

**SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS REPRESENTATION:  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON AN EFL E-TEXTBOOK  
FOR THE TWELFTH GRADERS IN INDONESIA**

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**Abstract**

This study aimed at analyzing representation of ten sociocultural sub aspects, namely: age; gender; social distance and status; politeness strategies; genres; registers; major dialects; and Background Knowledge of the Target Language Group (BKTLG) and Crosscultural Awareness (CcA), in an e-textbook, *Developing English Competencies* (DEC). Discourse Qualitative Content Analysis was the research method and DEC was the data corpus. Data were gathered through e-textbook observation and were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Findings showed that: age group of >12-18 years contributed 40% of the total 117 units; 1.098 units signified man, and 321 units were of women; 71% of conversational texts showed intimate social distance and the rest 29% indicated distant one; negative politeness strategies were employed most often (40.12%); non-drama/prose/poetry genres occupied 66% of the entire units; *informal* words and/or expressions were the most frequently appeared register; British English dialects gained 70% of the total 197 occurred units; 62% of the texts were BKTLG-related, leaving the rest 38% of them CcA-related. Qualitatively, all sub aspects were interconnected, creating a tight sociocultural entity.

**Keywords:** *e-textbook, Indonesia, representation, sociocultural aspects, twelfth graders*

**INTRODUCTION**

Regardless the fact that e-textbooks made available online by the National Education Department of Indonesia were claimed to have been evaluated by the Indonesian National Board of Education Standard (hereafter, BNSP: Ind. abbr.) and that they were of adequate eligibility as teaching learning materials of English as a Foreign Language<sup>1</sup>, these e-textbooks would be construed as being both linguistically and textually suitable, as well as functionally and socioculturally appropriate (Bachman, 1996, as cited in

Pawlikowska-Smith, 2002: 9). It was not so far clear whether or not the claim of BNSP does cover that prerequisite eligibility. Chances were these e-textbooks might be both linguistically and textually suitable, but not socioculturally appropriate yet. It remained a question if they had articulated the sociocultural aspects.

There found indications of not comprehensively including sociocultural referents of the learners and of their surroundings in such a way that those referents did not fully empower them during learning English (viz. Ena, 2011).

Simply put, there should be holistic inclusion of, and analysis on both linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> As regulated by the Ministry of National Education of Indonesia (latter named Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia) No.69, year 2008.

suitability and sociocultural appropriateness to EFL textbooks and/or e-textbooks, while reality was still showing imbalance share of attention towards them two. It was this existing discrepancy between *das Sein* and *das Sollen* that provoked this study.

Consisting of six competencies including sociocultural competence<sup>2</sup>, Celce-Murcia's model of communicative competence (2007) has uniquely given special space for growing the sociocultural element through integrating culture into language teaching. In practical reality, however, that special interest on integrating sociocultural competence into ESL/EFL teaching is claimed Celce-Murcia (2007: 46) as in the state of 'lacking sociocultural awareness',

The pedagogical challenge lies in the fact that second and foreign language teachers typically have far greater awareness and knowledge of linguistic rules than they do of the sociocultural behaviors and expectations that accompany use of the target language.

The sociocultural behaviors and expectations accompanying the use of the target language can be synthesized into one term, sociocultural competence. This is the competence that needs to be more appraised and represented.

The so far insufficient discussion on language appropriateness in EFL learning drove the researcher into delving sociocultural aspects in EFL context. As such, problem was suspected to arise in the representation of sociocultural aspects in an e-textbook published nation-wide by the government of Indonesia-Ministry of Education and Culture.

One major question of this study was how sociocultural aspects were represented in the e-textbook. Thus, to serve the major

query of this study, the researcher projected the major question into three minor ones:

- 1) What *social contextual factors* appear in the e-textbook and how they are represented?
- 2) How is *stylistic appropriateness* represented in the e-textbook?
- 3) What *cultural factors* appear in the e-textbook understudy and how they are represented?

## RESEARCH METHOD

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006: 16) claims that research design is a logical framework to ensure that the evidence collected enables researcher to answer research questions as unambiguously as possible. The logical framework is intended to lessen *the chance of drawing incorrect causal inferences from data*. This particular study also employed a research design that framed the entire research process. Figure 2.1 accounts for the logical process of the study.

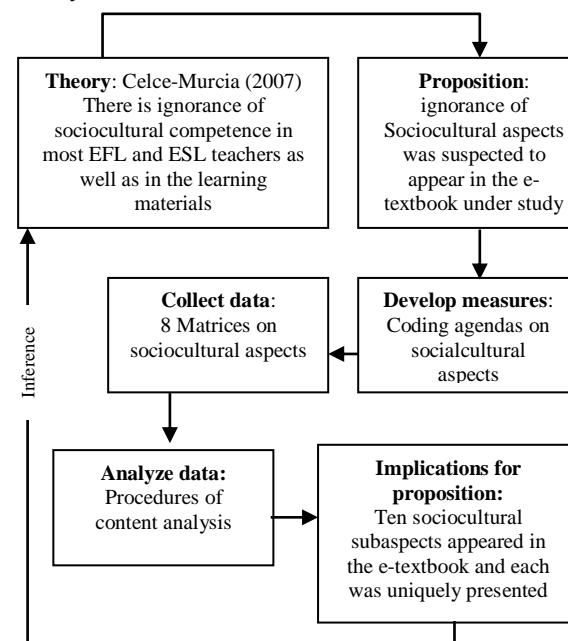


Figure 2.1 *The logic of the research process*

From the grounding theory, proposition could be deduced into a claim that assumed ignorance of sociocultural aspects appeared in the e-textbook understudy. Afterwards, coding agendas were

<sup>2</sup> Celce-Murcia (2007: 45) has revised her model of communicative competence, by retaining socio-cultural; discourse; and linguistic competence, while adding formulaic and interactional competence. Strategic competence, which was used in the earlier model (Celce-Murcia,1995) has served the later version model as an interweaver of the five components of communicative competence.

developed to measure occurrences of sociocultural aspects.

