

RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-CULTURAL VALUES IN CHARACTER-BASED ENGLISH EDUCATION

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Abstract: The present study portrayed the discourse product *When English Rings the Bell* presumably containing religious and cultural information as extended values and the teachers' integration of the information into classroom, manifesting character-based English education herewith. Under quantitative and qualitative descriptive research design, it unfolded religious information to encompass more lexical units of English words (153 events), fewer Indonesian (9), and few non-lexical units of images (65). Meanwhile, multi-cultural information included more lexical units of English words (99 events), fewer Indonesian (40), and few non-lexical units of images (66). Religious values were, then, synthesized from the most occurrences of wearing particular religious clothes (of 58 events). Meanwhile, multi-cultural values were deduced from the utmost events of communicating and being friendly (of 12 events). Outstandingly, the teachers deployed their creativities of teaching-learning media tailored with the problem-, cooperative-, task-, project-, and service-based strategies to foster the students' English skills. They also suggested the students be creative in their learning to perceive the very religious and multi-cultural information, aimed to alleviate stereotyping cases of certain religious and cultural discourse contents, and promoted peace and unity in Indonesia.

Keywords: *religious, multi-cultural, values, character, English education*

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of 2013, the Minister of Education and Culture as the representative of Indonesian Government introduced a new National Curriculum and brought the outline of character education. The 2013 curriculum mainly dealt with character values (religiousness, social orientation, knowledge and skill) as the outlined competences disseminated into the teaching and learning tasks and replaced the 2006 unit-stratified education curriculum with stratified courses (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013b, 2013c).

Explicitly, character education to develop learners' competences has been defined. Character education focuses on sex education, health education, environmental studies, multicultural education, peer conflict resolution, risk prevention, and religious studies leading to moral anatomy (Berkowitz, 2014). The targets of moral character education are folded into learning programs for the

desirable competencies to help the graduate foster the positive development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). It considers the effectiveness of the promoting of ethical values and performance values (Lickona, Schaps & Lewis, 2007).

Furthermore, cultural inputs can benefit young language learners to comprehend and enjoy its language of illustrated materials of visual clues (images) for vocabulary comprehension (Gordon, 2007; Cameron, 2001). The components of intercultural competence include attitudes and values, and a cognitive ability of intercultural relations of critical cultural awareness (Byram et al., 2001; Moran, 2001). Religious education at school aims to developing students' personality, fostering an understanding of other cultures, and raising students' competence (Fujiwara, 2011). The importance of ELT materials adaptation for diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds led to better interaction between lecturers and students and enhanced better understanding (Warouw & Ikasari, 2013). Relatedly, religious and multi-cultural values were first-and-second vitally prioritized under Indonesian character-based curriculum that learning materials of four English skills in *When English Rings the Bell* (a seventh graders' student book) and teachers' integration of classroom activities should be referred into its religious and multi-cultural information. Yet, the values likely seemed unattended in any study and the present study was going to do.

Hence, students' textbook of teaching-learning materials was somewhat inevitable to achieve the prescribed competences as outlined in a curriculum. The curriculum should consider a "good" textbook from which learning materials arise (Richards, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Textbook is full of (spoken/written) discourse, specific linguistic, genre or cultural feature of the texts, and so forth and added visual imaging (Tomlinson, 2013; Harwood, 2010) to color lesson content of textbook materials (Richards, 2006). Later, language learning materials can be printed materials of (possible) text- or course books, flash cards, game, etc. (Tomlinson, 2012). The materials of plentiful spoken and written texts (discourses) present the cultures of the textbook (Harwood, 2010). However, the discourse portrayal of the latest student book for the seventh graders under Indonesian character-based English education slightly remained unsearchable. In depth, the discourse features of "what" and "how" of the student book that essentially attend to discourse principles of equilibrium and appropriateness of wordy and pictorial entities to be inserted in the learning materials for the young learners became first research question. Also, the teachers' teaching and learning routines in congruence with the discourse representation of the materials for the diverse religious and multi-cultural students were problematically attempted and, hence, the aspects constituted second research question.

Normally, the Indonesian amendment curriculum from the 2006 unit-stratified education into the character education has led to revising some educational aspects, including student book and teaching-learning procedures to achieve the goals of the ongoing curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013c). Likewise, partly supporting tool for the 2013 Indonesian curriculum achievement to comply with the Minister's decree no. 54, 68 and 71 Year 2013, *When English Rings the Bell*, student book for seventh graders, was introduced as partial curriculum device to convey knowledge (partially through discourse) to allow them to attain the religious and (socially) cultural behaviors as their competences (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a, 2013b, 2013d). The

student-book was, later, influential to transfer the character education values (as manifestation of the projected competences) to be gathered with teaching-learning processes (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013c).

Noting the background, the study emphasized the following researchable angles:

1. the “what” and “how” of the religious and multi-cultural values were schemed into discourse,
2. how teachers integrated the religious and multi-cultural values into teaching and learning activities.

METHOD

This study followed quantitative and qualitative research designs as it focused on two subjects of a discourse work of seventh graders’ student-book *When English Rings the Bell* and several teachers’ documented interviews toward teaching-learning activities.

