
Exploration of the Representation of Cultural Values in the Textbook *Netzwerk B1 Deutsch Als Fremdsprache*

Sjuul Juliana Lendo^{1*)}

¹⁾ Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

^{*)} Corresponding Author: lendo.sjuul@gmail.com

Article History

Submitted : December 03rd, 2025

Revised : December 18th, 2025

Accepted : December 30th, 2025

KEYWORDS

Socio-critical semiotic approach,
Functional systemic linguistics,
Cultural Values.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore cultural values in the *Netzwerk B1* textbook, which is widely used in Indonesia. Using a critical social semiotic approach based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory, this study examines the semiotic relations between image-text and the cultural meanings contained therein, adopting the semiotic relation model proposed by Xiong and Peng (2021), namely denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relations, denotational/pedagogic relations, and denotational relations. The results show that the *Netzwerk B1* textbook provides ample opportunities and space for learners to learn, think, and reflect on German and Indonesian culture, through pedagogical questions in the image-text and in the form of pre-activities or follow-up activities after the image-text is discussed. The implication of this research is that language textbooks should be written and designed with attention to the selection and presentation of cultural materials containing global cultural values and also paying attention to the provision of tasks that can involve learners actively and responsively, whether in the form of hands-on tasks, project-based tasks and problem-based tasks. Thus, learners can have comprehensive cross-cultural knowledge and skills through learning foreign languages, including German.

INTRODUCTION

Improving understanding of how people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact with one another is crucial for language learners in addressing global developments in today's era of globalization, characterized by rapid technological advancements and increased mobility in various fields (Diaz & Callahan, 2020). Globalization has led to an increased need for cultivating cross-cultural competence in language education (Berti, 2020; Canale, 2016; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Risager, 2018; Widodo, 2018). Cross-cultural competence is defined as "the ability to meet and engage successfully with people of another social group" (Byram, 2015, p. 38). Therefore, it is important for language educators to develop the multilingual and multicultural vocabulary and cross-cultural skills of language learners (Diaz & Callahan, 2020).

Several empirical studies on cross-cultural competence (IC) and cross-cultural communicative competence (ICC) in the field of language education recently show that studies in this field continue to develop (Ruan & Medwell, 2020; Vu & Dinh, 2022). Cross-cultural communicative ability is operationalized as knowledge of attitudes toward, and skills to appreciate differences in other cultures and recognize and see other cultures beyond stereotypes (Widodo, 2018). It is not surprising that many scholars in this field (Alaei & Parsazadesh, 2021; Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020; Ho, 2021; Hua, Hu & Liu, 2021; Kaliska, 2022), Xiong & Peng, 2021; Zang, Li & Chang, 2022) are interested in investigating cultural content or cultural representations and cultural activities in language textbooks, because language textbooks implicitly and explicitly teach culture and cross-cultural knowledge.

Textbooks play an important role in teaching cultural knowledge and values (Risager, 2021). This statement is supported by various studies on language textbook evaluation. Every language textbook

and other language teaching materials present various representations of world cultures (Canale, 2016; Risager, 2021). Textbooks also offer representations of the daily lives of various cultural groups, involving cultural events or practices as well as equipment/artifacts (Widodo, 2018, 2019). All representations are structured into topics, themes, activities, scenarios, and storylines, and visually displayed through multimodal texts, such as photographs, paintings, drawings, or sketches (Risager, 2021). Canale (2021) asserts that studying language textbooks allows researchers to critically examine textbooks in terms of their content and discourse. Canale (2021) notes

“... The study of representation is fundamental since what is (verbally, visually) included and excluded in the textbook plays a role in how ideas, conception and cosmogony about the target language, society and culture are virtually transmitted. In their socio-cognitive dimension, representation can operate in different ways, guiding students’ semiotic processes and contributing to the reinforcement, establishment or even the contestation of ideas, concepts, stereotypes or prejudice.” (Canale, 2021: 114).

One aspect that is widely researched in the evaluation of language textbooks is cultural content or representation. Cultural representation is seen as the way or manner in which cultural aspects (knowledge, people, social practices, artifacts) are presented through verbal and nonverbal language, such as images, symbols, icons, gestures, and other semiotic materials. Previous research on cultural content or representation in language textbooks has been well documented in various foreign language textbooks, such as English, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, and heritage languages (Ho, 2021; Kaliska, 2022; Sun & Kwon, 2020; Uzum, Yazan, Zahrawi, Bouamer, & Malakaj, 2021; Zang, Li & Chang, 2022). English, Arabic, French, Chinese, and Spanish have been the primary and most common subjects of previous studies. There is a need for textbook evaluation studies beyond these languages. Based on Canale's (2016) observations, scientists in the field of language textbook evaluation have a high interest in analyzing cultural representations in first language, second language and foreign language textbooks, and heritage languages.