After the employment of coding agendas to observe occurrences of these aspects, data were finally collected into eight different matrices. The eight different matrices dealt with ten sub components of sociocultural aspects. This phase was the starting point of theory building.

Procedures of content analysis were, then, employed to address the issues of what sociocultural aspects appeared in the e-textbook and how they were presented. The study was open both for evidence that supported the root theory and supporting theories, and for evidence that competed these theories. It was this open treatment that led the study into a proposal of new theory that might become subsequent proposition for future research. Evidence that were found as in line with the previously drawn proposition became the implications of the proposition, which were inferred from the starting theory.

The design in Figure 3.1 was started by a theory of Celce-Murcia (2007) that posits the so far ignorance of sociocultural competence in most EFL and ESL teachers as well as in the learning materials. This is the starting point of theory testing.

In accordance with the research questions posed in the introduction, the data of this study were obtained from materials in an EFL e-textbook, namely *Developing English Competencies* (DEC). DEC consists of 9 chapters, each of which has different topic. Both text and context are sourced from DEC e-textbook. The nine chapters were here regarded as the text. The remainings, i.e. the following glossary, tape script, and answer key were, respectively, the context. The texts of this study (the verbal phenomena in the readings and activities of the e-textbook) were investigated in terms of variables of the three aspects.

By applying procedures of content analysis (Krippendorff: 2004), data were collected unobtrusively, with no intrusion into the naturally occurring course of events (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006: 134). No specific instrument was required but only some form

of record keeping. Therefore, data were collected in observation sheets recording occurrences of sociocultural aspects in DEC.

Eight different matrices had been developed as observation sheets. Collected data were, then, classified and tabulated into tables and charts. To analyze the data from the specified e-textbook, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. First, the frequencies of each categorized occurrence of the sociocultural aspects were counted. Afterwards, descriptions of all aspects were given. Finally, interpretations of all aspects were developed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings on the first four subcomponents are parts of the e-textbook's *socio-contextual factors*. The second three subcomponents are those of *stylistic appropriateness*, and the last three subcomponents belong to the *cultural factors*.

### Participants' Age

Participants' age were classified into age groups. Adopting the age groups theorized by Erik Erikson (1950<sup>3</sup>). The participants' age appeared in the e-textbook, subtly or explicitly, were classified into such age groups. Figure 3.1 below quantifies number of appearances of each group and the respective percentages.

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<sup>3</sup> It could hardly be mentioned that there was a single year of Erikson's theory on psychosocial development, since Erikson worked on his theory from 1950 until 1987. 1950 was yet the year where he published his major work *Childhood and Society*, within which the eight stages of psychosocial development had already been featured. This information was sourced from Wikipedia pages (2012) at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik\\_Erikson#Early\\_life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik_Erikson#Early_life) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childhood\\_and\\_Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childhood_and_Society)

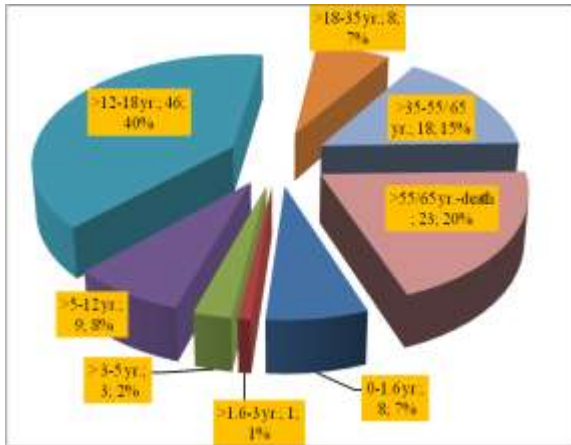


Figure 3.1 *Frequencies of participants' age in the e-textbook*

The total number of appearances of all age groups was one hundred and seventeen times. Two dominant age groups (in terms of number) were: (a) from *older than year twelve to year eighteen*. This age group appeared forty six times, contributing to 40% of the total make up; (b) from *older than year fifty five or sixty five to death*. This age group appeared twenty three times, which occupied 20% of the whole pie chart.

The eight age groups were distributed unevenly that it resulted in the dominance of three age groups, namely: age group of *older than 12 to 18 years* (collecting 40% of the total composition); age group of *older than 55/65 years to death* (collecting 20%); and age group of *older than 35 years to 55/65 years* (collecting 15% of the entire findings).

The fact that age group of *older than 12 to 18 years* was the greatest contributor of all was reasonably because the e-textbook was itself for senior high school students aged around 16-18 years.

Age group of *older than 12 to 18 years* appeared in almost all chapters, except for chapter nine—a chapter within which novel, play script, movie review, and short story dominated. This age group was employed at most in chapter three—where discussions on central, controversial, and popular issues were at hand. The author was presumably trying to make the e-textbook as a learning material that was as close as possible to learners. This was also

supported by the inclusion of topics related to youth culture.

The second biggest at frequency was age group of *older than 55/65 years to death* that appeared twenty three times in five different chapters. A classic author identified as positing this age group was Shakespeare. The date of Shakespeare's birth was unknown. Yet, he was baptised on April 26 1564, and died on April 23. 1616.

This age group gained popularity in the e-textbook, especially in chapters seven, eight, and nine, because these chapters were mostly contained of novel and movie reviews, narrative poems, and short stories having authors who were identified as *older than 55/65 years to death*.

Age group of *older than 35 years to 55/65 years* appeared eighteen times and became the third most frequently employed age group because of fairly similar reason to that of *older than 55/65 years to death*.

Lesser percentages were contributed to the rest five age groups: *from birth to year one point six*; *older than year one point six to year three*; *older than year three to year five*; *older than year five to year twelve*; and age group of *older than 18 years to 35 years*.