First, under quantitative research design, discourse data of lexical units (words of English and Indonesian from phrases and sentences) were gathered using vocabulary discourse tool, and those of non-lexical units (images of culturally objective or physical or symbolic signs) were also collected harnessing reflective discourse tool, both of which potentially communicated information of religious and multi-cultural values in English education. Then, using anthropological tool, the gathered discourse data of non-lexical units (the images) were categorized into respective groups of religious and multi-cultural information. Later, applying content analysis, the collected data discourse of lexical units (English and Indonesian words/vocabularies from phrases and sentences) were split up into textual elements of the coding categories as per parts of speech, and those of non-lexical units (images) were also differently grouped into pictorial elements of the coding categories as per anthropological groups of religion and multi-culture. Forth, deploying qualitative content analysis, the given discourse data of textual elements of lexical units and those of pictorial elements of non-lexical units in the texts were analyzed and discussed to reveal underlying discourse messages of the religious and multi-cultural values in the student book. It was meant so to answer the first research question. To answer the second question, teachers were also interviewed to respond with teaching-learning routines under the 2013 character education to be ideally guided with the student-book, and the interviewed outcomes were documented into written information.

FINDINGS

Religious Information as per Lexical Units of English Words in Learning Categories

The finding indicated religious information was enriched with English words of 153 happenings in seven chapters (excluding eighth) of total eight in the student-book, and differently shared into first three most frequent categories of lexical units of words of noun (51 events), pronoun (46), verb (42), and fewest adjective (5).

As seen in figure 1, the words were, then, distributed into a series of first three dominant categories of learning materials of speaking (of 11 happenings), reading (5) and writing (4). Meanwhile, they were absent in category of listening material.

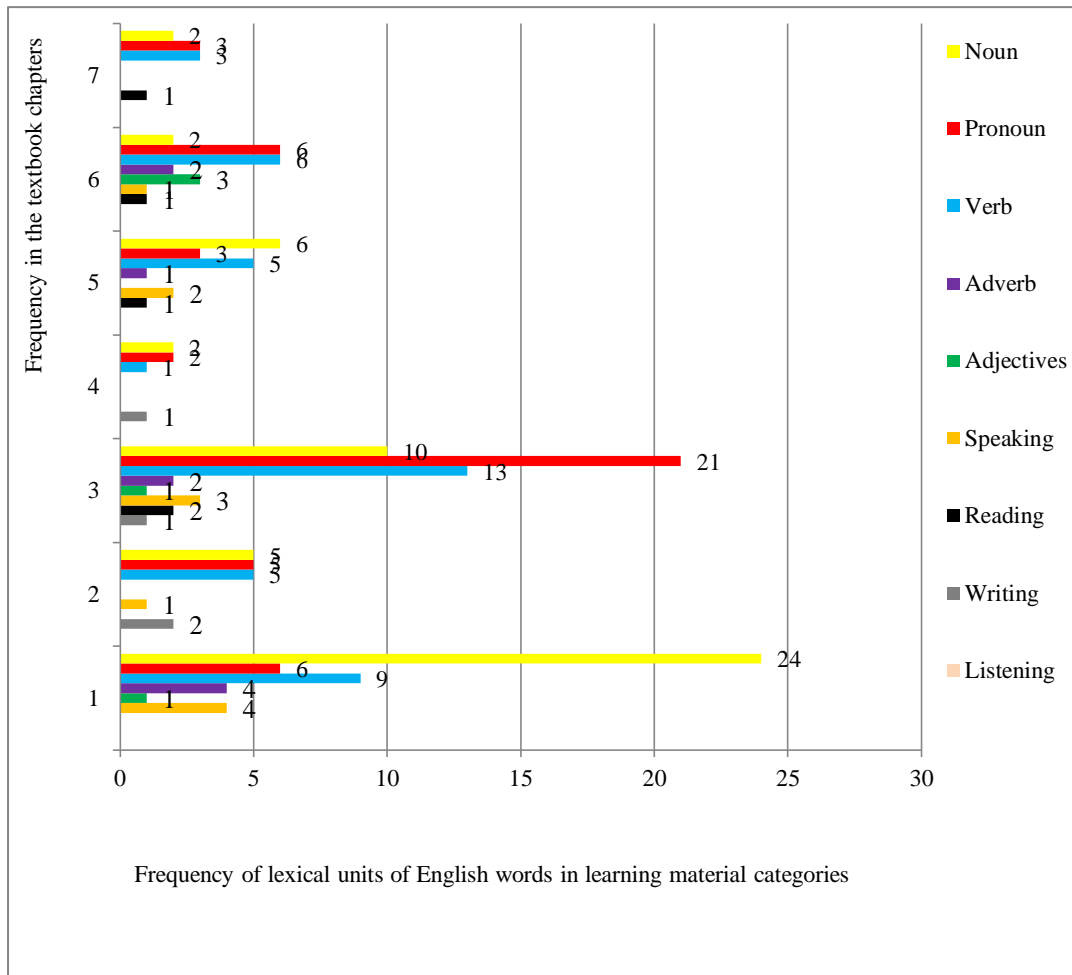


Fig. 1: Religious information as per lexical units of English words in learning categories of the textbook

Religious Information as per Lexical Units of Indonesian Words in Learning Categories

The finding showed religious information was ample of Indonesian words of 9 incidences in two chapters (including first and third) of total eight in the student-book, and solely distributed into categories of lexical units of Indonesian words of noun (of 9 events). Yet, the word did not exist in other categories to construct religious information.

