Abstract: The importance of cultural content in ELT (English Language Teaching) materials is strongly related to the current role of English as an International Language (EIL). Furthermore, as English is now internationally spoken, a need to learn the culture is also inevitable. However, many recent theories suggest that learning EIL does not have to be associated with learning the culture of the ‘Western’ countries where English is spoken as a mother tongue. As Smith (1976; as cited in McKay, 2002, p. 7) assumes that the ownership of English is now de-nationalised, the cultural norms of native speakers not need to be internalised by EIL learners. Then, whose culture should be taught to Indonesian learners? I have examined several aspects related to what implications the cultural contents have in relation to the role of English in Indonesia, which can be of importance for many educational practitioners. This paper is divided into two major sections, the theoretical background influenced by theories that connect between culture and ELT materials and to what context English plays its role in Indonesia and what cultural content Indonesian ELT should adopt in relation to the role of English in Indonesia.

Keywords: cultural contents, EIL, English materials, Indonesian ELT context

Introduction
The existence of cultural content is considered important in language learning materials; hence, the learning of culture in language learning process becomes inseparable. Then, what kind of relationship does language and culture have and why is culture important in the learning of language? My paper covers some explanations and arguments regarding what Indonesian ELT teachers should teach in relation to the current status of English, which puts more concern on the ELT materials commonly used by teachers, the textbooks.

Culture in Language Learning Materials
Culture, which is often associated with customs and values or anything that signifies a particular society from another, is inseparable with language. Hall (1997) connects language to culture in a complex but sensible way. He remarks that language serves as the medium whereby culture can create and preserve meanings and values. Additionally, culture is the place where language used by people can represent their ideas, thoughts and feelings. In addition, Kramsch (1998, as cited in Tong and Cheung, 2011) reminds us how language plays a vital role in constructing cultural identity. Kramsch scrutinises that language not only expresses but also embodies and symbolises cultural realities within a society. It enables the members to draw their personal pride, social importance and historical continuity from using the same languages spoken by the society. Regarding the relationship above, ELT should also become the place where learners are able to represent their identity through the language they use. Therefore, it is teachers’ task to provide and facilitate the learning process with appropriate cultural content so that learners can construct their own identity through English.

The implication of culture in TEIL
What kind of identity do learners need to express through English? It depends on their needs and purposes in using the language. If they plan to live abroad, they should recognise customs and values that prevail in the country where they plan to go. If they do not plan to live overseas but are about to encounter cross-cultural communication with other people from different countries by using English, they ought to know a variety of cultures from many parts of the world to avoid misunderstanding in communication. Some scholars’ viewpoints are examined to answer why the choice of certain cultural content in different TEIL contexts is vital. One of the common reasons is because the global spread of English has created a new role of English as an international or global language. As a result, we need to consider that when interacting with people internationally, we also share our cultural values as well customs to each other. We should first understand that the spread of English has led to what Phillipson called as ‘linguistic imperialism’ (1992, as cited in Phan, 2008). His idea implies the dominance of English and ELT in which he classifies into two different domains, the ‘Centre’ (English speaking countries) and the ‘Periphery’ (Outer and Expanding Circle countries). Phillipson indicates that ELT pedagogies defined by the Centre is said to be more advanced. Consequently, the Periphery tends to follow the Centre’s communication norms. Nevertheless, although the Periphery countries realise their dominance towards their own ELT contexts,
they try to resist and appropriate them according to their local contexts (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001, as cited in Phan, 2008).

Meanwhile, the new role of EIL as the result of the rapid spread of English worldwide has forced people who learn it to be exposed by the culture of English speaking countries mainly from which English becomes the mother tongue of those countries. As stated previously, the effort to make English as the dominant language then forces people to learn English in order to communicate with international communities. Consequently, cultural values of the Inner Circle countries also become dominant in many ELT materials due to its power and influence. In turn, those can be easily penetrated in many different ELT contexts not only because of the powerful American and British ELT industries but also because of their representations that have been commonly stereotyped by the learners. As stated by Kramsch (1998, p. 80-81), many learners tend to ‘imitate’ how the native speakers of the target language speak and behave to be able to speak the language like them. Kramsch elaborates that language learners by nature deal with two important terms, authenticity and appropriateness. She describes language learners as the ones who are keen on slipping into someone else’s shoes by learning the language and as a result attach great importance to the cultural authenticity (e.g., Australian bus schedules, American casualness) and the cultural appropriateness (e.g., Japanese salutations). The idea of appropriation deals with how learners gradually make a foreign language and culture their own by adopting and adapting it to their own needs and interests. Some view points above lead to the importance of discussing the cultural issue in ELT materials since learning English cannot be separated from learning its culture. Kramsch (as cited in Gnutzmann, 1999) declares that learning EIL involves learning how to understand and speak a variety of Engli