### Participants' Gender

Celce-Murcia (2007) suggests that the second sociocultural aspect is gender. However, as the nature of this study is quantitative, on one part, and qualitative, on the other, sex was taken so as to ease quantitative measurement of the aspect occurrences throughout the e-textbook. Gender, on the other hand, was believed to be qualitative in nature.

The global layout of gender distribution in the e-textbook found that female references appeared 321 times (23%), while their male counterparts were shown 1098 times (77%). Findings revealed that females were depicted less than one third of the total shares. It had also been mentioned that the male references outnumbered female references in all chapters.

The findings demonstrate how prevalent the issue of gender in the analyzed e-textbook was. In terms of distribution, gender dichotomies appeared in all chapters in the e-textbook, starting from chapter one to chapter nine, with differing numbers in each chapter. Differences between female and male references that appeared in each chapter keep showing that male references surpassed the female ones.

Besides tracking references from pronouns and including references chains analysis was also done through tracking gender attribution, for instance by acknowledging symbolic resources in names, use of diminutives and/or endearments (e.g. *dear, sweetheart*) in times parents speak to girls rather than to boys, and use of direct prohibitives (e.g. *don't do that!*) to boys rather than to girls (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 17). Quite in contrast to what Eckert and McConnell-Ginet claim, the e-textbook employed direct prohibitive to a girl, rather than to a boy.

Back to frequency of both gender, imbalanced shares mostly appeared in short stories, play script, and some conversations. Nevertheless, there were also cases where feminine references slightly outnumbered the male ones

Male and female in the e-textbook were ordered differently in terms of order of mentioning. There were two versions of order: first, the case where women were mentioned before men (see extract 3.1); second, the case where it worked conversely (see extract 3.2).

[Extract 3.1]

Speech 1 ...

Mr. Chairman, honourable chief guest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speech 2

Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope you will lend me your ears

In extract 3.2, *Ladies and Gentlemen* were employed three times. These expressions seemed to grant privilege to women. Gender ideology that is presumably behind the case is the system of belief that gender order *can or should be maintained without*

*inequality* (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 35). The use of *ladies* before *gentlemen* proved that there was an attempt to work 'out of the convention'.

However, the second version of gender order was also tracked in the e-textbook. In extract 3.2, it is illustrated that men preceded women and thus affirming male superiority<sup>4</sup>. Instead of saying *Mrs. and Mr. Jones*, saying *Mr. and Mrs. Jones* appeared to be a more practical convention.

[Extract 3.2]

time getting him out of bed. Poor Mr and Mrs Jones didn't know what to do with their lazy son.

The convention is engendered by gender ideology that rules these particular texts, and in turn is created to, at least implicitly, support gender ideology (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 34).

Furthermore, *gender order* can also be viewed from the perspective of division of labor. It is asserted by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, (2003: 38), that *the gendered division of labor involves differential power and status*. Traditional view of labor division provides more access to positions of public power and influence is available for men, compared to that accessible for women. The e-textbook employed quantitatively more male references and seemed to be less appreciative to female's existence in the division of labor. See extract 3.3 for an instance of the case.

[Extract 3.3]

...  
of avian influenza? Did you hear that United Nations coordinator, Dr David Nabarro, estimated

Extract 3.3 is an excerpt from a speech campaigning vaccination move to battle avian influenza in the United States. A male name was mentioned (Dr. David Nabarro) as having a position of public power, i.e. being a coordinator in the United Nations.

<sup>4</sup> Eckert & McConnell-Ginet claim that male superiority is established from convention, time after time. The case of mentioning males before females is a form of linguistic convention (2003: 34).



Labor division was as well projected in educational setting. In contrast to what has been portrayed in extract 3.3, where access to public power was granted to male, the view of female as nurturant was described to be possessed by male. The view that women are more nurturing than men, and thus are more suitable to work as teachers (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 46) seems to be out of the case in the studied e-textbook.

In conclusion, changing practices do likely result in changing ideologies and so does it works with changing of gender ideology. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet asserted the dynamic state of dominant ideology and linguistic conventions. They believed that both ideology and convention are *constructed, maintained, elaborated, and changed in action and in talk* (*ibid*: 53).

### Participants' Social Distance and Status

Social distance and social status account for explaining the reasons people do not speak the same way all the time. Within the two aforementioned terms, there are four useful components that help determine their degrees. Holmes develops scales on the four components, namely: (a) social distance scale; (b) [social] status scale; (c) formality scale; and (d) functional scales<sup>5</sup>. (Holmes, 2000: 8-9). The scales were used to help describe and analyze interactions employed in the e-textbook, which resulted in varying numbers of the scaled components and several interesting cases on social distance and status.

With seventy one percent of the total measured units counted as employing intimate social distance (high solidarity), the e-textbook managed to show intimate relationships among participants. Nevertheless, attempts were also made so as to show distant relationships among participants (low solidarity). Showing both cases might have been thought as crucial in order to provide the e-textbook users with samples on both instances. Relationships

<sup>5</sup> Holmes (2000:10.) mentions that the functional scales are consisted of two scales, i.e. referential function scale and affective function scale, both of which serve two basic linguistic functions.

among participants with high solidarity are shown in extract 3.4 and 3.5

Extract 3.4 shows high degree of solidarity, hence intimate social distance among participants. The first clue is the way the son addressed his mother. The second clue is the way the conversation flowed with expressions showing the mother's concern about her son.

### [Extract 3.4]

Son : Mom. I'm thinking of travelling around Java this holiday alone. What do you think?

Mother : Travelling? Alone? That sounds dangerous! You shouldn't go by yourself. You ought to go with your friends.

Son : Yes. That's true.

Mother : And you'd better talk to your father first.

Son : I did. He thought it was a great idea, but he also said that I had to go with a friend.