In order to continue previous studies on cultural content or representation in foreign language textbooks, this study aims to explore cultural representation in a German as a Foreign Language textbook, which is widely used in institutions. educational institutions in Indonesia, such as universities, high schools, and private courses. The textbook reviewed is Kursbuch *Netzwerk B1* Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Considering every educational textbook as a socio-cultural artifact created by diverse social agendas and ideologies (Widodo, 2018), this study uses a critical social semiotics approach, where every cultural representation is realized through language and semiotic sources or materials (images, icons, symbols, etc.). Thus, both language and semiotic materials play a crucial role in representing cultural knowledge, values, activities, and artifacts (Xiong & Peng, 2021), where textbooks open the door to cultural learning. As emphasized by Xiong and Peng (2021), while representing cultural aspects in nationally and internationally published textbooks has been empirically established, critical social semiotic research in foreign language textbooks is still needed. Two research questions guide this study: (1) What cultural elements are represented in Kursbuch *Netzwerk B1*?; (2) How are these cultural elements represented through the image-text pedagogical relationship?

Culture and Foreign Language Textbooks

Everyone living in today's global era is required to have cross-cultural awareness and skills. Therefore, every foreign language learning (English, German, etc.) must develop all four language skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) and the cultural aspects of the language-speaking community being studied together. Culture is an important element in foreign language learning and is seen as a fifth skill (Damen, 1987) complementing the four language skills. Chastain (1988) divides the notion of culture into two categories, namely (1) capital 'C' is a culture that includes literary themes, fine arts, and several other general themes and (2) small 'c' is a culture that includes daily routines such as greetings, shopping, marriage, etc.

Furthermore, Moran (2001) defines culture in terms of products, practices, perspectives, and persons. Products can be tangible and intangible artifacts produced and consumed by members of a culture, such as plants, animals, clothing, buildings, and music. Practices relate to the actions, interactions, and activities carried out by members of a culture on a daily basis. Practices are evident in the form of communication, product use, interpretation of space and time, and notions of appropriateness. Perspectives concern the beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie the products and practices of members of a culture. Persons are individuals who shape culture, for example, famous iconic figures such as Mahatma Gandhi in India and Albert Einstein in Germany. On the other hand, Kachru (1986) classifies language use into an inner circle – language used as a native language; an

outer circle – language as a second language; and an expanding circle – language as a foreign language or additional language. Driven by global mobility and transcultural globalization, where people from different regions and countries interact with each other, every individual needs to have the ability to understand each other better and interact peacefully amidst cultural differences (Widodo, 2019).

In recent decades, there has been a growing body of language textbook evaluation research focusing on the content or cultural representations in foreign language textbooks (see Canale, 2016; Ho, 2021; Kaliska, 2022; Sun & Kwon, 2020; Uzuma, Yasan, Zahrawi, Bouamer, & Malakaj, 2021; Zang, Li & Chang, 2022). The methods used include content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal analysis. This research contributes to the richness and diversity of knowledge on cultural learning and teaching in contemporary language education. Empirical reports such as these play a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and cross-cultural communicative competence (Widodo, 2018; Xiong & Peng, 2021). This empirical report also serves as a means to motivate language teachers to include intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in their teaching practice routines.

Critical Social Semiotic Approach to Language Textbook Analysis

Cultural representation is an integral part of language textbooks. From a critical perspective, language textbooks represent people, events, activities, interactions, and discourses. These representations are culturally bound. Through language textbooks, people can be taught knowledge, attitudes, and skills, as well as the sociocultural ideologies of a particular cultural community within an educational context. Weninger (2021) suggests that when language textbooks are examined through the lens of representational meaning, the questions that can generally be asked include: "What/who is represented in the textbook and how? Which cultures (ideologies) are represented in the language textbook and how (and which are included or excluded)? What kind of language is represented as legitimate?" (p. 137).

This research was conducted to answer the following questions: What cultural elements are represented in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1*? How are these cultural elements represented through the pedagogical relationship of image-text? To examine these questions, the following systemic functional linguistics- based on social semiotic theory. Systemic Functional Linguistics was developed by Michael Halliday (1978) as a social theory of language, which is approached based on two main principles, namely: (1) Any language must be understood as a source for forming meaning or creating meaning, and (2) Any language must be understood as a potential for networked meaning that is realized in the contextual use of language as text, language as social practice, and language as discourse ((Halliday, 1975, 1978),

Referring to the SFL tradition, language has three metafunctional meanings:" (1)*the ideational metafunction, the representation/construal of experience (how something is represented and what processes are involved;* (2) *the interpersonal (ie interactive and personal) metafunction, the enactment of social relationships/roles/identities (the degree to which the representation appears authentic or naturalistic, as well as the attitudinal meanings expressed by the participants;* and (3) *the textual metafunction, how something is organized (which part of the image is made salient or highlighted)*(Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 30). These three metafunctions are semiotically interconnected. Driven by the development of SFL use in language textbook research, a semiotic approach has been used to study the images and texts within them (Weninger & Kiss, 2013; Widodo, 2018).

