

## **LOCALITY AND SELF-IDENTITY:**

Local story inclusion in Indonesian English Text Books

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### **Abstract**

With the issue of self-identity and glocalization, the role of local content in teaching materials plays, these days, more significantly as a recognition of national identity. This study identifies the inclusion of local literature in Indonesian English text books of junior and high schools and the perception of both teachers and students on their use. The data were taken from analyzing 10 English text books from different publishers and administering questionnaire to 10 teachers and 68 students from different schools. The findings show that the inclusion of local narratives in Indonesian English text books is still less than enough. Questionnaire results show that teachers found it easier to teach local narratives than the international ones whereas the students also found that they could understand them more easily as they are more familiar with the local narratives. The study suggests the inclusion of more local narratives in Indonesian English text books and their use in teaching for better English acquisition as well as stronger national identity.

Key words: self-identity, local narrative, perception, students, teachers

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization, as an impact of the development in science and technology, has made the world shrinking and borderless. It allows people of a nation to interact with their counterparts of different countries and languages. In this case, English has been the main bridging language allowing them to communicate their message and necessities and understand each other. The need for mastering this means of international communication becomes more salient when countries compete to gain and establish their interest and power in economy, politics, science and technology. Hence, human resource of a country with minimum English mastery will be deprived from international and global competition, as in the case of diplomacy, for example.

In the same line, globalization is driven by politics and economy. It is often used by some developed countries to impose their economic control and political hegemony on developing or underdeveloped countries. The free market policy, for instance, has positioned people in the so called third world countries the potential buyers and customers for commodities produced in some developed countries.

With the help of media advertisement, the latter group can enjoy the economic benefit and political supremacy from the globalization issue they enforce. This can be seen from how corporate culture has made our innocent children consumptive to commodities produced by global corporations (Giroux, 2000). Take for example, how TV advertisement has made our children addicted to franchise products such as fast food, music, film, and fashion. Indonesian children and youngsters, for instance, feel more confident and updated when they can go and have lunch or celebrate their birthday at fast food restaurants such as

McDonald, KFC, CFC, *Hoka Hoka Bento*, listen to western music groups such as West Live and U2, watch Hollywood movies, wear internationally-branded clothes. Indonesian children become more familiar with western culture than that of theirs and develop into an uprooted generation. This condition strengthens the hegemony of developed countries and make these under-develop ones imitate them and, therefore, lose their identities.

As a part of a developing country, we, therefore, need to develop and show our own identity as a bargaining power through various efforts. One of which is by empowering the local wisdom found in our culture and society such as honesty, politeness, and work ethics. Some of these wisdoms and values can be found in local stories or folktales which can be handed down from generation to generation, particularly, through formal schooling.

At the same time, the teaching and learning process of English at school often face some obstacles, one of which is students' low interest and ability. The first is influenced by many factors such as teacher's mastery of curriculum and its implementation (Yusuf, 2008). The second is also, among others, affected by the gap between learning material and students' background or prior knowledge (Graves et.al., 2004) so that it influences their reading comprehension. In terms of narrative text, Indonesian students often find it harder to comprehend stories from English speaking countries which have characters and settings irrelevant to their culture than those relating to their own (Muslim, 2008). Indonesian teachers might also find it hard to explain words and concepts found in these English culture-based stories, let alone when they have never had any experience of living in English speaking countries. In the same line, students might also find it harder to comprehend words and plots of stories from cultures different from theirs.

As such, it is important that we include local stories in teaching English at schools. By incorporating a number of local stories in English text-books, not only do we preserve the heritage culture of our ancestors and develop our identity as a nation but also improve the learning process of English at school. Thus, we can develop quality human resource playing active roles in global competition.

### **English Learning**

Learning any foreign languages, including English, always involves the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The learning process tends to be more successful when these four skills are comprehensively incorporated.

Besides, the improvement of these skills is inseparable from vocabulary mastery. To be able to speak fluently, for instance, English learners need to have sufficient amount of vocabulary. Since the task of acquiring vocabulary is huge (Graves & Graves, 2004), students should be motivated to be independent learners. For this, Nation (2008) suggests structured vocabulary learning using different strategies (Crystal, 1995) with context relevant to students' background knowledge (Gu, 2003; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2003; Elley, 1997). In certain situations, students should be provided with natural linguistic environment (Brumfit, 1989) and strategies to effectively use dictionary (Johnson, 2000).