As illustrated in figure 2, the words were, later, divided into two frequent categories of learning materials of reading (5 happenings) and speaking (4). However, they were not found in other two categories of learning materials of writing and listening.

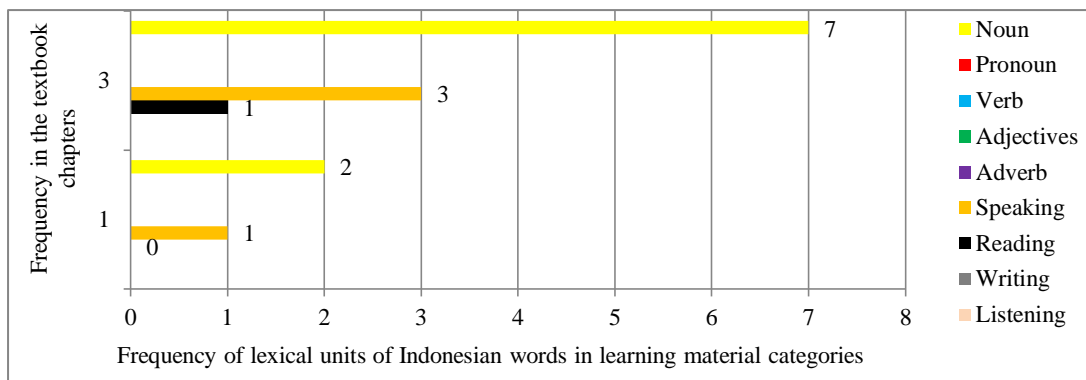


Fig. 2: Religious information as per lexical units of Indonesian words in learning categories of the textbook

Religious Information as per Non-Lexical Units of Images in Learning Categories

The finding unveiled religious information to be abundant with images of 65 incidences from entire eight chapters in the student-book, and unevenly slotted into categories of non-lexical units of images of most frequent cloth of 58 events, building (4), activity/habit (2) and photo (1).

As shown in figure 3, the images were, later, positioned into categories of learning materials of outnumbering speaking of 24 happenings, writing (7) and reading (6). Yet, the images did not occur in two categories of learning material of listening.

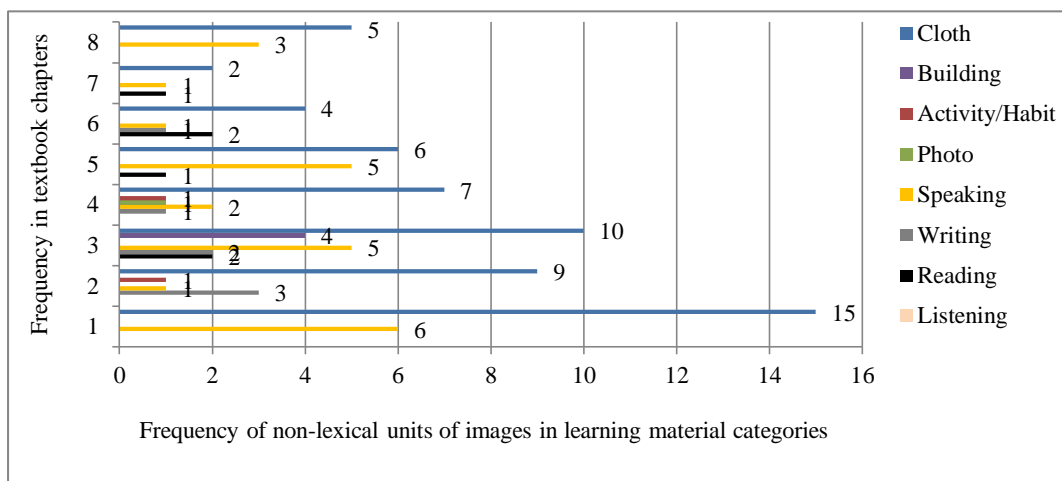


Fig. 3: Religious information as per non-lexical units of images in learning categories of the textbook

Multi-Cultural Information as per Lexical Units of English Words in Learning Categories

The finding displayed multi-cultural information to be framed with English words of 99 happenings that appeared in four chapters (including first, second, third and fifth) of total eight in the student-book, and diversely positioned into

first three most frequent categories of lexical units of the words of verb of 38 events, pronoun (33), and noun (21).

As outlined in figure 4, the words were, subsequently, shared into a series of first three major categories of learning materials of reading of 5 happenings, speaking (2) and writing (1). Yet, they did not present in category of learning material of listening.