In language textbooks, the semiotic relationship between image and text reveals a variety of potential cultural meanings, with different people interpreting cultural events, actions, and artifacts differently. This is because in language textbooks, language learners understand such cultural elements by referring to their sociocultural repertoires. Therefore, following Xiong & Peng (2021), a critical social semiotic approach was adopted to analyze the textbooks studied in this study. There are three analytical parameters as a reference for this study: "denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relations," "denotational-pedagogic relations," and "denotational relations" (Xiong & Peng, 2021, p. 169). The first parameter relates to the extent to which "images provide language input and facilitate cultural learning and thinking." The second parameter refers to "images that facilitate cultural reflection and learning." The third parameter relates to "images that merely illustrate specific themes in the text."

The Position of German as a Foreign Language in the Context of Education in Indonesia

Indonesia is known as an archipelagic country. As an archipelagic country, Indonesia has a variety of languages, cultures, ethnicities/races, religions, and beliefs. In other words, Indonesia is a multilingual

and multicultural country (Widodo, 2011). However, Indonesia has a motto that unites the Indonesian nation, namely *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which means different but one. Indonesia also has a state foundation "Pancasila" (five principles), which is the ideology of the Indonesian nation and state. The five basic ideologies of the nation in Pancasila are (1) Religion, (2) Humanity, (3) Pluralism/Unity, (4) Democracy, and (5) Social Justice. All areas of life, including education, in which language education must support the instillation of the values contained in these five state principles. In Indonesia, there are four known language groups, namely local languages (Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Ambonese, Batak, etc.), national language (Indonesian), heritage languages (Chinese, Arabic) and foreign languages (English, Dutch, German, Japanese, French, Korean).

German is one of the foreign languages taught formally in Indonesia, in schools, state and private universities, and also informally in language courses. One well-known German language course institution in Indonesia is the Goethe Institut (GI). GI is a German government-owned institution with offices in many countries around the world. In Indonesia, GI operates in Jakarta and Bandung. In its activities in Indonesia, GI is tasked with promoting German language and culture, collaborating with the Indonesian government, the Indonesian German Language Teachers Association (Ikatan Guru Bahasa Jerman Indonesia, IGBJI) and the Indonesian Germanisten Association (Asosiasi germanisten indonesia, AGI). GI also facilitates educational and training activities for German teachers and learners, both domestically and in Germany. As an international institution, GI is the only official institution that can issue German language competency certificates.

German language learning in Indonesia and throughout the world refers to the *Gemeinsamer Europäischen Referenzrahmen* (GER) or Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a general reference framework adopted as the standard for German language competency in Europe. As a global reference, GER or CEFR is used in all schools that teach German, in all German language study programs at universities, and all non-formal institutions that teach German. Like other foreign languages, German language teaching focuses on oral and written skills, including language skills, mastery of linguistic elements and cultural functions (Huneke & Steinig, 2000). There are six levels of language proficiency in German, referring to GER, which is also widely used in other foreign languages. The six levels in question are levels A1 and A2, equivalent to basic skills, levels B1 and B2 equivalent to intermediate skills, and levels C1 and C2 equivalent to advanced skills.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study, which bases its analysis on the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL, Halliday, 1978), by integrating the systemic functional social semiotic method (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and the image-text semiotic relationship analysis (Xiong & Peng, 2021). The data source in this study is *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1 Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (2017 edition). This book is designed for adult learners who already have basic German language skills (A1 and A2). The reasons for choosing this book are that (1) this book is published by a major and well-known publisher in Germany, namely Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, (2) this book is used internationally as a learning resource, (3) this book is widely used in schools, universities and course institutions in Indonesia, (4) As a learning resource, this book is a book used by the Association of Indonesian German Language Education Study Programs, (5) This book displays many authentic images that support learners to understand more easily what they are learning.

The data analysis procedure begins by identifying image-texts, which represent cultural elements, such as people, events, places, actions/interactions, artifacts, and other cultural elements by carefully studying this book. Identification of these image-texts also serves as the starting point for semiotic analysis. The identification revealed image-texts representing cultural elements, which were then categorized into analysis parameters, referring to the three semiotic relation models proposed by Xiong & Peng (2021), namely denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relation, denotational/pedagogic relation, and denotational relation (p. 169). The next step was to select image-texts for in-depth social semiotic analysis and finally select and determine three image-texts as analysis samples.