The son addressed his mother as *mom*. He addressed her just the way he should. Holmes (2000: 13) claims that when someone addresses her or his mother at home alone, she or he might apply several alternatives like *mum, mummy, mom, ma*, or by her or his mother's first name. The mother addressed her son by using *you*. It was not clear from the conversation in extract 3.4 how the son was called most of the time. It was clear, however, that the mother was not feeling affectionate to her son at the particular time of the conversation (she used no nickname or endearment), she was feeling rather surprised and anxious (she showed her apprehensiveness to her son's idea by saying *Travelling? Alone? That sounds dangerous!* and suggested a better idea for her son's safety in *You ought to go with your friends; And you'd better talk to your father first.*)

Extract 3.5 contains indication of low degree of solidarity, hence distant social distance among participants. The use of deference *sir* instead of first names (by Dadi to the teacher) as well as the formal nuance in the eighth move (*I do apologise, Sir*) suggest that the utterance was from a subordinate to a superior (Holmes, 2000: 14).

[Extract 3.5]

- Mr Suherman : Dad... did you write this essay?  
 Dadi : Yes, Sir.  
 Mr Suherman : You didn't write it, did you? I think you copied it from a journal or somewhere else.  
 Dadi : I'm afraid that isn't true.  
 Mr Suherman : Really? I've read this article. It's Mr Hartono's essay, isn't it?  
 Dadi : That's right, Sir. I have to admit I downloaded it from the Internet. I regret it.  
 Mr Suherman : It's good that you admitted it.  
 Dadi : I do apologise, Sir.

Distant participants' relationship did appear in the e-textbook. Distant participants' relationship was signaled by the use of formal transaction in a formal setting (a transaction between a student and a teacher, probably, in his office or in a classroom), e.g. *I'm afraid that isn't true* (cf. *I'm afraid that ain't true* in a colloquial language) and in *I do apologise, Sir*.

Intimate participants' relationship, where the participants shared high solidarity with no disparity in terms of social status, were indicated by: the choice of first name among classmates (Adi; Dian); use of informal linguistic codes like *I'll, thanks*, and; a rather informal response like *anytime* to *thanks a lot*<sup>6</sup>. These all showed low formality was involved in the context. *Anytime* was presumably chosen by the speaker as a response to the preceding informal thanks.

To determine participants' social distance and status, level of formality helps decide the degree of solidarity and status, as had been illustrated in extract 3.4 and 3.5.

In addition to seeing the formality context, function of interaction should aid decision whether the conversation was of intimate or distant relationship, and whether there were indications of superiority and subordination in the exchange. Extract 3.6 is an example of exchanges with differing function of interaction.

<sup>6</sup> Oxford Online Dictionaries (2013) mentioned that the polite response for thanks is *you're welcome*. Variants of replies to thanks like *don't mention it/that, anytime* would serve as less formal replies.

In extract 3.6, judgment about the relationship between the speakers can be seen from the addressing style (*Therefore, Tiresias, do not begrudge your skill; Oedipus, let me go home.*) Except for Oedipus' utterance *Save everything that the pestilence defiles* that employed a formal word 'defile', the use of personal pronouns like *I* and *you*, rather than passive grammatical structures showed low formality was involved in the context.

Extract 3.6 shows both referential and affective functions. In *You know, blind though you are, the plague that ruins Thebes, the plague* referred to **the killers** of King Laius.

[Extract 3.6]

- A: (a) Tiresias, do not <sup>8</sup>begrudge your skill. In the voice of birds other prophecy. But save yourself, save me, save the whole city. Save everything that the pestilence defiles. We are at your mercy, and man's <sup>9</sup>noblest task. Is to use all his powers in helping others.
- B: (b) Oedipus, let me go home. Then you will bear. Your <sup>10</sup>burden, and I mine, more easily.

The utterance also contained referential information on Tiresias' gift (i.e. regardless his blindness, he knew the killers of King Laius). These killers were also portrayed by Oedipus as *the pestilence* in *Save everything that the pestilence (deadly disease) defiles* simultaneously conveyed both objective information of a referential kind and the speaker's feeling about those referred to. Tiresias' utterance in (b) literally<sup>7</sup> conveyed goodwill toward the interlocutor, thus it appeared to be more affective in function.

The scales of social components outlined by Holmes (2000: 9-10) proved important in describing and analyzing interactions in the e-textbook and that deviation from the general rule was well

<sup>7</sup> Tiresias' utterance was suspected as conveying literal goodwill toward Oedipus because as the play *Oedipus Rex* unfolds, it is revealed that the hunted killer of King Laius is Tiresias.

supported by the claim of cultural variability<sup>8</sup> (*ibid.*, 2000: 13).

### Politeness Strategies

There found four politeness super strategies, namely: Off-Record (Off-R) politeness (making up 8.38 % of all strategies), Bald on Record (BoR) that appeared twenty five times (14.97 % of all strategies), Positive Politeness (PP) and Negative Politeness (NP).

Two dominant strategies were NP that appeared sixty seven times, making up to 40.12 % of all strategies, and PP that appeared sixty one times, taking the rest 36.53 percent of all strategies.

The e-textbook employed thirty out of forty sub strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987): six Bald on Record (BoR) strategies, ten Positive Politeness (PP) Strategies, seven Negative Politeness (NP) strategies, and seven Off-Record (Off-R) Strategies. In terms of variation, the e-textbook had sufficiently made use of politeness strategies variety.

BoR #1, *showing little or no desire to maintain hearer's face* is visible in, for example, *One of your classmates told me you cheated*. In this quotation, no attempt was presumably made to save hearer's face. The speaker (a school teacher) overtly stated something (the action of cheating) that plausibly would damage the face of the hearer (the speaker's student).

BoR #2, *using task-oriented expression*, can be seen in extract 3.7, where a conversation between Peter Quince<sup>9</sup> and Nick Bottom who rehearsed a play was set.