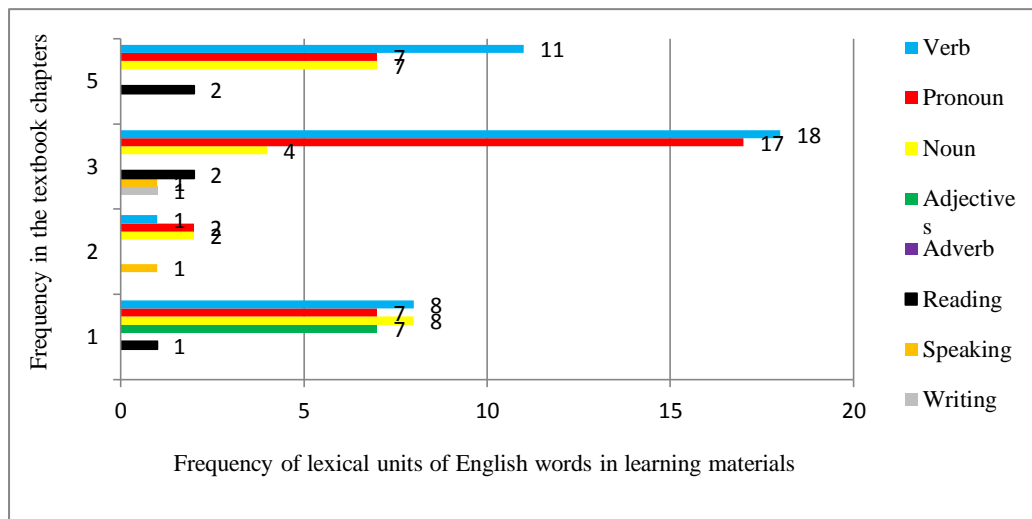


Fig. 4: Multi-cultural information as per lexical units of English words in learning categories of the textbook

Multi-Cultural Information as per Lexical Units of Indonesian Words in Learning Categories

The finding indicated multi-cultural information to be prevalent of Indonesian words of 40 occurrences in five chapters (including first, second, third, fifth and seventh) of total eight in the student book, and mainly segmented into first two major categories of lexical units of the words of noun of 23 events and adverb (14).

As displayed in figure 5, the words were, later, attached to a series of three categories of learning materials of reading of 6 happenings, speaking (3) and writing (2). Nevertheless, they were not apparent in category of learning material of listening.

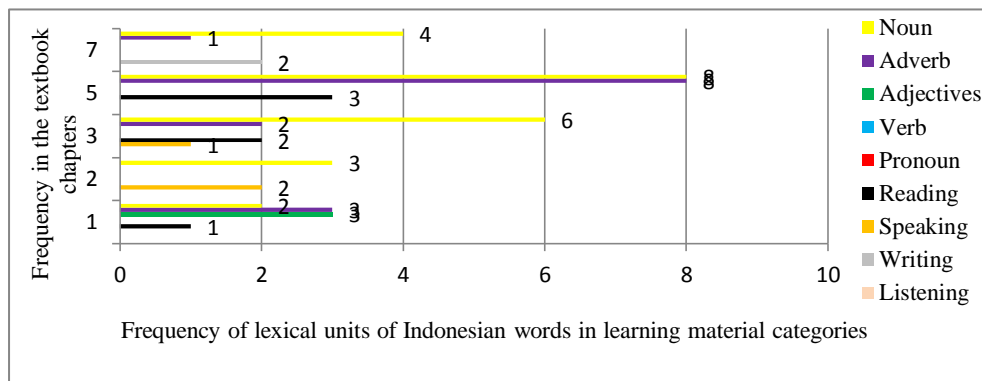


Fig. 5: Multi-cultural information as per lexical units of Indonesian words in learning categories of the textbook

Multi-Cultural Information as per Non-Lexical Units of Images in Learning Categories

The finding manifested multi-cultural information to be outlined within images of 66 incidences from five chapters (including first, second, third, fifth, and seventh) of eight chapters in the student book, and unequally distributed into first three prominent categories of non-lexical units of images of accessory of 58 events, building (18), and cloth (11).

As seen in figure 6, the images were, later, slotted into categories of learning materials of reading of 6 happenings, speaking (3) and reading (3). Still, the images did not happen in learning material of listening.

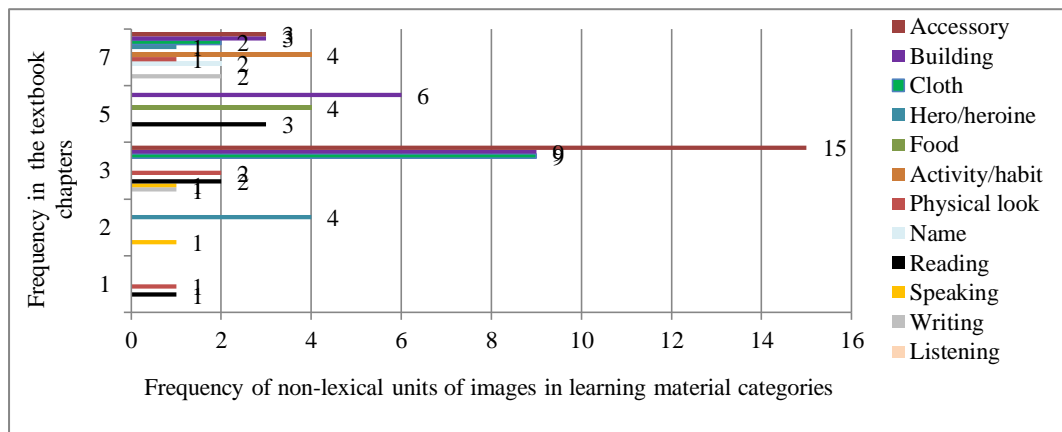


Fig. 6: Multi-cultural information as per non-lexical units of images in learning categories of the textbook

Integrating of Religious Values into Teaching and Learning Activities

The finding suggested teachers of A. (of Christian school), R.P. (of Islamic school), S.C. (of Catholic school) and S.S. (State school) integrated religious values into their teaching and learning activities (of the given four strategies) to promote the development of the seventh graders' English skills. Deeply, all four school teachers incorporated religious values into their teaching and learning activities for the development of the speaking skill category (of 12 events) with problem-, cooperative-, and task-based strategies. Likewise, they respectively did activities for the development of reading skill category (4) with problem-based strategy, that of writing (4) with project-based strategy, and that of listening (4) with cooperative-based strategy. The integration is outlined in figure 7.