The research data was analyzed in three steps. First, image-texts containing cultural elements were selected. The identified image-texts primarily contained values that respect differences in ethnicities, countries, perspectives, characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and customs. After the image-texts once identified, the next step is to determine the semiotic relationship between image and text by referring to the three semiotic relationship models proposed by Xiong & Peng (2021) as mentioned previously. The second step is to conduct a semiotic analysis to find out how cultural meaning is represented. This analysis uses the systemic social functional semiotic model (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005; Widodo, 2015), by taking one image-text from each category of image-text semiotic relationship

as an analysis sample. As with the meta-functional meaning model of SFL, visual meaning is grouped into (1) representational meaning (what and how something is represented), (2) interactive meaning (modality, the extent to which the representation appears authentic or natural), and (3) compositional meaning (which parts of the image displayed are interesting and striking. All of these meanings are explored discursively to provide a comprehensive semiotic picture of cultural elements, such as people, events, places, artifacts and other cultural materials. The third step is to draw conclusions and discuss the results of the analysis in the discussion and conclusion section.

FINDINGS

The results of the study indicate that in the Kursbuch *Netzwerk B1* there are 37 image-texts identified as containing cultural values, specifically multicultural values. Of the 37 image-texts, 19 image-texts are categorized as having a denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relationship (relation 1), one image-text with a denotational/pedagogic/ (relation 2) and 17 image-texts with a denotational relationship (relation 3). In this study, three image-texts were taken representing each category of semiotic relationship to be the analysis samples. These sample image-texts are described in detail in the following table 1.

Table 1. Sample for Analysis

Page	Image description	Image topic	Study Unit/Theme	Image-text relationship	Sample image number
22	An adult woman is touching buttons on a monitor screen on the wall and smiling at three women on the screen.	<i>Smartes Wohnen</i> (Smart Homes)	Chapter 2, Alles Neu!	Donotational/pedagogic/linguistic: Image-text that provide language input and facilitates cultural thinking and learning	1
124	A chart depicting the most valuable cities in Germany.	<i>Lebenswerte Städte</i> (Cities of value)	Chapter 11, Vom Leben in Städten	Denotational/Pedagogical: Image-text that facilitates cultural reflection and learning	2
134	Two people, a man and a woman who gave responses about globalization	Global Total	Chapter 12, Geld Regiert der Welt	Denotational: Image that only illustrates text	3

Image-text that provides language input and facilitates cultural thinking and learning

As seen in Table 1, sample number 1 is an image-text that refers to the denotational/pedagogic/linguistic semiotic relationship, an image with language input that facilitates cultural thinking and learning. This image shows an adult woman in front of a mirror, touching a button on a wall monitor and greeting three women with cheerful smiles on the monitor. On the left side of the image is the words '*Smartes Wohnen*', written prominently in a font size much larger than the existing text. Visually, this image is attractive, colorful, and depicts the technological sophistication of homes in Germany. This image has both linguistic and social functions, namely providing language input and triggering learners to think and learn about culture, in this case the house with advanced technology depicted in the text.

Image 1 is taken from Chapter 2, with the theme 'Alles neu', in section 8 (page 22) with the topic '*Smart wohnen*' (smart homes). Thinking and learning about the culture represented in this image-text begins with pedagogical questions before reading the text: *Was können Häuser und Wohnungen in der Zukunft* (What will the houses and places of the future look like?) *Sammeln Sie Ihre Vorstellungen und Ideen* (Gather your views and ideas). After reading the text, the learner is guided with the questions: *Welche Möglichkeiten gibt es?* (What possibilities are there?) *Welche gefallen Ihnen am besten?* (Which do you like best?) *W-Fragen* questions like these are very effective in facilitating open-ended and in-depth thinking. With these questions, learners are motivated to find out more about what and how a modern house is in their opinion and what modern houses have been developed and enjoyed by some Germans, such as those of the Singers family in Berlin and *Frau Schröder* in Bremen, which are described in the text.



Image 1. Image-text that provides language input and facilitates cultural thinking and learning

For Indonesian learners, the cultural knowledge explored in depth through this picture-text becomes an additional cross-cultural knowledge for them, which can certainly open their insights about the differences between Germany and Indonesia, including in terms of economics and technology, which of course affects other areas of life, including the field of housing or residence. That the housing situation in Indonesia is generally different from housing in Germany is a real socio-economic situation, because Germany is a developed country and Indonesia is a developing country. By studying this picture-text, Indonesian learners are directed to have the ability to appreciate and accept cultural differences, accept and acknowledge the cultural progress of other countries (technology) and respect and uphold Indonesian culture and country.