In addition, vocabulary acquisition also relates to the frequency of exposure to the four language skills. The more the students listen and read in English, the more the number of vocabulary they will acquire. Furthermore, comprehension also relates to students' background or prior knowledge (Graves etl.

al., 2004). Listening to and reading local stories can help improve students' comprehension as the themes, characters, and settings of these stories have been familiar to them. When reading a story with familiar content, students can even guess some new words they find in the text, relying on their knowledge of the story (Muslim, 2008) or by guessing the plot they have known before (Elley, 1989).

Learning materials, furthermore, should be interesting and challenging to attract students' attention and interest. In this case, Lazar (1993) suggests the use of stories or children's literature, combined with interesting illustrations (Tomlinson, 1990; Wright, 1989), packed in interesting functional activities (Littlewood, 1990; Reasoner, 1982 in de Andres 1999) and in contexts relevant to students' cultural background (Hadley, 2000). In the case of using narrative texts, the stories used should be familiar to students, or let alone relevant to students' cultural background.

In relation to this, the ongoing national curriculum of English at junior and high school in Indonesia is Curriculum 2006, well known as school-level curriculum with Genre-Based approach. It is adapted from Wells' (1987) four literacy levels (performative, functional, informational, and epistemic) and Halliday's (1985) genre types. The curriculum of junior high school determines 5 types of text (narrative, procedure, recount, descriptive, and report) whereas that for high school incorporates these five texts with other types (analytical exposition, news items, hortatory exposition, discussion, and spoof). As the national curriculum has mandated, the narrative text is introduced to grades 8 and 9 of junior high school and grades 10 and 12 of senior high school.

### **Globalization and Identity**

Globalization may, to certain extent, mean making all parts of the world similar. It may also mean provoking people to imitate the so-called pop or high culture. Campaigned by mass media like television, this phenomenon has been an effective means of promotion and made youngsters from underdeveloped countries faithful followers of the trend set by the developed countries (Giroux, 2000). As the result, many youngsters in these underdeveloped countries become uprooted and lost generation. In Indonesian context, for instance, this globalization has made some Sundanese children, a local ethnic in West Java, ignore their indigenous culture and tradition (Mahfudin, 2009). They don't like to speak their ancestor language, eat their traditional food, and wear their inherited clothes.

To actively play in this global life, not only should we have qualified human resources, one of which is supported by good English acquisition, but also strong identity as represented by their use of language (Hall, 1997). This means that the language they speak, the dress and other cultural artifacts they wear should show who they are and where they are from. Our generation should know who they are and how they should conduct (Barker, 2000). Once they know their own identities, they will be able to use their potentials to the fullest. Their competitors will, therefore, know them as quality but unique characters (Giddens, 1991; in Barker, 2000). As such, this generation will be proud of their own identity and do their best for the betterment of their country.

The identity of this young generation can be developed in many ways. One of which is through formal education. Some research shows that the national identity of youngster can be nurtured at school. In Indonesian context, Syaifulah et.al. (2008) suggest that the subject of civic education at school or

university can develop youngsters' understanding of democracy and nationalism. Similarly, Sunaryo (2009) has also proven that dance lesson at Indonesian elementary school can be inspired by and developed from nursery rhymes or childhood plays and games. In addition, other subjects like English, can also be used to nurture nationalism. Against the issue of language imperialism, English can even be used to nurture students' identity. Not only can the use of local stories like legend and folktales help students develop their English skills but also nurture their sense of nationalism.

This study, therefore, focuses to answer several questions: how the Indonesian text-books incorporate local stories, how teachers and students perceive the inclusion of local stories in the book, and how this inclusion influences their English learning process.

## **METHOD**

### **Samples**

This study is descriptive in nature. It describes the inclusion of local stories in English text-books for Indonesian high schools and the perception of teachers and students on their use in supporting the learning process of English. The samples are 10 English teachers of senior and high schools and 68 students of junior and high schools from around Bandung, the capital city of West Java. Details of teachers and students is described below.

### **Teachers**

There were 10 teachers involved in the study. Five of them teach at junior high school whereas another five teach at senior high school. The schools are located in greater Bandung city West Java. One sample teaches at a junior high school in Kaimana regency, West Papua province. Their selection is based on accessibility and equity of area and school level. Table 1 shows more detail about teachers and their schools.

**Table 1**  
Sample Teachers and their schools

Number of Teacher	School
1	PGII Junior High School 2
1	Kaimana Junior High School 1, West Papua
1	Taruna Bakti Junior High School
1	Baabussalam Islamic Junior High School
1	Cianjur Junior High School
1	Cimahi Senior High School 2
1	PGII Senior High School 1
1	Al-Ihsan Islamic Senior High School
2	Baleendah Senior High School

## Students

There are as many as 68 students selected as samples in this study. 50 students are of senior high school and another 18 are those of junior high school. They come from different schools in greater Bandung area. Their selection also reflects their age maturity, grade levels, school types and areas, and accessibility. Table 2 shows more detail.