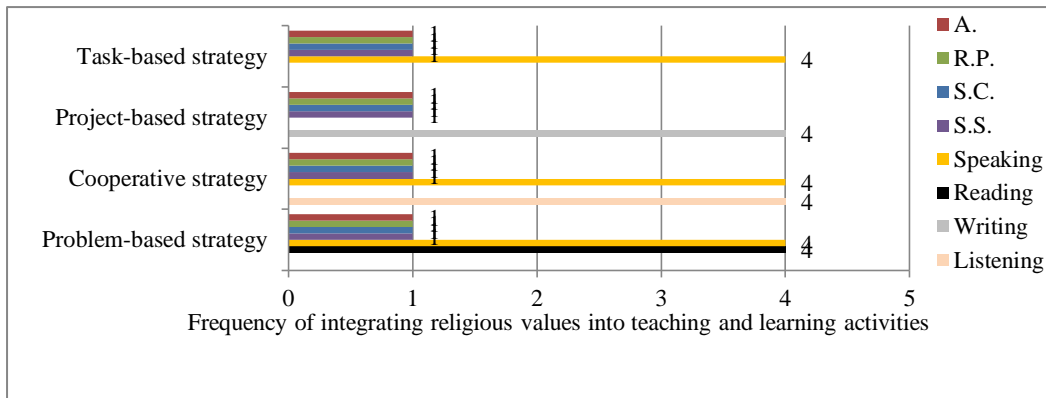


Fig. 7: Integrating of religious values into teaching and learning activities

Integrating of Multi-Cultural Values into Teaching and Learning Activities

The finding manifested teachers of A. (of Christian school), R.P. (of Islamic school), S.C. (of Catholic school) and S.S. (State school) integrated multi-cultural values into their teaching and learning activities (of the given three strategies) to support the development of the seventh graders' English skills. In depth, all four school teachers linked multi-cultural values with their teaching and learning activities for the development of the speaking skill category (of 8 events) with problem-and service-based strategies. They also respectively did activities for the development of reading skill category (4) with problem-based strategy, that of writing (4) with project-based strategy, and that of listening (4) with service-based strategy. The integration is shown in figure 8.

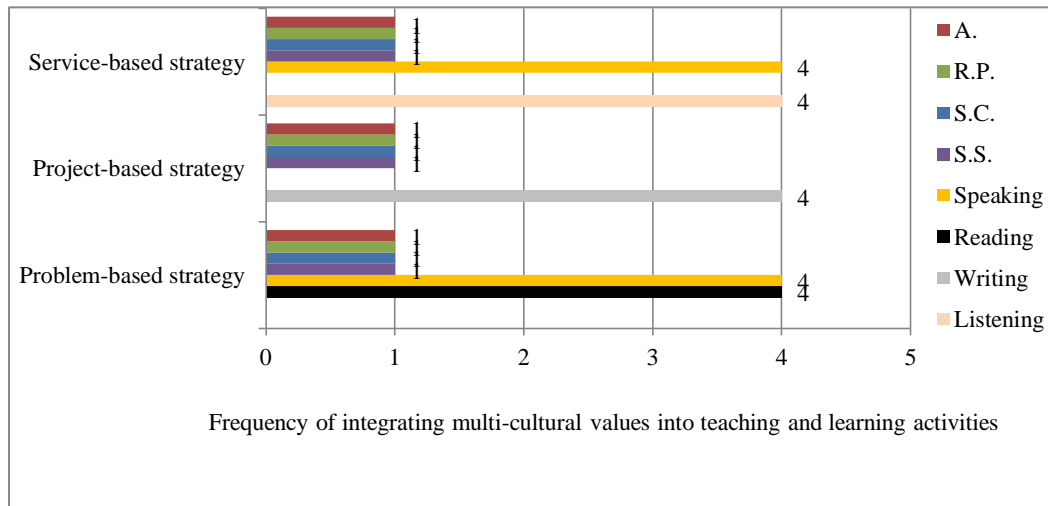


Fig. 8: Integrating of multi-cultural values into teaching and learning activities

DISCUSSION

Religious Information as Ascribed by Lexical Units of English and Indonesian Words, and Non-Lexical Unit of Images in Learning Material Categories of the Textbook

Visibly, the given three tables showed the greatest share of English words (of 153 events) plausibly enriched the novice English learners with more rich lexical inputs. Despite fewer Indonesian words (of 9 incidences), the words integrated with English were to some extent helpful to figure out discourse contents of Indonesian religiousness as the seventh graders are somewhat novice learners in population.