Image-text that facilitates cultural reflection and learning

Image 2 shows a graph containing the names of cities in Germany accompanied by percentage figures that refer to the names of the cities in the graph. At the top of this graph there is a bold text 'Zufriedenheit mit der Stadt insgesamt' (Satisfaction with the city as a whole), below it is written a question sentence 'Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit Ihrer Stadt insgesamt?' (How satisfied are you with your city as a whole?) This graphic image is visually-semiotically quite interesting, colorful even though it is not too striking. The city names and numbers in the form of percentages have their own appeal to learn, because they inform the names of valuable cities in Germany. This image is taken from *Kapitel 11* with the theme 'Vom Leben in Städten', in Aufgabe 8 with the topic 'lebenswerte Städte' (page 124).

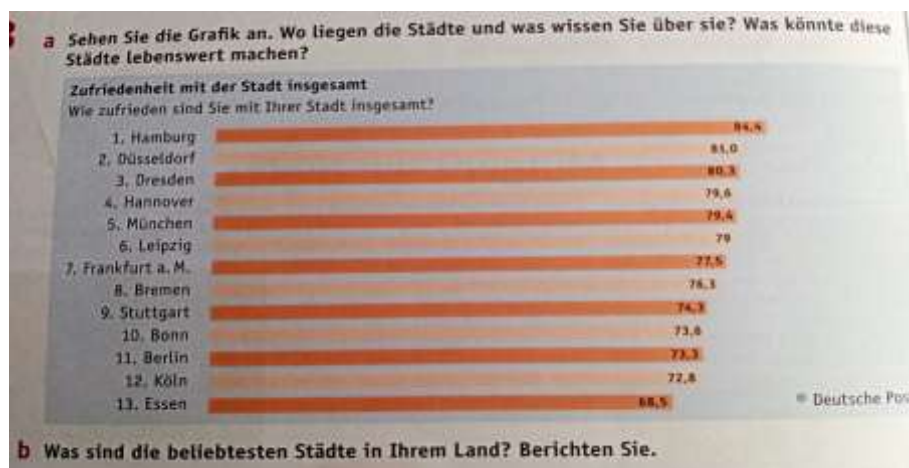


Image 2. Image-text that facilitates cultural reflection and learning

The pedagogical question that triggers learners to study the culture represented by this image-text is: 'Wo liegen die Städte und was wissen Sie über Sie? (Where are these cities located and what do you know about them?); What do you think makes this city valuable? (Aufgabe 8a). These questions provide ample space for learners to learn about valuable German cities, what makes them categorized as valuable; *What are these cities valuable in, whether from an economic, natural/environmental, educational, artistic, technological, tourism industry, and other aspects?* That is what learners must learn. Of course, learners will collect a lot of information (via the internet and other sources) and study the collected information. By answering and discussing the questions, their insight into German cities with their respective advantages will broaden: *Why is Hamburg the most valuable city in Germany? What is the reason? Why is Essen ranked last?*, and other questions that open their international cultural insights.

Questions that encourage learners to reflect on their own culture are 'Wie zufrieden Sind Sie mit Ihrer Stadt insgesamt? (How satisfied are you with your city?) and 'Was sind die beliebtesten Städte in Ihrem Land? (Which city do you like most in your country?). For Indonesian learners, questions like these will trigger them to dig up various information about cities in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Makassar, Denpasar, Medan, Samarinda, Manado, Ambon, Sorong, Kupang and other cities. They will certainly study the advantages of these cities to be able to categorize which city can be called the most valuable and most liked city in Indonesia.

Image 2 clearly refers to the semiotic denotational/pedagogic relationship. This image-text is designed to facilitate learners in learning about the culture represented in the image-text and in reflecting on the culture being studied to better understand and deepen their own culture. Studying this image-text not only enriches Indonesian learners' knowledge of foreign cultures but also provides them with the opportunity to personally explore their own culture. Thus, the multicultural values that can be taken from this image-text are respect for the differences and diversity of natural and environmental potentials locally, nationally, and globally.

Images that only illustrate text

Image 3 is an example of an image-text with a denotational relationship, where the existing picture only serves as an illustration for the existing text, that the picture-text is only for providing information/knowledge alone, without any pedagogical questions that can broaden their insight about the culture represented or provide an opportunity to explore their own culture. This picture is taken from Chapter 12 with the theme 'Geld regiert der Welt', in the Aufgabe 7a section, with the topic 'Total Global' *Meinungen zur Globalisierung* (page 134). This picture consists of two separate images, one showing an adult man named Bernd Christiansen, whose left hand is holding his chin, looking forward with a happy facial expression, smiling cheerfully. The other is an adult woman named Kati Grubens, wearing a yellow blouse, looking forward, smiling cheerfully. Semiotically, this picture is interesting, colorful, both figures are shown in close-up, and present a positive aura with their smiles.