**Table 2**  
Students, schools, and grades

Number of students	Schools	Grades
5	Baleendah High School	X
5	Baleendah High School	XI
5	Baleendah High School	XII
1	Bandung Senior High School 5	XII
1	Bandung Senior High School 2	X
30	Islamic High School of Al-Ihsan	XII
1	Bandung Senior High School 1	X
1	PGII High School 1	XI
1	Bandung Senior High School 14	X
18	PGII Junior High School 2	IX
Total student :68	Total school : 10	Total grade : 4

## Instrument

Data for this study were collected from questionnaire and interview. Both teachers and students filled out two different questionnaires written in Indonesian language. In general, the questionnaires ask their preferences of food, fashion, and film, story reading, and sense of nationalism as well as the inclusion of local and international narratives in English text-books they use at schools. Besides, the questionnaire for teachers also ask their opinions on using the text-books in teaching narratives whereas the one for students ask their experiences of learning narrative texts using local and international stories. The interview clarified and completed a few questions some samples found rather confusing.

## FINDINGS

The following are findings from this study which are divided into three categories: text-book, teacher, and students.

### A. English Text-books

The sample of this research is 10 English text-books for junior and senior high schools. The grades are 9, 10, 11, and 12. This selection is because they contain narrative texts as stated in the national curriculum. Below is detail for each book selected.

**Table 3**  
Sample English Text-Books

No.	Titles	Grade	Authors	Publishers
1.	English on Sky Book 2	IX	Mukarto et al..	Erlangga
2.	Real Time Student's Book 2	IX	Nina A. Bates	Phibeta A Gama
3.	Contextual Learning	XII	Wachyu Sundayana et al.	Grafindo
4.	Look Ahead 1	X	Theresia & Eudia	Erlangga
5.	Linked to the World 1	X	Soeprapto & Darwis	Yudhistira
6.	Learning to Use English	XI	Fernando et.al.	Piranti Darma Kaloka
7.	Seize Your English	XII	Ahmad Bukhori et.al.	Al-Ihsan Press
8.	Let's Talk	IX	Bachtiar Bima etl.al.	Pakar Raya
9.	English in Context	X	Wachyu Sundayana, et.al.	Grafindo Utama
10.	Developing Competencies in English	IX	Anwar Sofyanda, et.al	Grafindo

These ten text-books are published by different publishers all over Indonesia and used at both junior and senior high schools. Their use at school has been approved by the Indonesian National Standardization Bureau of Education. This approval means that the books have met the government minimum requirements as set in the national curriculum for English subject. Detail of foreign and local stories contained in each books is as follows.

