

INNER CIRCLE ENGLISH CULTURAL SENSES FOUND IN INTERLANGUAGE XII

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Abstract.

The learning of culture is unavoidable in the learning of English since cultural values are embedded in the body of language. In order to communicate effectively, language learners need to be culturally aware of what their utterances might convey. As one of important factors in successful language learning process, English course books should foster English cultural issues and support learners to be culturally competence. The study investigated cultural contents of the inner-circle English countries in an English course book entitled Interlanguage XII, which has been approved by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP). The inner-circle English cultural contents were investigated through the theory of four senses of culture by Adaskou et al (1990). The all four senses of culture were included in Interlanguage XII. The results indicated that the highest percentage is the presence of pragmatic sense, while the least sense was the sociological sense. The results also showed that even though the all four sense were present, the frequency among those four was not balance. This implies the aim and the emphasis of the course book in the foreign language learning; the course book emphasize more on the use of language instead of its grammatical and structural skill.

Keywords: cultural senses, inner-circle English culture, course book evaluation, content analysis.

Background

The success of ELT learning depends on at least 4 factors, namely teachers, learners, learning facilities and materials. English course books, which remain essential in English learning, should be carefully selected since they potentially play a key role in many English classes. The issue teachers had better concern with is that “recurs and persists, regular and successful communication between materials producers and users does not seem to be taking place” (Masuhara, 2011, p. 23). Analysis on course books used to deliver English should indeed be the move every teacher take before selecting a course book, so that he can possibly pick one that is most suitable for the need of his and his language learners. Then,

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regarding the wealth of published materials available in the market, selecting a single course book to employ in an English classroom can be intriguing.

In today's globalization, the world demands language learners to be communicative so that communication across cultural boundaries is possible. Related to being communicative as the process of exchanging information, it is the success at the end of communication that determines whether a speaker is being communicative. What is worth noticing is that communicativeness is much more than the mastery of grammar complexity and sentence maturity. Language skills covering the competence in word choice, appropriateness and other paralinguistic components is, indeed, one of prominent factors in comprehending messages in both written and spoken text. In addition to executing communication, language learners who are said to have acquired a language are those who are able to align themselves with the culture of the target language. This means, they can also think in the target language thus enabling them to identify the language by capturing the essence of the language (Tang, 1999, pp. 1-2). As a result, once a speaker and a listener do not share or do not familiar with a certain language background, the probability for the message to find obstacles in the process of transferring is higher. The cultural background of both the speaker and the listener play an important role to avoid miscommunication that results on the failure in message transfer.

Align with the above issue of communication, Cunningsworth (1995, pp. 90-91) suggests that teachers should ensure that the course books set its language learning materials in social and cultural context. These are presented so that language learners can relate the language use to its purpose in the social context. Language learning, whose process is presented in isolation, will merely result on bookish production since the process does not address the real purpose and challenge in communication. Therefore, context is one to be taken into consideration.

In the previous stud conducted by Abdullah & Chandran (2009, p. 4), it was stated that communicativeness is not possibly achieved without cultural understanding for the reason that it is the core of language acquisition. Culture can be translated into numerous definitions. Therefore, culture is put into a more operational definition for a research purpose and is specified which culture is referred to. In the study, culture was categorized into four senses according to Adaskou et al (1990) and it is the inner-circle English culture by Kachru (1985) that is referred to.

For the above reason, an English course book entitled *Interlanguage XII* was investigated in the study. The study was investigating the inner-circle cultural senses found in the course book. The coursebook was addressed for English learners of the twelfth grade. The use of *Interlanguage XII* had been approved by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP), the regulator of Indonesia's national education standards. This means that the contents and the use of

Interlanguage XII is stated to reach the national standard in English teaching in Indonesia, and therefore, mirror how the teaching of English is suggested in Indonesia.

Method

The current study was a qualitative content analysis, which condense raw data into categories. Four cultural senses namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic senses (Adaskou et al 1990) in *Interlanguage XII* were counted in percentage terms.