Image 3. Images that only illustrate text

This picture text serves only to convey information related to the opinions of the two people in the picture about globalization. The man provides a positive view of globalization, the role of the internet, global job opportunities, increased welfare, and so on. On the other hand, the woman provides a critical response about the negative effects of globalization on families, the workplace, and the growing gap between rich and poor. Learners are simply given and receive information about globalization from these two figures. There are no pedagogical questions integrated with this image-text, which would give learners the opportunity to explore globalization from their perspectives. However, with the information obtained from this text, learners can gain an understanding of the positive and negative aspects of globalization from the perspectives of the two people in the picture, which may or may not be their own. The cultural message this image conveys is to respect the differing opinions of others about the new cultures that have emerged as a result of globalization, as people in all parts of the global world certainly experience the effects of globalization differently.

DISCUSSIONS

This study has explored cultural values represented through image-text by describing and explaining the semiotic relations generated by the image-text in the *Netzwerk B1* book. These semiotic relations are a way to express cultural meanings and values through image-text. The analysis was conducted using an integrated social semiotic analysis framework, with three analysis parameters, namely three semiotic relations that appear in each image-text. The results of the analysis show that there are three semiotic relations of image-text, namely denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relations, denotational/pedagogic relations, and denotational relations. Of the 37 image-texts identified as containing representations of cultural values, 19 of them are denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relations, 1 denotational/pedagogic relation and 17 denotational relations.

As for the culture represented by the image-text in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1*, it generally refers to the themes chosen in each lesson unit (Chapter 1-12), namely themes (1) *Gute Reise (Urlaubsarten, Reiseangebote, Serviceangebote)*; (2) *Alles neu (Technik und technische Geräte)*; (3) *Wendepunkte (Ereignisse im Leben, historische Ereignisse)*; (4) *Arbeitswelt (Arbeit und Arbeitsuche, Stellenanzeigen)*; (5) *Umweltfreundlich (Umwelt, Umweltschutz, Wetter)*; (6) *Blick nach vorn (Zukunftsprognosen, Stadtplanung)*; (7) *Beziehungskisten (Männer, Frauen, Familie, Kontakte)*; (8) *Von Kopf bis Fuß (Gesundheit)*; (9) *Kunststücke (Art, Theater, Museum, Film)*; (10) *Miteinander (Gessellschaftliche Werte, Europa, Politik)*; (11) *Vom Leben in Städten (City, Verkehr)*; (12) *Geld regiert die Welt (Bank und Geld, Globalisierung)*. Specifically, the three image-texts that were the analysis samples, representing the three semiotic relations that were the parameters of the analysis, have provided messages or cultural values that can be learned by Indonesian learners (see the results of the analysis of each image-text with its semiotic relations).

Based on the analysis referring to semiotic relations, it appears that image-text in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* provides Indonesian learners with the opportunity to learn and think deeply about German culture represented in image-text. This is evidenced by 19 image-texts with denotational/pedagogic/linguistic relations. The 17 images with denotational relations indicate that quite a number of image-texts serve to provide cultural information or knowledge but do not provide an opportunity for learners to learn more deeply about the culture in the existing image-texts. And surprisingly, there is only one image-text that shows a denotational/pedagogic relationship, namely an image-text that provides an opportunity to reflect on and explore one's own culture. With this finding, it appears that the semiotic relationship of image-text in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* is dominated by a linguistic denotational/pedagogic relationship, followed by a denotational relationship, while a denotational/pedagogic relationship is almost non-existent (only 1). Thus, it can be said that the image-text used as a means of representing culture in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* is more focused on deepening German culture and providing information about German culture, and provides almost no opportunity for learners to reflect on and explore their own culture. This is true only when referring to the semiotic relationships that emerge in the image-text.

However, if we look closely, *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* basically prioritizes cultural learning, which is not just providing information or knowledge and deepening German culture alone, but cultural learning that provides opportunities and broad space for learners to learn in depth, explore and reflect on their own culture by reflecting on the culture being studied. In other words, *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* provides opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and knowledge critically and reflectively (Xiong & Peng, 2021), opens up ideological space for learners to express their views on their cultural identity and orientation (Canale, 2016; Xiong & Peng, 2021). While this is not explicitly evident through the semiotic

relationship between image and text, in all learning units (Chapters 1-12), whether before or after an image and text containing cultural meaning and values is discussed, it will inevitably begin or be followed by an in-depth cultural exploration activity learned through the learner's own cultural exploration. Therefore, *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* is a textbook that supports cultural learning.