[Extract 3.7]

Quince : Answer as I call you, Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bottom : Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed

Quince : You, Nick Bottom, are set down for  
Pyramus.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance when addressing style vary from culture to culture. Holmes (*ibid.*) notes that *in some culture*, certain name may apply in the family but is not used outside. In some other culture, a *ceremonial name* is given and is used on very formal occasion.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Quince is the leader of the troupe of players, including Bottom. Visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Midsummer\\_Night%27s\\_Dream](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Midsummer_Night%27s_Dream) for accounts on characters and synopsis.

As illustrated in extract 3.7, in the light of the relationship between Bottom and Quince (troupe leader-troupe member), Quince's *Answer as I call you* seems to be linguistically appropriate. The second move, however, seemed to be very direct and blunt. Bottom used task-oriented expression to Quince, who was notably the leader of the troupe. Assessment on Bottom's politeness might have been influenced by the dimension of formality. Holmes (2000: 268) asserts that *being polite may also involve dimension of formality*. The play rehearsal was in Quince's house (unmarked setting) where low formality was considered needed in the conversation, and therefore BoR #2 was chosen.

The following two sub strategies are samples of PP. Being optimistic (PP#10) as a politeness strategy is also often used for things having prospect in the future, as it is illustrated in (a) *I'm sure you'll do better this time*.

Including hearer in speaker's activity (PP#11) is also a positive politeness strategy. In the e-textbook, a conversation on a controversial issue employed positive politeness strategy #11, i.e. including both S and H in the activity.

The strategy is marked clearly with, for instance, the use of pronoun 'we' instead of singular pronoun 'I', in (b)... *[W]e can't play God...We can never change that*. The use of 'we' when the speaker and hearer were in disagreement means that the speaker, without the hearer's direct consent, included the hearer to agree the speaker's proposition. The inclusion was probably because the speaker thought that the particular matter was taken for granted as being consented by both parties, and that the speaker, in spite of debating, wanted to maintain solidarity with the hearer.

The following two sub strategies are samples of NP. *Minimizing the imposition* (NP#3) enables user to defuse the FTA. Thus lessens the seriousness of the



imposition, as illustrated in (a) *Oedipus, let me go home. And you will bear your burden and mine, more easily*. In (a), the speaker soothes the seriousness of the imposition by saying *let me go home, then you will bear your burden and I mine, more easily*. A phrase like **bear X more easily** lessens the intrinsic seriousness of the statements they entail.

Apologizing as an NP strategy is also found in the e-textbook, as illustrated in (b) *I hate to mention it, but you seem to be rather careless*, and (c) *I'm afraid I can't. I don't have it now*. In (b), the speaker indicates his or her reluctance to impinge on hearer's negative face by saying *I hate to mention it, but ...* before the speaker proceeds and mentions the FTA *you seem to be rather careless*. In (c), the speaker partially redresses the impingement by saying *I'm afraid I can't* after refusing the interlocutor's request—a refusal of which is an FTA.

Linguistic politeness is claimed to be different across cultures. An excuse in some culture can be of general vague formula like *I'm afraid I'll be busy at that time*. The other way around might work well with the Western culture, where more specific excuse is preferred (Holmes, 2000: 275).

The following quotations are illustrations where Off-R strategies were employed. Being vague (Off-R #12) is defined as employing words and phrases that are not very exact or precise. In (a) *I wish the law won't be misused by some irresponsible people*, and (b) *I oppose it for many reasons*.

In (a) the speaker decides not to be exact or precise by employing two vague quantitative phrases (i.e. *many reasons; some irresponsible people*). The word *many* (indefinite determiner) determines a large number of things. The word *some* (indefinite determiner) in (b) refers to certain members of a group or certain types of a thing and not all of them (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 1995: 1132).

Displacing hearer (Off-R #14) is the last discussed politeness strategy that appears in the e-textbook. By displacing

hearer in (a) *If I were you, I would buy this novel*, the hearer is moved or shifted from the usual position. Instead of blatantly forbids hearer to do a particular thing (*Don't do that!*), or overtly advises hearer to do that particular thing (*You'd better not do that*, or *You shouldn't do that*), the speaker chose to make his or her contribution off-record in *If I were in your position, I wouldn't do that*.

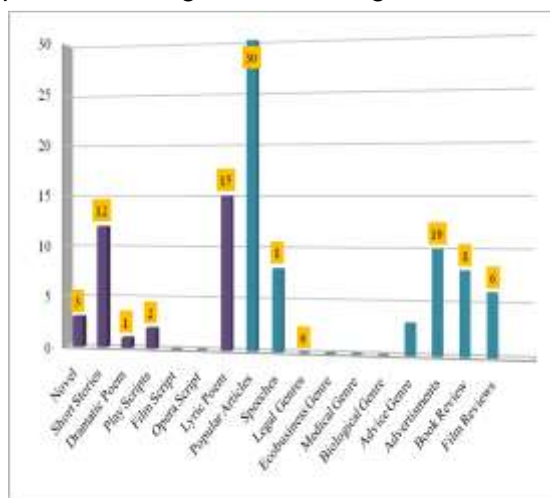
### Sense of Genres

Genres identified in the e-textbook were partitioned into two super genres, namely: those belong to Play/Prose/Poetry (hereafter PPP) and those belong to Non-Play/Prose/Poetry (hereafter Non-PPP). Non-PPP genres gained 66 percent of the total units, leaving the PPP genres with the remaining 34 percent.

As illustrated in figure 3.2, the big three genres under Non-PPP are *popular articles, advertisements, and book reviews*. *Popular articles* placed the most frequently used Non-PPP genre, followed by *advertisements* that appeared ten times. *Book reviews* emerged eight times. *Speeches* appeared eight times. *Film reviews* appeared six times. The least appeared Non-PPP genre was *advice genre* appearing thrice.