Thus, the writers feasibly inserted “religious” images of (65 happenings) to guide the young learners of plausible limited English and Indonesian vocabulary to perceive the religious discourse contents of the student-book. The implementation of the images to express the religious discourse content of the student-book fitted the young learners’ possible preference of the images to a degree, and enabled them to be more stimulated and interested in learning the content. The number of “clothing” and building images was likely schemed accordingly since the writers aimed to a degree to establish the religious symbolic attributes to be more common and tolerant to the learners’ life of different faiths.

The outlined three tables also manifested the textbook of imbalance distribution of the greatest English words, fewer images and fewest Indonesian words to establish religious discourse contents as one-sided element of religious information in numerous learning material units of different text categories of unequal quantity of the most speaking group of 39 occurrences, fewer reading (22), fewest writing (11), and listening (nil) to prioritize the formulated levels of the learners’ English skills. Probably, category of listening materials was omitted due to the novelty of the learners’ English. The image inclusion was probably “favorable” medium to get the young learners’ interest and acceptance of the religious discourse contents of the textbook, which might later be corresponding to their expectation of more “tolerant, acceptable, safe and interesting” religious discourse contents, and avoid the tendency of the “strongly” written-with-word stereotyped happenings of certain religious illustration.

To conclude, the adoption of the fewer images comparable to lexical inputs from ranging phrasal and sentential constructions of *When English Rings the Bell* to display religiousness manifested the ideal configuration of “good” student-book in part since discourse contents should be developed with balance of images and lexical features to maintain the seventh graders’ interest on reading the student-book as linguistically proven (Tomlinson, 2003; McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

Multi-Cultural Information as Attributed by Lexical Units of English and Indonesian Words, and Non-Lexical Unit of Images in Learning Material Categories of the Textbook

Evidently, the given three tables shed light on English words of 99 happenings to outnumber Indonesian (of 40) to function as linguistic features to develop the informative multi-cultural discourse contents. The distribution of greater English words than Indonesian was probably designed to equip the novice

learners with more English lexical intakes to boost their English vocabulary development to access information from English resources.

In spite of fewer share of Indonesian words, the words tied to English words were enlightening to transfer multi-cultural discourse contents of Indonesia as the seventh graders seemed to be novice learners to a degree. Besides, the integration of Indonesian and English words potentially drew the young learners' attention to learn their multi-cultural discourse occurrences of other inter-island counterparts.

Hence, the adopted elaboration of the images of common Indonesian multi-cultural traits with English and Indonesian words to convey the multi-cultural discourse contents of the student-book was possibly done hitherto to conform to the young learners' needs of the images and gave them more stimulation and interest to learn the contents. Profoundly, the first three dominant images of Indonesian multi-cultural discourse have been posed to comprise cultural buildings of 18 events, accessories (18) and clothes (11). This was likely done as the student-book writers meant to introduce familiar and interesting multi-cultural symbolic hints to the young learners' life of diverse multi-cultural traits.

Obviously, the study unveiled the student-book of disproportion of the most English words (of 99 incidences), fewer images (66) and fewest Indonesian words (40) to constitute multi-cultural discourse contents as one-sided element of multi-cultural information in abundant learning materials units of text categories (of unequal proportion of the most reading group of 17 events, fewer speaking (12), fewest writing (11), and listening (nil) to train the prioritized degrees of the learners' English skills. Feasibly, category of listening materials was left out due to the novelty of the learners' English. The image adoption partly served as carrier to grab the young learners' interest and acceptance of the multi-cultural discourse contents of the student-book, which might later coincide with their expectation of more "tolerant, acceptable, safe and interesting" multi-cultural discourse contents, and minimized the plausibility of the "strongly" written-with-word stereotyped occurrences of dominant cultural representation.

In conclusion, the addition of the fewer images comparable to lexical inputs from ranging phrasal and sentential constructions of *When English Rings the Bell* to shape multi-culture somewhat overlooked to meet the ideal construction of "good" student-book since discourse contents should be developed with balance of images and lexical features to keep the seventh graders' interest on reading the student-book as we have been well-informed by several linguists (Tomlinson, 2003; McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

Religious Informative Values Found in the Textbook

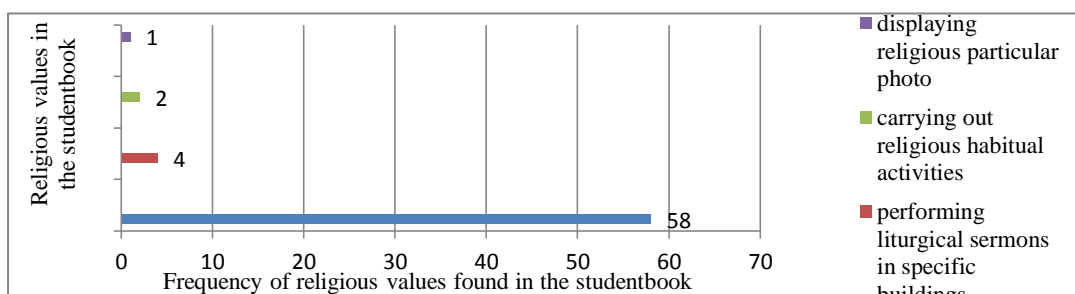
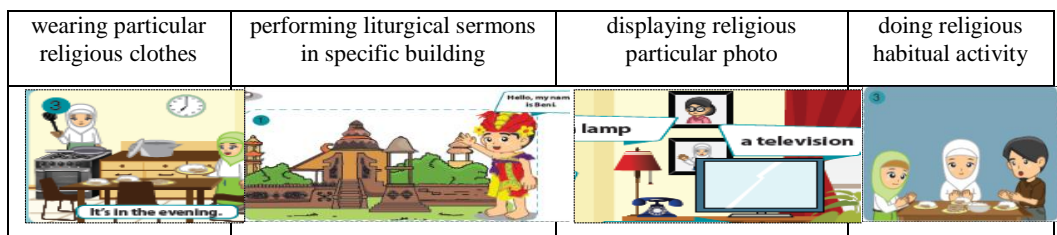