Cultural content in ELT materials in general

The relationship between language and culture can be understood if we acknowledge kinds of culture existing in language learning materials. First of all, Roger Bowers (as cited in Gnutzmann, 1999) formulates ‘large cultures’ when doing two case studies aimed to demonstrate ‘how learners of English may have personal and localised reasons for learning English, reasons which have little to do directly with the cultures of the English native-speaking countries’ (p. 221). Bowers elaborates them into three levels namely the national, the international and the transnational. The national level is concerned with British cultural norms, such as enthusiasm of annual agenda like the cricket season. The international level deals with the European cultural set but which is not limited to those geographically situated in European continent such as the high culture they recognise, like composers, authors, and galleries. The transnational level comprises of professional groupings that cut across national and international boundaries by setting up a new and impersonal set of joint assumptions. He considers that ‘the learning and the teaching of English language can be motivated, influenced and structured in terms of one or two or all of these cultural dimensions’ (p. 222). Accordingly, Bowers’ idea of three levels of cultural content in EIL suggest that learners’ preference to employ one or all of them depends on their reason in learning English.

Second of all, the more accepted classification which has been categorised thoroughly is framed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). They classify cultural content in English textbooks and materials into three. Source culture materials are those which are derived from learners’ own culture and are aimed to enable learners to maintain their own identity although they are using a language other than their own mother tongue, whenever they communicate with other people by using the same language. Target culture materials are the contents that make use of the culture of English-speaking countries where English is spoken as the first language. Target culture materials tend to expose customs and values that characterise the culture of Inner Circle countries. The
implication of target culture materials to ESL/EFL learners is clearly described by McKay (2002) by showing how material related to the target culture can be interpreted differently by learners who are not accustomed to the culture. International target culture materials, which use a range of cultures in English-speaking countries as well as in non-English-speaking countries, are influenced by the assumption of the current role of EIL, a medium of communication spoken by many people in the world who have different kinds of mother tongues. Cortazzi and Jin (1999; as cited in McKay, 2002) describe that this type of material represents a great variety of cultures of many English and non-English speaking countries. As a result, international target culture materials that represent diverse contexts of the use of EIL can help the learners identify various manners in which English can be used internationally and examples of cross-cultural pragmatics in which bilingual users of English draw on their own rules of appropriateness. Hence, Kramsch’s idea of the sphere of interculturality between speakers of EIL can be encouraged through the use of international target culture materials since they can provide a basis to gain a fuller understanding of how English today serves as a great variety of international purposes in a broad range of contexts that enable the speakers to reflect on their own local and global uses of EIL (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; McKay, 2002).

The relevance of Cultural Content in Indonesian ELT Context

Studies about whose culture should be given in language learning materials of ELT classes have been greatly conducted by many scholars. However, few of them are from the countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language. This fact leads to a question whether or not Indonesian teachers have been aware of the issue. Ideally, English teachers should recognise that the issue of cultural content in the materials they deliver to the learners is very relevant to the learning purpose their learners want to achieve. The study of English textbooks cannot be kept apart since both teachers and learners still count on to them largely, especially in Indonesia. The next part will describe how English serves as a foreign language in Indonesia and how it gives implication to Indonesian ELT.