Under PPP genres, *lyric poems* were the most frequently appeared genre. *Short stories* appeared twelve times, placing the second place. These two genres surpassed the rest five PPP genres which were not much employed in the e-textbook. *Novels* were mentioned thrice. *Play scripts* appeared twice and *Dramatic poem* appeared once.

Two most frequently appeared genres in the e-textbook, lyric poems and popular articles, are worth discussing. Lyric poem is meant to express the poet's personal thoughts and feelings.



in order to fit e-textbook format, the short article in extract 3.8 is believed to possess ostensible characteristics of a popular article viewed from such aspects as **audience, language, research, and bibliography**<sup>12</sup>.

[Extract 3.8]  
**How the Water Cycle Works**

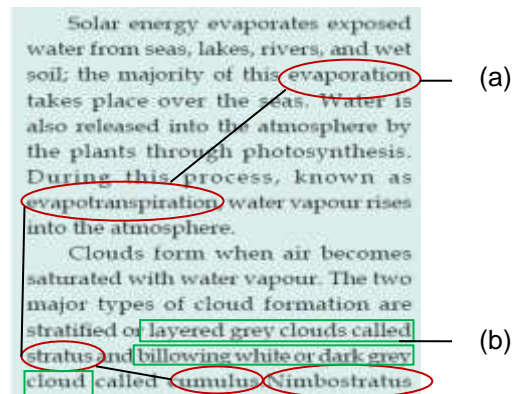


Figure 3.2 *Genre variations*

The e-textbook employs several kind of lyric poetry: (1) the poetic personal statement in the verse is made from the poet (or persona) to another person (e.g. Dido's song lyric *Thank You*); (2) poems recounting a poetic personal statement from the poet (or persona) to someone who cannot hear him or her like Frost's *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*; (3) meditative lyric poems within which thoughts and sentiments are addressed to the poet or persona or to no one were also employed in the e-textbook (e.g. Emily Bronte's *Love and Friendship*).

On the one hand, there arises a mistaken conclusion that canonized poetry<sup>10</sup> is relatively less appealing than that of other recently popular ones<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, Widdowson (1992:7) believes that students should be provided with access to great literature. Appearing sixteen times in the e-textbook (eight of which are canonized poems and the rest eight poems are popular ones), poetry becomes a genre that is worth highlighting. The employment of poetry in the e-textbook shows a balance of availability for both canonized and popular poetry.

Moving beyond PPP genres, the e-textbook employed non-PPP genres almost double the number of the PPP ones (65:33 occurrences). And the most frequently appeared genre of all is popular article.

Although it is not shown in a complete format, which is highly likely because of intentional page minimization

In terms of **audience** extract 5.1 is perceived to be a popular article. While a scholarly article is intended to be read and/or refereed by professionals, professors, or graduate students, article in extract 5.1 is apparently written for students of senior high, i.e. undergraduates.

In terms of **language** it employs field-specific language/ registers requiring readers to be sufficiently knowledgeable of that particular field (a). Although it employs several vocabularies like as laid out in the above extract, these vocabularies have also been adjoined with explaining phrases<sup>13</sup> (b) that would make the language of the text accessible to any generally knowledgeable reader.

The text was not written based on an original research or new application of other's research and no research method was explained. In terms of **bibliography**,

<sup>10</sup> Canonized here refers to such traditional poems as the work of Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and William Shakespeare.

<sup>11</sup> Popular poetry would cover poems/ song lyrics by Bon Jovi, James Blunt, and Dido Amstrong.

<sup>12</sup> Some characteristics of a scholarly journal and popular magazine as well as of scholarly articles and popular ones are sourced from the homepage of Wittenberg University Library, accessible in <http://www6.wittenberg.edu/lib/help/schol-pop.php>. The article was accessed in October 30, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Phrases that would assist readers' understanding with, relatively, little effort or no need to refer to other source of information include, for examples: *stratified or layered grey cloud*; *billowing white or dark grey cloud*—which refer to types of clouds.

the text cites *Geographica's World Pocket Reference*. Author or authors of the content including contact information were not identified. Cited references were also unavailable in the text, of which are ubiquitous in any scholarly article. In a worse case, however, references were not at all cited in a clip of seemingly a popular article.

### Sense of Registers

Registers in the e-textbook were identified from the employed words and/or expressions that belong to certain register classification according to dictionaries both in printed and online versions.

This study uses the term “register” more narrowly to describe the specific vocabulary associated with *specific situation of use*, and there are twelve distinct registers employed with varying frequencies in the e-textbook.

Starting with the big three, words classified as *informal* appeared 60 times, taking 54% of the total percentages of registers. *Informal* words were the most frequently appeared registers. *Archaic* expressions placed the second place with twenty-time appearances, and was followed by *formal* words at the third place, which appeared fifteen times (accumulating the 13% of all registers). *Sexist* words (appeared nine times) and *derogatory* words (appeared eight times) subsequently placed the fourth and fifth place. Figure 3.3 sums up contributions of all evidenced registers.

Seven other registers that contributed less significantly were: *technical* words (appeared thrice; contributing 3 % of the whole registers); *dated* words (appeared twice; contributing 2% of the whole registers); *euphemistic expression*, *slang*, *jocular expression*, *dated expression*, *offensive expression* and *ironic expression*—each of which contributed 1% of the whole frameworks).

