELT have been conducted in the last decades [2], [3], [5], just a few studies concern on the superiority given to non-Anglophone western countries. Therefore, the present study aims at analyzing to what extent non-Anglo-centrism is represented in Indonesian ELT textbook, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia.

II. NON-ANGLO-CENTRISM: ORIGIN AND POSITION IN ELT

Non-Anglo-centrism is sprung from western-centrism, that is a view centered on the West by perceiving western countries as superior [9] compared to non-western countries in many fields such as politics, economy, and education. Critically applied linguists such as Phillipson [3] sometimes interchangeably refer to the West as Anglophone western countries and/or both Anglophone and non-Anglophone western countries. For the purpose of this study, the term Non-Anglo-centrism is coined to refer to the superiority and dominance that non-Anglophone, developing western countries have upon non-western countries in ELT. It is not without a reason that some people in the East alter superiority non-Anglophone western countries in regards to ELT.

The first reason is misperception and misconception in the periphery communities that all westerners embody nativeness in English [10] and that western culture is homogeneous. This phenomenon is also related to white supremacy theory. Following the insights of critical race theory, Gillborn [11] conceives white supremacy as a condition where white people have more power over color people that the interests and perceptions of white subjects are continually placed center stage and assume as 'normal.' The white supremacy has been seen as normal in the ELT industry [12]. It ranges from racist hiring practice to textbooks modeled after white people [10]. As a result, some white people get the privilege of being 'native English teachers' in periphery countries even though they are not native English speakers.

Another reason that strengthens non-Anglo-centrism in periphery countries is the dominance and power that some

non-Anglo western countries have in international relations. International politics history notes that some non-Anglo western countries usually referred to as the great powers or the major powers, had the power to make differences globally [13]. These countries participated in the largest percentage of wars and international crises in history because of their capacity to influence world peace. Non-Anglophone western countries that belong to the great powers are Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy [14]. The power that those countries have had in influencing and controlling the world creates the assumptions in the periphery countries to make great powers as their role model in developing their countries. Thus, non-Anglo-centrism emerged in ELT following the influence of the great powers.

III. METHOD

The materials of the study are fifty-nine passages in three Indonesian ELT textbooks for senior high school level. The study applies Moran's [15] cultural dimensions (Products, Practices, Perspectives, Persons, and Communities) and Fairclough's [16] three dimensions of critical discourse analysis (Description, Interpretation, and Explanation). The three dimensions of discourse analysis are used as a framework to construct a set of guideline questions to critically observe the use of pronouns, wording, metaphors, semantic relations, genre, and the representation of ethos, values, and cultures in the passages. After the critical reading, the highlighted points are coded based on five cultural dimensions to reveal the centrism embedded in the passages.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Non-Anglo-centrism is embedded only in two passages, signified by-products representing non-Anglophone western countries. One passage is in Grade XI textbook, a short procedure text about how to make pizza which represent Italian dish. The second passage is in Grade X in the form of a biography entitled B.J. Habibie in which quality of life and education in Germany are presented. The discussion of non-Anglo-centrism is sprung around the passage of B.J. Habibie in which the ideology is foregrounded implicitly, and perhaps unconsciously since the objective of the text is to present the Indonesian national figure which represents Indonesia-centrism. In addition, the text consists of seven paragraphs, five of which mention Germany in the discussion. Non-Anglo-centrism is found in three out of five paragraphs bringing up Germany. The following is an excerpt from the second paragraph.

[...] in 1995 moved to Germany. In 1960, Habibie received a degree in engineering in Germany, giving him the title *Diplom-Ingenieur*. He remained in Germany as a research assistant under Hans Ebner at the Lehrstuhl und Institut für Leichtbau, RWTH Aachen to conduct research for his doctoral degree.

(Paragraph 2)

Although it is true that B.J. Habibie got his degrees in engineering from Germany, the passage implicitly transfers non-Anglo-centrism in a way that it covertly drives students' mind that western countries provide a better education than their own country. In fact, students and parents, and even educators have been exposed to the

imageries of western countries as providers of high-quality education. It creates a common, unquestioned assumption believed and followed for ages and generations that studying in western countries provides a better future. Moreover, in Indonesia, like in most periphery countries, people believe that studying in western countries gives not only a better future but also prestige.

The fact that Indonesian students are obsessed with studying in western countries can be seen from the result of a recent survey conducted by AFS Intercultural Program in 2017. The survey is conducted online, involving over 5.500 high school students age 13-18 in Indonesia. The result shows that "[a]ltogether, English-speaking destinations (the United States, the United Kingdom, and to a smaller degree Australia) retain the highest rates of positive attitudes (86%) among Indonesian students. Western European countries (Italy, France, and Germany) fare nearly as well (82%)" [17]. This obsession towards western educational systems is, again, the outcome of western portrayals depicted in media, including textbooks.