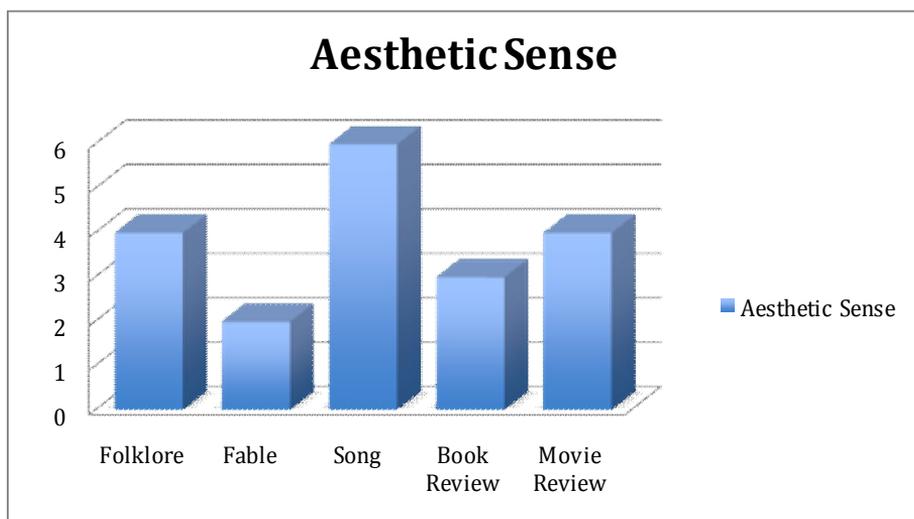
The contents of *Interlanguage XII* were analyzed using the theory by Adaskou et al (1990) who defined culture into four cultural senses, namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic sense and the Braj Kachru's (1985) inner-circle English countries. The data of the study were the verbal text in the coursebook. A checklist was developed to note down the frequency of the presence of each cultural sense. The findings were discussed in in-depth analysis. The objectives of the study is to investigate whether *Interlanguage XII* include four senses of inner-circle English culture in its content.

Findings and Discussion

The four cultural senses, namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic senses were found in the course book. Each of their presence was counted in percentage terms. The percentages, however, were not equal. In general, most senses found were pragmatic sense in 46%, followed by aesthetic sense in 19%, sociological sense in 17% and semantic sense in 18%. Materials containing aesthetic senses were found in each unit in *Interlanguage XII*. The data were pervasive in the course book. They were present in units that were more inner-circle English country culture-related, for instance *Fairytales* and *Great Friendship Movies*, as well as in other less inner-circle English country culture-related units, for example *Illegal Drugs Can Damage Important Organs* and *Should Students Be Allowed to Take Part-time Jobs*, whose features were common to any cultural groups.

The first sense, the aesthetic sense was also known as culture with a capital C refers to the products of civilization. The sense may also refer to the cinema, songs, books, novels as well as other literary products. In *Interlanguage XII*, songs as a part of cultural sense in term of a product of civilization appear in almost every unit. Figure indicates the number of unit of analysis by aesthetic sense.

Figure 1: Aesthetic Sense



Aesthetic sense, which specifically refers to cultural values manifested in products, such as literature, songs and movies. As educational field has set its concern to communicativeness, any products of the target language countries, which reinforce cultural knowledge, begins to be a consideration. Figure 4 above indicates types of products found in *Interlanguage XII*. The types of products found were folklores, fables, songs, book reviews and movie review. Songs were distributed in almost all of the chapters except in the fifth and the seventh chapter. Therefore, it happened that songs dominated the representation of aesthetic sense in the whole course book. Consequently, the frequency of songs exceeded the frequency of any other products in the book. As a result, in the introduction of English language in the classroom, a fun activity like singing songs can be a common learning experience. The other products of civilization, which were included in the book, were movie and book reviews, folklores and fables. Folklores were present in the first and the sixth units while book and movie reviews were presented in the seventh unit.

The features of stories, which pictured the characteristics of each of them, were closely related to the cultural values they contained. The author and the publishing country were ones taken into consideration. Table 1 show that most stories of both folklore and fables were taken from storybooks published by Golden Press Australia.

Table 1: Features of Aesthetic Sense

| NO | TITLE | FEATURE |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | The Ant and the Grasshopper | An Aesop fable |
| 2 | The Little Red Hen | Written by Alma Flor Ada, a professor at University of San Francisco |
| 3 | The Fairy's Cake | Stories published by Golden Press Australia, by John Lupton, Gabrielle Stoddart, Lynn Duncombe, Richard Hook and Terry Pascoe |
| 4 | Peter and the Mountainy Men | |
| 5 | The Dancing Fairies | |
| 6 | The Elves and the Shoe Maker | |

Songs were the next type of aesthetic sense that was found widely spread in almost all units. As shown in Table 2, the performer of the songs varied from the United States, England and Australia. Unlike folklores, songs performed by Australian singers or music bands were absent and it is the songs of American and British singers that dominate the findings.