**Table 4**  
Number of foreign and local stories

No.	Book Titles	Foreign Story	Local Story
1.	Contextual Learning (XII)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Angle Who Became A Buffalo (Asia)</li> <li>A Story About Yellow (King Midas)</li> <li>The Art Game (English)</li> <li>Jealous Ken (English)</li> <li>Who Do You Believe (Arab)</li> <li>Soapy' Winter Home (English)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Noble Koling Lumanau (Kalimantan)</li> <li>Lebai (West Sumatra)</li> <li>Sambua Koto (Nias)</li> <li>The Strange Porridge (Timor)</li> </ol>
2.	English in Context (XI)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Man, The Boy, And The Donkey</li> <li>Martin</li> <li>Jeremy</li> <li>A Famous Cherry Tree</li> <li>The Wizard Of Oz</li> <li>The Old Man Who Made Flowers On Trees (A Home For Shiro,</li> <li>Shiro Discovered Gold Coins,</li> <li>A Wicked Neighbor,</li> <li>A Gian Tree,</li> <li>Ashes And Flowers)</li> <li>Scotty</li> </ol>	None
3.	Learning to Use English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Star Story</li> <li>The Two Goats</li> <li>The Ugly Duckling</li> <li>The Banker And The Pauper</li> <li>Beauty And The Beast</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dayang Sumbi</li> </ol>
4.	Look Ahead 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Legend Of Minos, King Of Crete</li> <li>Indian Tall Tale</li> <li>Paul Banyan</li> <li>Daedalus And Icarus</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Batara Kala, A Myth From Java</li> <li>Bandung Bondowoso And Roro Jongrang</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Thumbelina</li> <li>6. The Fly And The Bull</li> <li>7. The Silvery Key</li> <li>8. The Gift (O'Henry)</li> <li>9. The Necklace</li> </ol>	
5.	Linked to The World 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sleeping Beauty</li> <li>2. Cinderella</li> <li>3. Peter Pan</li> <li>4. Lazy Jack</li> <li>5. The Oldman And The Bell</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Hare And The Tortoise</li> </ol>
6.	English on Sky 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Snow White</li> <li>2. Cinderella</li> <li>3. Geppetto</li> <li>4. Princess</li> <li>5. Beauty And The Beast</li> <li>6. Rapunzel</li> <li>7. The Shoemaker</li> <li>8. The Stingy And The Generous</li> <li>9. Mulan</li> <li>10. Sleeping Beauty</li> <li>11. Spiderman</li> <li>12. Hercules</li> <li>13. Shrek</li> <li>14. The Wizard of Oz (The Tinman)</li> <li>15. The Wizard of Oz (The Cowardly Lion)</li> <li>16. The Wizard of Oz (The Deadly Poppy Field)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calon Arang</li> <li>2. Kancil (The Mouse Deer)</li> <li>3. The Golden Cucumber</li> <li>4. Malin Kundang</li> <li>5. Takatuliang (Sulawesi)</li> <li>6. Bawang Merah And Bawang Putih</li> </ol>
7.	Real Time 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alice In Wonderland</li> <li>2. Cinderella</li> <li>3. Little Mermaid</li> <li>4. Peter Pan</li> <li>5. Snow White</li> <li>6. Pinocchio</li> <li>7. Rohan And The Dragon</li> <li>8. Penelope And Anastasia</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Story of Loro Jonggrang</li> </ol>
8.	Seize Your English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jack and the beanstalk</li> <li>2. Greedy Hamster</li> <li>3. Mico, the monkey</li> <li>4. Rapunzel</li> <li>5. Titanic</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mount Tangkuban Parahu</li> <li>2. Malin Kundang</li> <li>3. Timun Mas</li> <li>4. The lake of color</li> </ol>
9.	Let's Talk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Magic Flower</li> <li>2. The Frog King</li> <li>3. The Little Sparrow</li> <li>4. Brilliant child</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mouse deer and crocodile</li> <li>2. Banyuwangi</li> <li>3. Roro Jongrang</li> <li>4. Lake Toba</li> <li>5. Princes Mandalika (Lombok)</li> <li>6. Malin Kundang</li> <li>7. Talaga Warna</li> <li>8. Legends from Celebes</li> </ol>
10.	Developing competencies in English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cinderella</li> <li>2. Snow White</li> <li>3. Sleeping Beauty</li> <li>4. Thumbelina</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Mount Bromo</li> <li>6. Lake Toba</li> <li>7. Prambanan Temple</li> <li>8. Tangkuban Parahu</li> </ol>

Based on this table, *English on the Sky 2* by Mukarto et.al., has the most number of foreign stories (16 titles), followed by *English in Context* by Sundayana et.al. (11 titles), and *Look Ahead 1* by Theresia & Eudia (9 titles). The book with the least number of foreign story is *Let's Talk* by Bima et.al. and *Developing competencies in English* with only 4 foreign stories each.

On the other hand, the text-book which has the biggest number of local story is *Let's Talk* by Bima et.al. (8 titles), followed by *English on the Sky 2* by Mukarto et.al. (6 titles). One text-book, *English in Context*, includes no local story at all. Look at the table below for more details.

**Table 5**  
Comparison between foreign and local stories

No.	Book Titles	Number of Foreign Story	Number of Local Story	Ratio between Foreign and Local Stories
1.	Contextual Learning	6	4	More foreign
2.	English in Context	11	0	No local at all
3.	Learning to Use English	5	1	More foreign story
4.	Look Ahead 1	9	2	More foreign story
.	Linked to The World 1	5	1	More foreign story
6.	English on Sky 2	16	6	More foreign story
7.	Real Time 2	8	1	More foreign story
8.	Seize Your English	4	4	Equal number
9.	Let's Talk	4	8	More local story
10.	Developing competencies in English	4	4	Equal number
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>31</b>	

As the table above shows, to sum up, most books contain more foreign stories than the local ones. Of 10 sample text-books, the number of foreign story is 72 whereas the local one is only 31. One book doesn't even include local story at all and only one book provides more local stories than the foreign ones.