Fig. 9: Religious informative values found in the textbook

As pinpointed in figure 9, religious discourse contents of the student-book were rooted from interpretation of qualitative content analysis towards meanings of the given semantic representation of data analysis units (of any linguistic units of English and Indonesian words), and the symbolic image representation of data analysis units (of any non-linguistic units of images) to retrieve the religious values as the potentially extended values of character education.

Deeply, the meanings were deduced from general symbolic religious illustration of the existing images of most frequent (wearing) clothes (of 58 events), few (performing liturgical sermons in religious) buildings (4), fewer doing religious activities/habits (2), fewest displaying (religious) photo (1) from chapters and pages in the student-book as shown below,



Sum, the religious values were not stereotyped as religious liturgical efforts, but informative as religious values of wide representations for the learners to properly behave in their own religious manners for peace and unity despite their diverse religious devotions.

Multi-Cultural Informative Values Found in the Student-book

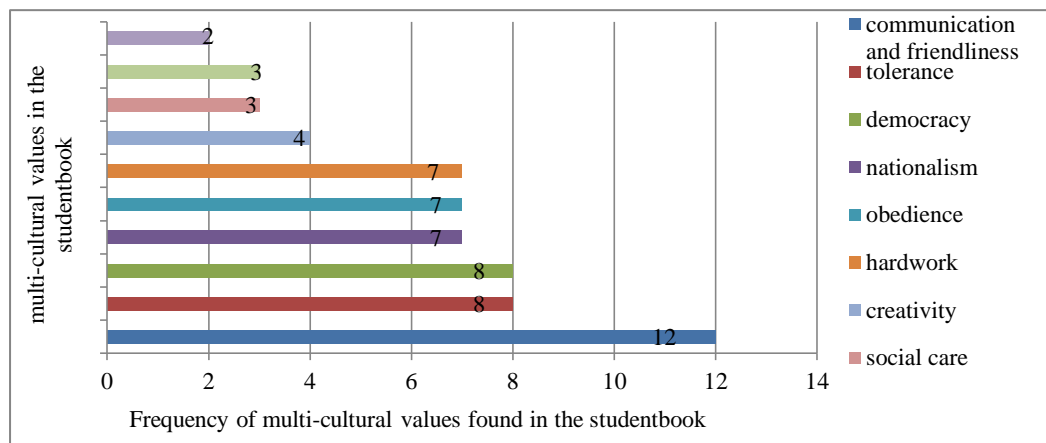


Fig. 10: Multi-cultural informative values found in the student-book

As suggested in figure 10, multi-cultural discourse contents of the student-book were synthesized from interpretation of qualitative content analysis towards meanings of the given semantic representation of data analysis units (of any linguistic units of English and Indonesian words), and the symbolic image representation of data analysis units (of any non-linguistic units of images) to generate the multi-cultural values as the potentially comprehensive values of character education.

Deeply, the meanings were implied from common symbolic multi-cultural depiction of the existing images of most frequent communication and friendliness (of 12 events) of performing acceptable addressing system towards other's possible diverse multi-cultural traits, few tolerance (8) of showing respectful behaviors towards other's different multi-cultural symbolic tribes, few democracy (8) of welcoming to other's various multi-cultural ideas, fewer nationalism (7) of defending own country in battle field, fewer obedience (7) of perceptibly doing daily routines in good ways, appropriate time and place, fewer hard work (7) of working hard together in positive goals in everyday practices, less fewer creativity (4) of designing and producing multi-cultural products, less fewer fewest social care (3) of helping neighbors despite their different multi-cultural groups, less fewer responsibility (3) of doing own tasks, and fewest environmental care (2) of caring of surrounding nature from chapters and pages in the student-book as shown below,

communication and friendlines	tolerance	democracy	nationalism	obedience
environmental care	responsibility	social care	creativity	hard work

In sum, the multi-cultural values were perceivable as general cultural values of wide multi-cultural instances for the learners to appropriately and acceptably behave in their multi-cultural manners to foster Indonesian peace and unity despite their diverse multi-cultural ethnical societies.

Integrating of Religious Values into Teaching and Learning Activities

On the basis of interviewing of the 3 based-religious and 1 state school teachers, the study highlighted teachers' somewhat similar preferences of implemented problem-, cooperative-, project-, and task-based teaching and learning strategies to develop the students' common religious competences and four English skills.