Canagarajah [2] argues that media blows up '[...] the image of university life in which classrooms are equipped with the latest audio-visual and computer technology, and students go quietly about their work in a setting of green lawns and ancient quadrangles' (p.12). This argument was written in 1999 where the use of audio-visual and computer technology in the classrooms in periphery countries was still considered a luxury. Nowadays, although some classrooms in the periphery countries are equipped with audio-visual facilities, still western classrooms are seen as steps ahead. Canagarajah's [2] argument shows that it is common to encounter the emphasizing description of western superiority in the aspect of education, and the image is not only drawn by the center but also by the periphery countries.

To lessen non-Anglo-centrism in the passage, the difficulties that B.J. Habibie faced in studying in Germany can be presented in the passage. Habibie studied in Germany self-funded, without a scholarship. It required a big amount of money that he lives miserably during his study. He often spent his days with an empty stomach because he did not have enough money [18]. Even he suffered from a terrible health condition that made him hospitalized twice during his bachelor degree [19]. These difficulties are commonly occurred in western countries due to the high tuition fee, and living cost required [20]–[22]. By presenting the problems that Habibie had to overcome, the passage provides a more balanced picture of studying abroad and improves students' admiration of the national figure.

The following excerpts are taken from the third and the last paragraph of the passage. The excerpts indicate non-Anglo-centrism by implying that Germany provides a better living condition. The discussion is provided after the two excerpts.

The two married on 12 May 1962, returning to Germany shortly afterward. Habibie and his wife settled in Aachen for a short period before moving to Oberforstbach.

(Paragraph 3)

Since relinquishing the presidency, Habibie has spent more time in Germany than in Indonesia.

(Paragraph 7)

Although it is not stated explicitly, non-Anglo-centrism can be transferred through the two excerpts. Since the passage does not provide the reasons why Habibie decided to live in Germany, they potentially trigger the readers' assumptions. When students read the passages, they will assume that Habibie prefers living in Germany because of better living quality compared to Indonesia. It is common in Indonesia, just like in other periphery countries, to believe and assume that western communities provide better living quality. Again, it is the results of media framings and how the people in the periphery country perceive it [8]. In the imperialist era, western built the images of their countries as strong, prosperous ones, and defined the Orient as the opposite [8]. Meanwhile, nowadays, it is the Orient that continues the belief and perceives themselves as inferior as the result of western orientalism.

In Indonesia, it is common to find articles or news reporting living qualities in western countries. *Deutsche* [23], [24], for example, reported that Germany has good job opportunities, clean environment, low level of criminality, plenty of cultural events, and well-managed transportation facilities. On the other hand, reports regarding Indonesia and the periphery countries are mostly the negative ones, such as high criminality in the periphery countries [25], unemployment [26], bad living environment [27], and terrible condition of public transportation [28]. The passage, therefore, indirectly reinforces the depictions of the prosperous living condition in western countries, including the non-Anglophone ones, and the low living quality in periphery countries.

In fact, each country has its own problems, including western countries. Despite the good news reported, there are problems haunting western countries such as a high number of unemployment [29], pollution [30], health problems including obesity (Putra, 2016), and high level of mental problems resulting in suicides [31]. These show that both center and periphery countries have problems that should be reported in balance. To lessen the transfer of non-Anglo-centrism, the passage could provide the reason why Habibie decided to live in Germany and what problems he encounters when he lives in Germany. The problems that Habibie and his family faced when they first moved to Germany was written Habibie's autobiography. He states that in the beginning, it was difficult for him to make a living for his family in Germany [19]. However, since he has spent most of his life in Germany, he decided to spend the rest of his life there to remember his life when he was young and his memories with his wife [32].

Despite the non-Anglo-centrism addressed towards Germany, the passage can balance the superiority given to Germany with the descriptions of Habibie's nationalism such as in the following excerpts.

In 1974, Suharto requested Habibie to return to Indonesia as part of Suharto's drive to develop the country.

(Paragraph 6)

The excerpts are coming after the paragraphs explaining Habibie's life and achievements in Germany, which implies that Habibie loves his nation more than he was willing to leave his stable life and productive job in Germany to build the nation with Suharto's presidency. In fact, Germany acknowledged Habibie's skills and wanted him to change

his nationality [33], but he rejected the offers because he does not want to take off his nationality as an Indonesian.

However, he has also been active as a presidential adviser during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency.

(Paragraph 7)

This excerpt is presented right after the excerpt stating that Habibie spends his life in Germany after relinquishing from the presidency. It shows that even though he spends most of his time in Germany, but he is still contributing to Indonesian's governance by being the adviser of the president.

In sum, although the main ideology presented is Indonesia-centrism, but non-Anglo-centrism is built up upon the depiction of Germany superiority in education and living quality. However, non-Anglo-centrism can be stabilized with balance information regarding the figure attempts and contributions to Indonesia despite the German luxury portrayed.

V. CONCLUSION

The term of non-Anglo-centrism is minor ideology embedded in two passages. There are only products found in the passages from 5 dimension. Descriptively, the findings are exhibit a variety of excerpts from the selected passage followed by illustrated scenario and discussions for each excerpt.

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