## B. Teachers

### *Nationalism and Interests*

Sample teachers in this study are of different major ethnic groups in Indonesia. Two teachers of junior high school are Javanese (Central and East Java), another one is Padangese (West Sumatra), and the other two are Sundanese (West Java). Furthermore, two teachers at senior high school are Javanese, another two are Sundanese, and the other one is Padangese. The majority of teachers work in Bandung, West Java, and only one of them teaches in Kaimana regency, West Papua province.

Almost all sample teachers think that they are really proud of being Indonesians for various reasons. Many believe that they are proud of it because they were born, grown up, work, and live in the country. Besides, Indonesia has various cultures and traditions. This richness proves that the country is big and, therefore, deserves to be proud of. A few of them (2 teachers), however, feel that they are not really proud of, due to some bad practices they have found and experienced as Indonesian citizens such as raging corruption, ethnic clash, and natural disaster.



In terms of food and clothes, most believe that Indonesian cuisine and fashion are not less delicious, competitive and creative than the imported ones. Besides, domestic cuisine matches their tastes better whereas domestic fashion provides them with more relevant sizes. After all, the most important is that both domestic food and fashion are more affordable. Unlike food and fashion, most sample teachers prefer foreign films and music. They said that foreign movies, like those from Hollywood, have more interesting plots and techniques. In addition, the English song lyrics also help them improve their English language skills.

Sample teachers also have different reading preferences. Some like reading local stories as they can improve their knowledge about Indonesia. Some others, however, like reading both local and foreign stories as they always provide good lessons to learn. One teacher of junior high school even prefers reading foreign stories to the local ones as her school is of international standard using international books.

Questioned about checking students' nationalism during teaching, of the 10 sample teachers, only a few examine their students' sense of nationalism when teaching. A teacher of *Baabussalam* Islamic junior high school, for instance, asked her students if they were to study abroad. Most of her students said that they prefer to study in Indonesia due to their fear of negative life style and language barriers. Another teacher of senior high school (also Islamic) often questions her students about their pride as Indonesians when discussing local narrative texts.

When asked the importance of using local literature in formal schooling, most samples believed it is important to widen students' and teachers' horizon on Indonesia, to help nurture local tradition and culture, and to awaken students' pride of their citizenship. Local literature, however, as some teachers insisted, can be used to build identity but not nationalism. Teachers believe that their students cannot always apply what they found in stories they have read into their real life. However, since these adolescent students are, to certain extent, still in search of their identity, knowing and understanding their culture will help shape their identity.

### ***Text books***

Teachers' reasons for choosing the books vary, from their relevance with the national curriculum to their inclusion of local and foreign stories. Most of them however, select these books due to their relevance with national curriculum. One teacher also stated that, beside the reasons mentioned earlier, her choosing the book is also instructed by the school principal.

In addition, the inclusion of local and foreign literatures in each book also varies from one to another. One book includes more foreign stories than the local ones or vice versa. One book, written by a foreigner (Bates) includes no local stories at all. More details of book have been described in the previous section of text-book.

Narrative text also shows locality. Parts of narrative text which show Indonesian typicality are setting, characters, costumes, and content. Finally, most teachers suggest text-book writers to incorporate more local stories into the text book, besides the foreign ones. This suggestion is due to the fact that local

stories contain local wisdom important for young generation. In addition, text-book writers should also include reflection after each local story for students to ponder.

### ***Teaching process***

In terms of teaching process, almost all teachers believe that designing the lesson plan for both stories is similar. Only one female teacher thinks that it is easier to prepare lesson plan for teaching local stories to her students.

In general, most sample teachers also believe that local stories help students learn the four English language skills more easily. Teachers have somewhat different ideas in certain skills. Most teachers of junior high schools think that their students find it easier to learn speaking and reading skills. In addition, some teachers of high school agree that both local and foreign stories indifferent for their students. All teachers also agree that local stories can make students proud as Indonesians as they can know the uniqueness and peculiarity of their culture. Besides, having read local stories, they can also visualize or prove what they have found or read in the stories in their daily life. This makes learning more meaningful to them.

Almost all teachers agree that both foreign and local stories can nurture good values in their students such as the importance of hard work, humbleness, and respect for parents. One sample teacher even mentions love for family and tolerance. In addition, most teachers, especially those of Islamic junior high schools prefers to teach local stories as their students are more familiar with it. The content of the story is also more contextual to their students' life. Other teachers, nevertheless, find both stories similar.

## **C. Students**

### **High School**

As discussed earlier, the questionnaire asks students' ethnic background, interest in reading, nationalism in terms of food, fashion, music and film, and their English learning process. What follows is the discussion of each section.