With problem-based learning, the teachers presented shortly a topic of six religious public places in Indonesia and split students into small groups. They provided some pictures of six religious buildings and assigned them to complete several lost information of the pictures from the given answers in the bracket. Next, they invited them to look for a series of possible religious activities or habits and clothes in the brackets that were proper to the outlined six pictures of

religious building, and instructed every member of the groups to present their work in the class. The strategy was applied to teach reading and speaking. Moreover, they divided them into small groups, distributed listening worksheet related to short recorders about six religious buildings in Indonesia, played the recorders, and asked the members of the group to find out the correct answers of the questions of the worksheet and to present their own work. They aimed cooperative-based strategy to teach listening and speaking. Later, they instructed the students to do composition about their own religious celebration plan, and meant project-based strategy to teach writing. The teacher then introduced task-based strategy by asking the students to pray in English after the class was over, and encouraged the strategy to teach speaking.

Besides, the teachers intensely followed the student-book informative guidance to teach speaking, reading and writing to their students. Interestingly, they created their own models of enhancement to teach listening though the book did not contain listening exercises for them. They creatively sorted out various religious discourse topics and media for presentation in spite of a bit of diversities in terms of the religion devotion credited to the schools. To cope with the diversity of religious topical selections of the discourse creation, the teachers encouraged the students of different religious faith should create their own discourse creativity. They might aim this to avoid stereotyping cases of the certain religious discourse samples.

Integrating of Multi-Cultural Values into Teaching and Learning Activities

Based on interviewing of 4 school teachers of possible multi-cultural cues, the study manifested the teachers' favorable problem-, project-, and service-based strategies to help the students boost their widespread multi-cultural competences and four English skills.

With problem-based strategy, the teachers introduced a general topic of several public places of multi-culture in Indonesia and divided several students into small group members. They distributed some pictures of the places and asked them to select several lost information of the pictures from the given answers in the bracket. They also instructed them to find appropriate connection of a series of multi-cultural activities or habits, accessories, food, cultural bounded people name, local heroes/heroines, architectural buildings, and clothes in the brackets for the outlined pictures of the multi-cultural public places, and invited every member of the groups to present their work in front of the class. The strategy was helpful to teach reading and speaking.

Besides, the teachers assigned the students to browse some information of several pictures of certain multi-cultural public places from the internet and instructed them to write their own composition. The teachers concentrated on project-based strategy to teach writing.

To teach speaking, the teachers sometimes pursued service strategy by sending the students to join English contests with Indonesian multi-cultural dressing code. Likewise, to teach listening, they sometimes prepared dictation model by telling several descriptions of multi-cultural public places and asked them to decide the best pictures relevant to the dictated scripts.

The teachers paid attention to the student-book guidance to teach speaking, reading and writing to the students. But, they designed their own modified

advancement to teach listening though the student-book did not preserve listening tasks for the students. To cope with the diversity of multi-cultural topical preferences, they encouraged their students of different multi-cultures to create their own discourse products. They might scheme this to prevent feasible stereotyping to deal with their own multi-cultural discourse instances.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the writers of the student-book have slightly implemented “tolerant and peaceful” religious images to transfer the religiousness (religious values) with lexical forms of language and, at one time, to attract the young different-religious-faiths learners’ interest and motivation. Their implementation of the lexical units (of English and Indonesian words) to portray the religiousness was viably intentional to improve the seventh graders of liable limited vocabulary to learn the religious informative contents of *When English Rings the Bell* as English has been formally taught. Beneficially, the non-lexical units of images attached to English and Indonesian words served as “feasible and comfortable” carrier of the religious content to gain their acceptance to learn it.

Moreover, the writers plausibly intended the deployment of lexical units of English and Indonesian words (as representation of parts of speech) to illustrate Indonesian multi-cultural discourse informative contents to grab the young learners’ attention and interest to study the contents of *When English Rings the Bell* as the learners have been plausibly familiar with the outlined English and Indonesian vocabulary to figure out their Indonesian life of multi-cultural outlooks. This led to them to include English and Indonesian words to develop speaking, reading and writing text sections of the entire eight chapters. The outlined images (as the non-lexical units of the analysis discourse data) from various text categories of the student-book were somewhat helpful to depict and transfer several messages of multi-cultural values (multi-culture) for the “pillar” of the character values for the learners’ good behaviors and morality.

Again, the knowledge gained from numerous information of the learning materials (of lexical units of English and Indonesian words and non-lexical units of religious and multi-cultural symbolic images) as informative discourse inputs of reading, writing and speaking categories of the student-book) was creatively schemed with the teachers’ selections of teaching-learning strategies to help the learners achieve a set of first and second nominated competences, e.g. religious and socially cultural behaviors. The “creative” teachers could manage their ways to develop the students’ listening skill despite the exclusion of listening materials.

Overall, the religious and multi-cultural information of the student-book was appropriate for the seventh graders of the diverse religious faiths and multi-cultures to gain the prescribed competences of religious and (socially) multi-cultural awareness that the knowledge from the chapter units of learning materials relied on Indonesian character values of life sides. Yet, further discourse studies on different researchable angles on other education values and different teachers’ classroom activities at different education levels are suggestible to add to the discourse scientific collection to promote the character-based English education in Indonesia.

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