In the *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1*, it is indeed difficult to find image-texts that explicitly contain denotational/pedagogical relations, but all existing image-texts, in all learning units 1-12, are always accompanied by pre-activity or follow-up activities, whether in the form of hands-on tasks, project-based tasks, or problem-based tasks. Even image-texts identified as having only denotational relations are always preceded by pre-activity or followed by a follow-up activity, separate from the image-text. With activities like this, learners are encouraged not only to learn and reflect but also to simultaneously carry out certain actions in a planned and structured manner to engage them more intensely with the culture being studied. Activities like this are called 'reflection in action' (Schön, 1987; Xiong & Peng, 2021). Introducing the learner's culture into foreign culture learning and providing opportunities for learners to express their opinions about the positive and negative aspects of their own culture and the culture they are learning through communicative/interactive activities is important, as it will have a positive influence on societal change (Akbari, 2008; Lee & Li, 2020). With activities like this, learners can be equipped with the knowledge and ability to position themselves in social interactions as a global society. It is important for foreign language textbook compilers to represent cultural values in textbooks in a more diverse, discursive, and de-centralized manner (Qi, 2007; Qin, 2015).

The images in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* are almost all authentic images. Using real images and authentic language can enhance the authenticity and authenticity of the language and open the door to cultural learning that leads to understanding and appreciation of diversity culture based on a comparative global perspective (Weninger & Kiss, 2013; Xiong & Peng, 2021). This aligns with the idea put forward by Feng and Byram (2002, p. 63), who argue that 'intercultural authenticity' advocates a realistic attitude to cultural representation and a 'mediated interpretation' to embrace the textbook's intention and the learners' perceptions. All the image-text examples used in this study support this idea.

In learning foreign languages, including German, especially in Indonesia, there is a tendency for teachers to use textbooks with more emphasis on achieving language (linguistic) and language skills (*Hören, Sprechen, Lesen, Schreiben, Grammatik, Wortschatz*). Cultural elements that should be taught are often skipped and ignored or given only a limited amount of time. Based on experience and observation, this is due to limited time to achieve complete teaching of all the material contained in the curriculum. In addition, some teachers lack insight into the culture contained in textbooks, so they are reluctant to discuss and teach it. Textbooks must be designed with cultural elements in mind. However, the question is: *Do teachers pay attention to these cultural elements for teaching? Do teachers have sufficient insight into the culture in textbooks?* If they do, are they ready to devote time to teaching culture? Questions like these serve as an evaluation in learning culture through foreign language textbooks. As foreign language teachers, it is necessary to continuously equip themselves with adequate linguistic knowledge, language skills, and global cultural insight to be able to use textbooks optimally. Thus, textbooks can contribute, not only as a means of teaching language skills, but also as a means of improving cross-cultural competence (IC) and cross-cultural communicative competence (ICC) (Widodo, 2018).

CONCLUSION

In general, *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* is a textbook designed to be a resource for integrated German language and culture instruction. Language and culture are viewed as equally important subjects in this textbook. The themes chosen serve as a means of teaching language and culture with a universal nuance and globally acceptable. Therefore, this book is suitable for use in learning German as a foreign language. This study certainly has limitations, as it only examines cultural values in *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1*. There are certainly many other aspects that could be explored in this book. Considering the fact that research on cultural representation in German as a foreign language textbooks is still very lacking, it is very important for German as a foreign language teacher, both in Indonesia and internationally, to conduct further research. This further research can be done, either by reviewing *Kursbuch Netzwerk B1* with a different research focus, or reviewing other German as a foreign language textbook with a different analytical focus and different analytical methods. This is important to do to enrich the empirical findings that can be input for improving the quality of cultural learning through learning German as a foreign language. Despite some limitations of this research, the empirical report on cultural representation in this textbook can be used as input for writers and designers of language textbooks to develop language materials that are responsive to cultural elements

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers would like to express their gratitude for Universitas Negeri Manado for funding this research.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