#### *Ethnic, interest, and nationalism*

First, most sample students are Sundanese, a major ethnic in West Java area. Some others are Javanese, a few are Minang and Padangese (West Sumatra), and Betawi (Jakarta). This happens because the sample schools are located in Bandung, West Java province.

Like their teachers, most students are really proud of being Indonesians. They believe so because they were born and raised in Indonesia. Besides, they also think that the country is big, rich with natural resources, cultures, arts. Students of Islamic schools are also proud of Indonesia because it is a predominantly Muslim-country. A few students, however, feel not really proud of being Indonesians due to certain bad images of Indonesia.

In terms of food, most sample students also think that they like Indonesian food better due to their familiarity, taste, availability, and *halal* guarantee. One female student who happens to study at an urban

and favorite school said that she prefers foreign food as her school canteen provides more foreign foods than the local ones.

In addition, samples' responses to question about music, film, and fashion vary. Some students (60%) like Indonesian music and film better as the former is more familiar to their ears and has understandable lyrics whereas the latter has good plot, topic, and technique. Some others (40%), however, prefer foreign music and film to the local ones as they are more creative and good to learn English. Like music and film, samples also have similar ideas. Some (50) prefer local fashion due to its availability and affordability whereas a few (20%) prefer foreign fashion due to its quality and famous brand. Some others (30), however, like both types of fashion depending on their quality, price, and design.

When asked about their reading preferences, some students (27%), from urban schools, like foreign stories better as they have more interesting and unpredictable plots so that they can arouse their curiosity. Some students from Islamic schools (33%) believe the opposite way. They think that local stories are more interesting to read and easier to understand. Besides, they can also introduce them to their own cultures like some places of origin and even moral lessons. A bigger number of students (40%), however, like to read both local and foreign stories. For them, both can provide many new things to learn, including moral lessons.

Students' responses to whether or not reading local stories can develop their identity as a nation also vary. Most (50%) believe that reading local stories is important as they can reflect their cultures, characteristics, and identity. These stories can also improve their horizon and love for their country. The English version of these local stories can even introduce Indonesia to foreign countries. A few students (10%), on the other hand, think that foreign stories are more creative and interesting to read. Another group (40%), however, thinks that they like reading both local and foreign stories as they always provide new horizon and even moral lesson.

Answering the question about the importance of local stories in building the identity of youngsters, most sample (75%) believe that it is important for young people like them so that they are more easily identified, more proud of the country, and continue their ancestors in developing the country and reserve their heritage. Some others (25%) however, believe that just reading local stories cannot build identity.

### *Learning process*

Students recognize local stories found in English text-books from various factors. Some (30%) know them from their characters and settings. Some others (27%) recognize these local stories from their pictures and messages. The majority (43) know them from the combination of these factors.

Furthermore, when asked the influence of using local stories in learning English, students gave different responses. In terms of listening, (74%) of students think that local stories help them learn this skill more easily, whereas 10% of them think that foreign stories makes listening easier. The other group (16%), however believe that both stories are similar. For speaking skill, the majority (62%) prefer local stories to the foreign ones, whereas another 10% believe the contrary. The rest sample (30%) think that both stories

can help them learn speaking skill. Next, a high majority of student (82%) think that local story can help them learn reading English texts better, whereas only 10% of them think the opposite way. The least group (8%) believe that both stories are indifferent. Finally, most students (60%) think that local stories help them learn writing better, whereas another 14% assume that it can be learned better in foreign stories. The rest 26% believe that both local and foreign stories can support their learning of writing.

Along the same line, 42% of students believe that local stories make them proud as Indonesians as these stories reflect their own culture. A small group (6%) think foreign stories help develop their horizons. The biggest majority (52), however, believe that both local and foreign stories are equally important as they always provide good moral lessons to learn.

### **Junior high school**

As many as 20 questionnaires were distributed to students of grade 9 of junior high schools. This grade is purposively chosen as the students are assumed to have taken or learned narrative stories in their English textbooks. Of these 20 samples, however, only 18 finally returned it. Below is detail information of the questionnaire.

#### *Interest and nationalism*

Of 18 samples, most of them are Sundanese (14), the other 3 is Javanese, and another 1 is Padangese. This is because the school is located in the city of Bandung, West Java, the predominant Sundanese ethnic. When asked their pride as Indonesians, most samples (16) said they are really proud of being Indonesian. Their pride is triggered by the fact they were born in Indonesia, a country rich with its natural resources, cultures, ethnics, foods, and even religions. Only 2 of them said they are not really proud of being Indonesian, especially due to low quality of human resources and the blatant corruption.