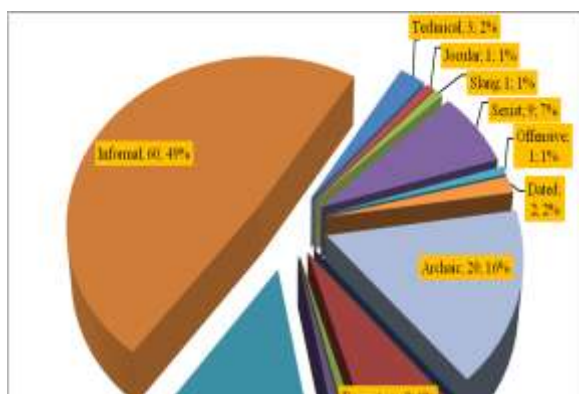


Figure 3.3 Register variations

Three points are worth highlighting: (1) by the employment of 49% *informal* words and/or expressions, contents of the e-textbook were not solely of formal situations. Thus, the author managed to put the e-textbook in somewhat an informal context; (2) the e-textbook language may be stilted in the sense that *archaic* words appeared fairly frequently. The words *'tis* [short form of it is] (Hornby, 1995: 1248, 1255) and *thy* [second person possessive determiner] are regarded as archaic expressions.

The employment of archaic words might add a tone of uniqueness to the e-textbook itself because those archaic words, at most, were used in canonized poems and play; (3) the e-textbook is vulnerable of being sexist. The phrase *cleaning woman* [a woman that cleans something, in particular (Oxford Dictionary online (OD))] in *...the former cleaning woman and plumber who won the lottery and left their life in Jackson Heights* is regarded as sexist. The term shows a job title which refers exclusively to women (Lei, 2006: 93). Alternative terms for this sexist phrase are cleaning officer, or simply cleaner.

Another case is the use of *chairman* [a person chosen to preside over a meeting (OD)] in *A speech by a chairman in a teachers' meeting or seminar* is considered sexist. The word is male-orientated in that it contains the element “—man” while it can in fact apply to both sexes (Lei, 2006: 88). The presence of *archaic* words could be of advantage for learners. Yet, the employment of *sexist* words and/ or



expressions should be handled with care in order not to draw learners to a stereotyped perspective.

### Major Dialects

Discussion on Major Dialects covered regional variation of English and differences in two aspects, namely: vocabulary differences; and grammatical differences. However, the texts in the e-textbook were observed to provide an example of intracontinental variation and examples of international variation.

In general, there are five major dialects that appeared in the e-textbook. The five major dialects were British English (BE), Scottish English (SE), American English (AmE), Australian English (AuE), and New Zealand English (NZE).

BE dialect outnumbered the rest four other dialects by contributing 70% (141 appearances) of the total 197 items. The second mostly used dialect was AmE which contributed to 27% (53 appearances). The thirds in number was SE, AuE, and NZE, each of which appeared once that contributed to 3% of the total makeup.

An example of intracontinental vocabulary variation is the use of the word *bourm* (noun). *Bourm* was found to be a word used in Scotland, with alternative spelling *burn* (noun). English variation for *bourm* is *creek* n.\`krēk, `krik\ and stream \`strēm\ . The case for Scottish English was regarded as an example of intracontinental variation as well as international variation. While variations of British English, American English, Australian English and New Zealand English were regarded as examples of the international variation.

International vocabulary variation would cover explanation for the words like *programme* (a word which is chiefly British variant for *program* in North American English). In the e-textbook, *programme* appeared four times, while *program* appeared once. In British English, *program* is used to refer to computer programs, and *programme* refers to all senses of word outside computer programs. New Zealanders tend to prefer the British distinction. Australian English speakers

have been using *programme* to refer to all senses of word, and yet is adopting *program* in the media and official publications. Instead of using *programme*, Americans and Canadians prefer using *program*.<sup>14</sup>

Intracontinental grammatical difference was evidenced in the use of *I won't [do] it* expression rather than *I'll not [do] it* expression, which is common in the Scottish English speakers<sup>15</sup>. In the e-textbook, however, there was only one evidence of *I'll not [do] it* expression and several examples of *I won't [do] it* expressions.

International grammatical difference between American English and British English was evidenced in the use of *have got to*. Holmes (2000: 124) states that *have got to* is typical traditional British English, whereas Americans would rather say *have gotten to + V<sub>1</sub>*, as pointed below in extract 3.9.

#### [Extract 3.9]

way. The three hours fly by, and the audience leaves feeling they have got to know a great country and sensitive, unusual man.

have got to + V<sub>1</sub>

Nevertheless, several texts showed inconsistencies of using dialects of British or American English at the same texts.

### Background Knowledge of the Target Language Group (BKTLG) and Crosscultural Awareness (CcA)

This study employed three cultural perspectives developed by Tornberg (as cited in Larsson & Karlsson, 2009: 14) are: a perspective viewing culture as a *fact fulfilled*; a *future competence*; and an *encounter in an open landscape* or a *meeting in the third place*. The first [consisting historical/geographical facts (A1), artifacts (A2), and collective descriptions (A3)] and the second aspects

<sup>14</sup> The information was sourced from <http://grammarist.com/spelling/program-programme/>

<sup>15</sup> Holmes (2000: 124) mentioned that a Scot is far more likely to say *I'll not do it* than *I won't do it*.

[consisting cultural preparation (B1), cultural comparison (B2)] view culture as a product, while the third one [individual-centered culture (C1) and youth culture (C2)] concerns it as a process. In this study, the BKTLG refers to (A1), (A2), (A3) and CcA covers (B1), (B2), (C1), and (C2).

In general, BKTLG-related items were accumulated into 62% of the whole pie chart, while CcA-related items added up the rest 38%. *Artifacts* collected 49% of the total analyzed items, placing themselves as that most frequently appeared BKTLG aspects. The second most frequently appeared aspect were those related to *cultural preparation*, gaining 20% of all items. The third most frequently appeared aspect were those related to individual-centred content.