The role of English in Indonesia

Unlike in other Asian countries colonised by the United Kingdom or the United States, English in Indonesia has long served only as a foreign language. Nevertheless, the former Indonesian government seemed to be aware of the significance of English competence to develop its nation. As stated by Alisjahbana (as cited in Britton, Shafer, & Watson, 1990), English was taught as an obligatory subject at junior high school as well as at senior high school since the beginning of Indonesian independence. Since then, English also became one of the compulsory subjects to be tested in National Test (UN) of junior and senior high schools. The significance of ELT in Indonesia then influences many aspects of educational systems both formal and informal ones. Some schools establish ‘international classes’ by applying bilingual instructions, plenty franchise networks of English courses are founded, and many publishing companies continuously publish a variety of English textbooks to fulfill the high demand in ELT throughout Indonesia. Given the geographical position in the eastern part of the world, people in Indonesia often perceive whatever coming from countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and so on as Western culture. Even any cultural values or customs derived from Australia are stereotyped as Western culture despite its location in the south east of Indonesia. The same term also prevails for any cultural content derived from the countries mentioned above as ‘Western materials’. This stereotype cannot be separated from English hegemony of the Inner Circle countries. Thus, the cultural content found in ELT materials published by Indonesian publishers are greatly influenced by that type of culture.

English textbooks in Indonesia

In Indonesia, production and distribution of English textbooks for primary and secondary schools have become promising business in educational industry. As a result, many new publishing companies which specialise themselves in printing and selling English textbooks from multinational companies to local and small ones have been established freely. When dealing with English textbooks, we need to pay attention to the contents preferred by authors and publishers. The choice of culture cannot be separated from the commercial preference. Some publishers may be obsessed with target culture content since it is more commercial and attract more customers. In Indonesia, there are many publishing companies that vary in types of textbooks they produce. Firstly, English textbooks published by big companies can be easily found in many bookstores. The textbooks they sell are designed to attract customers. Therefore, the choice of cultural content tends to be based on the culture of Inner Circle countries since whatever related to those countries are considered more advanced in the sense of English authenticity. I conducted a surface examination on the contents of four textbooks commercially sold in bookstores. Four of them are written according to the latest 2013 Curriculum and are published in 2014. In “Pathway to English for Senior High School Grade XI: General Programme” (Sudarwati, 2014) published by Erlangga, most images show photos of people who have white skin and blond hair, who do not resemble Indonesian people. Images of people that present local or source culture materials are only few, which show...
some Indonesian public figures such as artists and heroes. Secondly, there are other textbooks published by local companies. The publishers are usually small companies in which their market places are in small towns since the prices of the books are more affordable, whereas the preference of cultural content contained in the textbooks can be easily referred to the front covers, too. It can be seen from the images attached on the front covers that show the famous red London bus and the Big Ben. Despite the awareness the publishers have towards the importance of ‘sphere of interculturality’ that are promoted through the cultural content in the books, they seem to be reluctant in taking risk for the sake of marketing consideration by representing the Inner Circle cultures on the cover page of the textbooks they publish. This can be found in the cover page of “Talk Active: Compulsory Program for Grade X Senior High School” (Mulyono, & Kurniawan, 2014) published by Yudhistira. Thirdly, “Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA-MA/SMK Kelas XI” published by Yrama Widya (Djuharie, 2014) has shown many images that represent source culture materials such as national television programs, Indonesian public figures, currency and foods, famous places and common situations in Indonesia such as traffic, floods and so on. Even so, the number of images that represent target culture material surpasses the images that represent Indonesian culture. Meanwhile, many images that represent source culture materials have been shown in “English in Use for Grade X of Senior High Schools: Linguistics and Cultural Studies” (Daryanto, 2014) published by Platinum, Tiga Serangkai. They range from Indonesian religious places, common situations and activities in Indonesia, famous places and figures, Indonesian flag and the symbol of Garuda, and so on.

Besides images, reading texts can also indicate whether the writers prefer source culture, target culture or international target culture materials. In Mulyono’s and Kurniawan’s book, there are more than ten reading texts that show source culture materials, while around ten of them display target cultures. A text about Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of United Nations, represents the international target culture material. In Djuharie’s book which has around twenty five reading texts, there are less than ten text showing source cultures and a text about Indian marriage shows international target culture. Meanwhile, in Daryanto’s book which has less than forty reading texts, ten texts depict Indonesia and its culture, while a story from Laos indicates international target culture material. In less than fifty reading texts in Sudarwati’s book which presents international target cultures by showing two texts about Mahatma Gandhi and a panda, around six texts indicate Indonesian culture materials while most of them depict target culture materials. Each of the four textbooks has shown a variety in displaying the three types of cultural materials, based on the writers’ preferences. Some English textbooks have been written in accordance to the awareness of the importance of international target culture materials by representing several samples of international cultures from many different countries in their books. However, have those cultural contents represented the international target cultural contents that can prepare the learners to face real-life cross-cultural encounters, enabled them to appropriate their own English when dealing with other speakers from different cultures and prepared them to be able to reflect their own identity and culture towards the others? Has the government noticed this importance and created a policy to regulate what cultural content should be included in those textbooks?