In addition, samples' tastes on food and clothes vary. When questioned about their favorite food, the majority of sample (16) mentioned Indonesian food as their favorite as it is more affordable, delicious, easily found compared to those foreign food, and also meets their taste. One sample stated that foreign food is more delicious than the Indonesian one. Another sample believe that both Indonesian and foreign foods are unique with their own taste. Furthermore, the majority of sample (16) love domestic clothes due to its good quality, affordability, availability, and even as national identity. No single sample cares to choose foreign clothes. Two of them, however, believe that the most important criteria for choosing clothes is quality and design, regardless its where from.

In terms of music and film, as many as 13 samples prefer Indonesian music and movies to the foreign ones as former are more easily understood, whereas only 4 samples like foreign movies better than the Indonesian ones due to its creativeness. Another sample believes she likes both Indonesian and foreign music and film indifferently. Furthermore, one sample has different ideas from others. She likes Indonesian music like song as its lyric is easier to understand and internalize than those of English-written song lyrics, but prefers foreign movies like those of Hollywood due to its interesting theme and plot.

When questioned about their reading preferences, most of them (15 samples) like to read Indonesian stories as they are easier to find and understand, provide lessons to learn, and give deeper understanding about Indonesia's ethnics and cultures. They can even find the evidences of some legends, for instance, in their real life. Five sample, however, prefer to read foreign stories due to more interesting topic and unpredictable plot. One sample, furthermore, believes that stories are equally important to read and learn. Besides, responding to question on the importance of reading and learning local literature as local identity, all samples agree that it is badly needed to show their personality, local identity, and grow their love for domestic products.

### ***Learning process***

In terms of English learning, samples show their preferences to the use of local literature, almost in all English language skills as described more detail below.

At oracy cycle (listening and speaking), most samples prefer the use of Indonesian literature. As many as 12 samples believe that they find it easier to understand local stories told in English because the plot sounds more familiar to them as they might have ever heard it before. Besides, they can guess the unknown vocabulary meanings from their knowledge of the stories. Six samples, however, said that both local and foreign stories are not easy to understand when they are told in English.

The use of local literature also improves samples' confidence in speaking. When retelling local stories, 11 samples find it easy to express some terms into English as they are more familiar with the content. Their familiarity with the story even guides them to express what they cannot express in English. What surprises is that one sample believes that retelling foreign stories is easier than those the local ones (she come from big city again) whereas 5 of them find that both stories are equally easy to retell if they are already familiar with them.

At literacy cycle, samples also show similar preference. Most of them (11) believe that they tend to comprehend more when reading local stories by guessing the meaning of unfamiliar or new words and referring them to plot of the stories they are already familiar with. In a rather different tone, 6 samples think that both local and foreign stories have equal comprehension difficulty levels. One sample, however, said that foreign stories are easier to understand but mentions no reason at all. When it comes to writing, as many as 11 samples believe that writing or retelling in written form of Indonesian stories is much easier than that of foreign ones. Six of them, however, think that writing both local and foreign stories is easier said than done due to their limited English vocabulary mastery. One sample, on the contrary, said that writing foreign stories is easier but, again, didn't explain why.

Finally, when asked about learning stories that can make them proud as a nation, most of them (11) believe that learning local stories can improve their national identity and competitiveness as well. Besides, they are also sure that there should be more local literatures be translated into English and read by foreigners to introduce Indonesia worldwide. In a more wise tone, 7 samples think that Indonesian youngsters should be introduced to and read both local and foreign stories to nurture their national identity as well as widen their international horizon so that they can compete at global level.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Text-book**

Text-book is an important factor in learning process. Research has proven that good text-books can help achieve the purpose of learning more effectively. They also help teachers implement the curriculum into real teaching practice by providing natural linguistic environment (Brumfit, 1989). As mandated by the national curriculum, the English text-books should incorporate genre-based approach. All sample books have included narrative texts in various forms. It is no wonder since they have met the minimum requirement for a good text book set by the government.

Most students found it easier to learn the four English language skills using local stories than the foreign ones (Lazar, 1993; Tomlinson, 1990; Wright, 1989). In receptive skills, listening and reading, students can understand main ideas or plot of the stories exposed to them and guess the meaning of unfamiliar words more accurately because they are already familiar with the content of stories. In this case, the content of text-book is relevant with students' background or prior knowledge (Graves et.al., 2004; Gu, 2003; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2003; Elley, 1997).