REFERENCES

- Akbari, R. (2008). Transforming lives: Introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms. *ELT Journal*, 62(3), 276–283. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccn025>
- Alaei, M. M., & Parsazadeh, H. (2021). Emergence of a purpose-specific model: Culture in English language textbooks. *Intercultural Education*, 32(5), 547–561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2021.1878111>
- Amerian, M., & Tajabadi, A. (2020). The role of culture in foreign language teaching textbooks: An evaluation of the New Headway series from an intercultural perspective. *Intercultural Education*, 31(6), 623–644.
- Berti, M. (2020). Cultural representations in foreign language textbooks: A need for change. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 27, 175–190.
- Byram, M. (2015). Culture in foreign language learning: The implications for teachers and teacher training. In W. M. Chan, S. K. Bhatt, M. Nagami, & I. Walker (Eds.), *Culture and foreign language education: Insights from research and implications for practice* (pp. 37–58). De Gruyter.
- Canale, G. (2016). (Re)searching culture in foreign language textbooks, or the politics of hide and seek. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 29(2), 225–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2016.1144764>
- Canale, G. (2021). The language textbook: Representation, interaction and learning. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(2), 113–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1797081>
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Developing second language skills: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Damen, L. (1987). *Culture learning: The fifth dimension in the language classroom*. Addison-Wesley.
- Diaz, A. R., & Callahan, L. (2020). Intercultural communicative competence and Spanish heritage language speakers: An overview from the US, Australia and Europe. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 7(2), 150–162.
- Feng, A., & Byram, M. (2002). Authenticity in college English textbooks: An intercultural perspective. *RELJ Journal*, 33(2), 48–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003368820203300203>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1975). *Learning how to mean: Explorations in the development of language*. Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Ho, Y. R. (2021). Exposing colonial representations: Analysis of portrayals of Indigenous culture in Taiwan's language textbooks. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 24(6), 856–875. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1538123>
- Hua, X., Hu, G., & Liu, F. (2021). The cultural representation of Chinese-speaking groups in US-produced Chinese as a foreign language textbooks. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2021.1889971>
- Huneke, H.-W., & Steinig, W. (2000). *Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Eine Einführung*. Erich Schmidt Verlag.
- Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literature* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.

- Kaliska, M. (2022). 'Cultural activities' in foreign language teaching: A multimodal perspective on Italian language textbooks. *Italian Studies*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2022.2051926>
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Lee, J. F. K., & Li, X. (2020). Cultural representation in English language textbooks: A comparison of textbooks used in mainland China and Hong Kong. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 28(4), 605–623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2019.1681495>
- Liddicoat, A., & Scarino, A. (2013). Resources for intercultural language learning. In A. Liddicoat & A. Scarino (Eds.), *Intercultural language teaching and learning* (pp. 83–105). John Wiley & Sons.
- Moran, P. (2001). *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice*. Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Qi, H. (2007). International promotion of Chinese transformation of cultural conceptions. *Journal of Beijing Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 4, 118–125. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1002-0209.2007.04.017>
- Qin, H. (2015). The writing of international Chinese textbooks and the rhetoric of national image. *International Rhetoric Studies*, 1, 220–227.
- Risager, K. (2018). *Representation of the world in language textbooks*. Multilingual Matters.
- Risager, K. (2021). Language textbooks: Windows to the world. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1797767>
- Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ruan, J., & Medwell, J. (2020). Using social networking technology to develop intercultural communicative competence: A case of GCSE Mandarin. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 14(4), 362–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2019.1609000>
- Setyono, B., & Widodo, H. P. (2019). The representation of multicultural values in the Indonesian Ministry of Education–endorsed EFL textbook: A critical discourse analysis. *Intercultural Education*, 30(4), 383–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2019.1548102>
- Sun, W., & Kwon, J. (2020). Representation of monoculturalism in Chinese and Korean heritage language textbooks for immigrant children. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 33(4), 402–416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2019.1642346>
- Uzum, B., Yasan, B., Zahrawi, S., Bouamer, S., & Malakaj, E. (2021). A comparative analysis of cultural representation in collegiate world language textbooks (Arabic, French, and German). *Linguistics and Education*, 61, 100901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2020.100901>
- Vu, N. T., & Dinh, H. (2022). College-level students' development of intercultural communicative competence: A quantitative study in Vietnam. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 51(2), 208–227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1893207>
- van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing social semiotics*. Routledge.
- Weninger, C. (2021). Multimodality in critical language textbook analysis. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(2), 133–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.797083>
- Weninger, C., & Kiss, T. (2013). Culture in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks: A semiotic approach. *TESOL Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.87>
- Widodo, H. P., & Fardhani, A. E. (2011). The language rights of indigenous languages: An approach to maintaining Indonesia's linguistic and cultural diversity in a changing world. In T. Le & Q. Le (Eds.), *Linguistic diversity and cultural identity: A global perspective* (pp. 129–140). Nova Science Publishers.
- Widodo, H. P. (2018). A critical micro-semiotic analysis of values depicted in the Indonesian Ministry of National Education–endorsed secondary school English textbook. In H. P. Widodo, M. R. Perfecto, L. V. Canh, & A. Buripakdi (Eds.), *Situating moral and cultural values in ELT materials: The Southeast Asian context* (pp. 131–152). Springer.
- Widodo, H. P. (2015). *The development of vocational English materials from a social semiotic perspective: Participatory action research* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Adelaide.
- Xiong, T., & Peng, Y. (2021). Representing culture in Chinese as a second language textbooks: A critical social semiotic approach. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(2), 163–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1797079>