**Whose culture to be adapted in Indonesia**

As emphasised by Kramsch (as cited in Gnutzmann, 1999), people are willing to express through the native’s language, beliefs and values but they do not want to give up their own. Kramsch describes it as a challenge faced by English learners along with the development of English as an international language. She also points out how teachers can teach English language and its native culture without losing their own local native culture. It leads to the global/local cultural dichotomy which should be concerned by teachers of English. Canagarajah (1999) proposes and compares two models of critical pedagogy for any schools, teachers, learners, authors as well as policy makers to set their attitudes towards linguistic imperialism, particularly English imperialism. The first method is named reproduction theory in which any participant in education tends to embrace the values of the dominant culture of ELT by showing sort of receptive attitude towards its culture. Canagarajah makes an analogy of receptive theory by describing how a learner who admires the ‘western’ culture shows greater receptivity to the values such as personal discipline and routinised lifestyle. The resistance theory stands against the dominant culture and thereby tries to preserve its own cultural values. In my view, the later theory is the one should be adopted by Indonesian ELT participants in order to create the sphere of interculturality among many different speakers. Moreover, Bowers (as cited in Gnutzmann, 1999) argues that the more widely English is used the less it is restricted to a particular set of purposes for a particular set of people (p. 221). It implies that nowadays the reason why people are learning English does not always refer to the attempt to be competent when communicating with people from Inner Circle countries but to be comprehensible when sharing each other’s culture with any people using English as the medium of interaction. Regarding the points above, Indonesian teachers and other participants in education should reconsider when choosing whose culture they want to teach. Mercer (1988; as cited in Hall, 1997, p. 58) denotes that in relation to the current English role as an international language, TEIL should be seen as a process whereby teachers should guide their learners in seeing how the dominant culture in order not to be taken for granted as the only culture they want to represent.
through the language they use. Instead, teachers ought to be prepared in facilitating their learners to appropriate their use of English and articulate their culture so that they are able to represent their identity in relation to others. This attempt should also be executed by other participants involved in Indonesian ELT, not only for textbook writers and teachers but also for curriculum designers and policy makers. Woodward (2001) supports by stressing that identity ‘gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live’ and ‘gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live’ (p. 1). As a consequence, whether it is a material taught by a teacher or a book published by an author, the cultural content presented in textbooks should contain values by which the learners can establish their identity.

Conclusion

The inseparable relationship between language and culture results in the notion that culture becomes an important aspect of language learning, especially in English language learning since the increasing use of English in global world has turned it into an international language. Moreover, as studied by many scholars, the need to understand each other’s culture in cross-cultural encounters is considered vital. It is due to the fact that when having an international interaction, speakers are exchanging not only their ideas but also their cultures. Hence, the decision to adopt whose culture should be carefully undertaken since it will influence the way the learners represent their own identity when using English. In addition, according to Dat (as cited in Tomlinson, 2008), “an overdose of local-culture ingredients can easily damage learner curiosity and the novelty effect of many subject matters (p. 268).” The four textbooks that I examined can be investigated further to gain deeper and more meaningful results in order to find out what preference the writers of textbooks offer to teachers in accordance to the current status of English and ELT in global scope. In summary, it is essential for all ELT participants in Indonesia to understand that the cultural content in ELT materials such as textbooks should be designed to represent both source culture and international target culture to prepare the learners when encountering real-life cross-cultural communications. By doing so, it will enable the learners to appropriate their own English when interacting with other speakers from different cultures and in turn enable them to reflect their own identity and culture in relation to others. As a result, government should acknowledge this importance and provide a policy that can regulate the most appropriate cultural content that should be included in Indonesian ELT textbooks.

References