Current Indonesian English text-books, however, contain more foreign stories than the local ones. Some sample teachers said that text-book writers might find it easier to include foreign stories as they just need to pick these foreign stories up and need not translate them into English. Some teachers also think that most trainings about text-types or genres for teachers they have followed always include these famous foreign stories such as Cinderella, Goldy Lock, Snow White, and Sleeping Beauty. As such, teachers might be more familiar with foreign stories than the local ones.

As suggested by most teachers, to accommodate students' cultural background and to create more supportive learning experience, text-books should include more local stories in good English. Not only will this combination help students learn English more effectively but also introduce Indonesia to international world.

### **Teachers**

In terms of nationalism, most teachers are very nationalistic. They are really aware of their own culture, identity, and domestic products as evidenced by their choice of food, fashion, and film. Some, however, still find it irritating to find bad practices in their own country such as rampant corruption by government officers and legislators as well as the inability of government to create welfare for the people. Compared to their students, teachers tend to have more positive attitude toward the condition of their country. This might be caused by their higher level of maturity and more established self-identity.

Most sample teachers believe that including local stories in English text-books and learning them is important in introducing students into their own cultures. Once they know these stories and how they relate to their country, they will be aware of who they are, where they are from and how they should behave based on their own cultures and identities (Barker, 2000).

In addition, most of them also found it rather easier for them to make their students understand narrative text of local stories in all language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This fact shows that students' familiarity with the stories help them learn the four language skills better.

### **Students**

School location determines students, interests and nationalism. School in city center provides more international food and is closer to shopping centers displaying imported products. As such, students prefer foreign products to the local ones. On the other hand, students from suburban schools tend to have higher nationalism as evidenced by their preference for local products and stories. This might be caused by their minimum exposure to foreign products.

In addition, students' intellect also influences their nationalism. More intellectual students such as those of high achieving, even still 9 graders, and from favorite schools tend to be more critical in responding to what happens around them. They are more sensitive to social and political situations as evidenced by their critical pride of the country. They are not blindly proud of being Indonesian, but critical to some bad practices around them such as low human resources and corruption.

Furthermore, type of schools affects the sense of nationalism. In this case, religion schools both junior and senior high, tend to have stronger nationalism. Students of religion schools tend to be more nationalistic by preferring domestic products and local stories. This might be influenced by their nurtured beliefs that foreign products, especially those of western countries, are things to watch out. Besides, most students also live in dormitory schools which are relatively closed to out-siders. Their TV watching time is even limited to weekends only (Giroux, 2000).

In terms of clothes and stories, students have different taste. Most students like local clothes better due to accessibility and affordability. They, however, like foreign stories better due to interesting topics and challenging plots.

When asked about the four language skills, most students believe that speaking and reading skills can be learned more easily through local literatures. Furthermore, listening and writing about local stories can help the learning process more easily. This belief is supported by their teachers' opinions.

Familiarity with the text is really important in learning narrative texts. Most students who are more familiar with local stories such as those coming from sub-urban and religion senior and junior high schools find the incorporation of local stories into English text-books help them learn more effectively (Graves, 2004). On the other hand, a few students from urban schools who are more exposed to foreign stories also think that learning the four skills of English through foreign stories is easier.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the previous findings and discussion, this study concludes the following:

1. All sample books have included narrative texts as mandated by the government, but the number of foreign stories still outweighs the local ones.

2. Teachers tend to have higher sense of nationalism than their students. This relates to their maturity and better understanding of self-identity. Furthermore, some students from urban schools have less sense of nationalism due to their environment. The bigger the city in which the samples live, the less their nationalism is. This is due to more exposure to outside cultures and products found in big cities.
3. Some teachers find it easier to teach narrative texts using local literature but others find it indifferent between both local and international stories.
4. In terms of English learning aspects, most students find it easier to retell local stories than the international ones but they found it indifferent in reading.
5. Foreign story is still dominant in Indonesian English text books. Foreign text-book writers include only a few Indonesian literatures. Indonesian text book writers, however, include more local stories than their foreign counterparts.
6. The younger the samples' age the higher their nationalism. Students of junior high school tend to have stronger nationalism as they might have less knowledge and experience of living outside their world or country. Or they really internalize it when their teachers at schools tell about the importance of nationalism and self-identity amidst their teaching in the classroom as some sample teachers have done.
7. Familiarity is the key to comprehending narrative stories. The more familiar the students with the stories, the easier they can understand.
8. Finally, this study also suggests that teachers and students involved in the study should be ethnically more representative to portray the real Indonesia.

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