The rest 20% were shared by four aspects, namely: *historical/ geographical facts* (appeared seven times, 7%); *youth culture related content* (appeared four times, 5%); *collective description* (appeared thrice, 4%); and *cultural comparison* (appeared twice, gaining 3% of the total make-up)

Historical/ Geographical facts (A1) in the e-textbook was exemplified in a text that advertised a book fair sale with a stated social mission to help kids, senior citizens, and the homeless people in Frangipani street 213, in Montagne. This reading was classified as a historical/geographical fact, since the text, as above mentioned, recorded information on the time and venue of the event.

Artifact (A2) as BKTLG is exemplified in a short entitled *The Farmer and His Son*. It belonged to artifacts because it is a cultural product. The perspective of *meeting in the third place* was also present in the text. The character's nationality was not in focus in the text. The text was linked to a problem many parents face in preparing for their children's future.

There were three questions preceding the short story: Question #1 *Do your parents teach you to work hard?* Question #2: *How do they teach you to work hard?* Question #3 *do you think hard*

*work brings its own rewards?* It is these questions that possibly enable a meeting between the students' own experiences and of the same or similar case.

A collective description of culture (A3) was portrayed in a text entitled *Abortion: A Controversial Issue*. Abortion as part of lifestyle is controversially collectively described (banned and approved) in several different countries, i.e. Russia, Ireland, New Zealand, Bangladesh, the Phillipines, Indonesia, and Hongkong. Even though the text seems to compare traditions in varied places, the text was not followed up with a task assigning students to compare those traditions, which leads the text into mere collective descriptions.

The e-textbook also employed several texts that served as touchstone texts for cultural preparation (B1), and cultural comparison (B2), like scripts speeches delivered by different people on different occasions. This kind of text served as practice for future communication with those speaking the target language and hence prevented possible confusion/misunderstanding,

*Individ-centred* macro theme (C1) is evidenced in a poem *Love and Friendship* by Emily BrÖnte. There are two points that signify the text to (C1). Point one; love and friendship are two universal topics. Their ubiquitous characteristics enable them to be employed as a text with *individ-centred* macro theme (C1). Point two; in the e-textbook, the text was followed by a set of questions, one of which asked students' views on the poem (*What is your view on love and friendship?*). This would provide students with the opportunity to have their own voices--nationality free, gender free, and race free, hence an individual-centered culture (C1).

Similar to what governs text containing an *individual-centered culture*, text containing *youth culture* takes no significant consideration on the characters' nationality, gender, age, social distance and status and is not aimed at representing a group of people. A text entitled *Mobile Phones: Good or Bad?* focuses on a recently popular media in youth subculture,



i.e. mobile phones. Eventhough mobile phones were stated as used widely in all ages, they were more of youth-related social media. Pervan (2009: 26) asserts that texts in the textbook that employ this perspective, are claimed as supportive for *learners to interpret the texts in many different ways, and to reflect on the texts based on their own experience and values*, thus engender an open area for *polyphonic encounters of multination*.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Among eight evidenced age groups, age group of >12 yr. – 18 yr. appeared most frequently, contributing 40% of the total 117 encodings implying that the e-textbook is appropriate for almost all twelfth graders in Indonesia (apropos of that particular graders are mostly within the range of that age group).

The apparent discrepancy between the males (77%) and female (23%) implies that the e-textbook, whether driven intentionally or not, was male-oriented. Hence, characteristics of male and any aspects related to male as portrayed by the e-textbook, might impinged readers socio-contextually, to a greater or lesser extent.

71% of the e-textbook's analyzed conversational texts showed intimate social distance among participants and the rest was of distant social distance. Texts containing indications of low social status gained 42% of the entire analyzed texts, and the remaining 58% was that of participants' low social status. Whereas findings on participants' social status might lead readers into finding the e-textbook as preachy, the findings on social distance entailed a conclusion that the e-textbook was managed to be more reader-friendly.

Whether or not it was employed on purpose, British English dialects were of the authors' preference (contributing 70% of the total 197 items). This is in line with the highest frequency of occurrence of Negative Politeness, which showed authors' preference into using this particular strategy. If it is generally believed that Americans prefer employing positive

politeness strategies to the negative ones, then, the e-textbook's style would be more of what European English speakers prefer to use.

The inclusion of PPP genres over one thirds of the entire employed genres in the e-textbook showed that English was taught in a style where what sounds 'less academic' and 'unscientific' were not deprived. This is in accordance to the employment of informal words, which signalled that the e-textbook was managed to be more reader-friendly. However, occurrence of *sexist words*, though not very significant in number, is worth giving attention to.

BKTLG-related items (especially *artifacts*) dominated Although CcA was not overlooked, the perspective *culture in an open territory* (i.e. *individual-centered culture* and *youth culture*) was not yet the soul of cultural perspective of the e-textbook.

In general, correlations among sub aspects should be positive. Yet, several cases show contradicting findings in some ways. Among other plausible causes of these deviations, the following causes are the most potential reasons: (i) that the authors might be aware of these sociocultural aspects but they opted to disregard them, that they were not basing their e-textbook design on lists of sociocultural aspects and sub aspects; (2) that the authors were possibly aware of the need to regard sociocultural aspects, but they were not practically aware of how the representation of these aspects should be; and (3) that the authors were not, at all, aware of these aspects.

Future research can certainly be done in the same area of sociocultural aspects, which, first, would need more work on range of age groups that would better fit all ages employed. Other scale could be used or set a priori. When persisting to use that of Erik Eriksson's, further alteration could be applied. Second, deeper research on which names belong to which gender would be of help. Third, there should be developed a range within which participants' social status will be well-accommodated. Fourth, the term *jocular*

would need redefinition. And fifth, more recent information on major English dialects will do better to justify findings of dialects.

Recommended to e-textbook governmental issuers, and material developers in Indonesia, e-textbooks should be better scrutinized in terms of their contents in order to avoid gender misrepresentation and/ or cultural stereotypes, before they are spread for EFL learners nation-wide. E-textbooks should also be culturally better developed in order not just to seize the idea of cross or intercultural understanding but also to really make the idea workable.

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