Table 2: Songs and their Features

| NO | SONG | ARTIST/COMPOSER | PUBLISHING COUNTRY |
|----|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Can You Feel the Love Tonight | British singer, Elton John | England |
| 2 | Is It Possible | American singer, RaheemDeVaughn | USA |
| 3 | Short Skirt Long | American rockband, Cake | Canada |
| 4 | When You Believe | American singers, Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston | USA |
| 5 | Let the Sun Shine in | Australian music group, Frente | USA |
| 6 | You've got a friend | British singer, James Taylor | England |

Book and movies reviews were next. Both books and movies, which represented the aesthetic sense, were found at the closing unit of the course book. The reviewed books were of three (3) different genres. A review on *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* was one bringing in the topic of personal development. The other book titled *The White Darkness* was a fictional book. It was told from the point of view of one of the characters. The last one was more biographical in nature. This book, which entitled *One Child*, brought about the story of an inspirational teacher and the challenges she faced in delivering education.

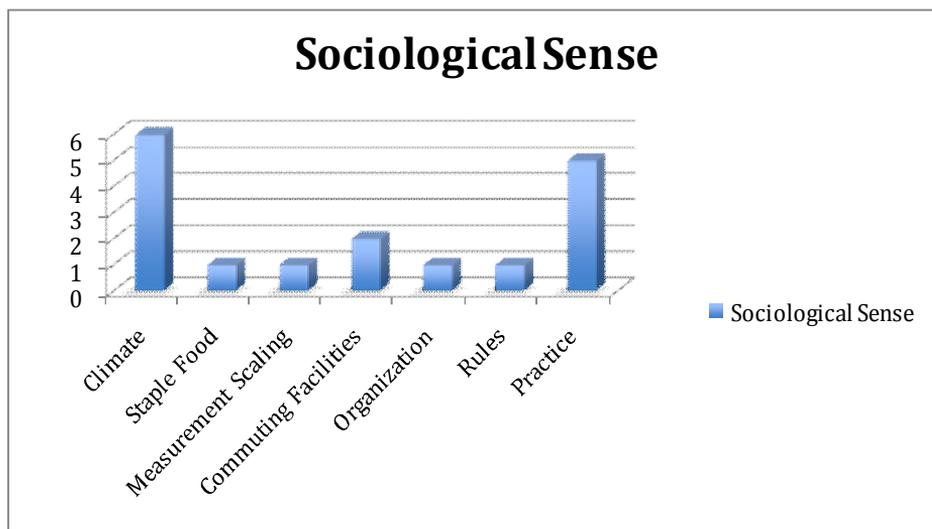
Finally, the movies mentioned in *Interlanguage XII* were mainly those that gain fame. *Harry Potter*, for example, has been popular among people of any ages starting from children to elders. The other mentioned movies namely *The Son of Rambow*, *Ratatouille* and *Music and Lyrics* have earned quite similar reputation even though they do not share same nature.

The sociological sense refers to the organization, nature of family, or home life, interpersonal relations, work and leisure and customs. The sense, then, concentrates on the practices manifested in actions and the description of situations. Activities such as making a snowman and snowball fighting were also considered to be culturally loaded since they specifically refer to countries whose climate and seasons enable them to experience the practices.

Figure 4 indicates that sociological sense is mostly represented by the illustration of climate, which was characterized by the mentioning of weather specifically referring to the climate of inner-circle English countries. Therefore, the idea of ‘...shuddering and shivering, and their breath turned white in the frosty air...’ brings a clear notion of sociological sense of English culture. Then, rooted from the climate, other sociological aspects arise. Wheat as staple food, subway as a way of commuting facility, driving rules, measuring scale, organization and actions are included.

Following the mentioning of climate, practices were next. Activities such as throwing javelin and goose-feather darts in an outdoor party were examples. Consequently, the sociological description of the target language was mostly represented through the weather condition and the activities in the countries of target language.

Figure 2: Sociological Sense

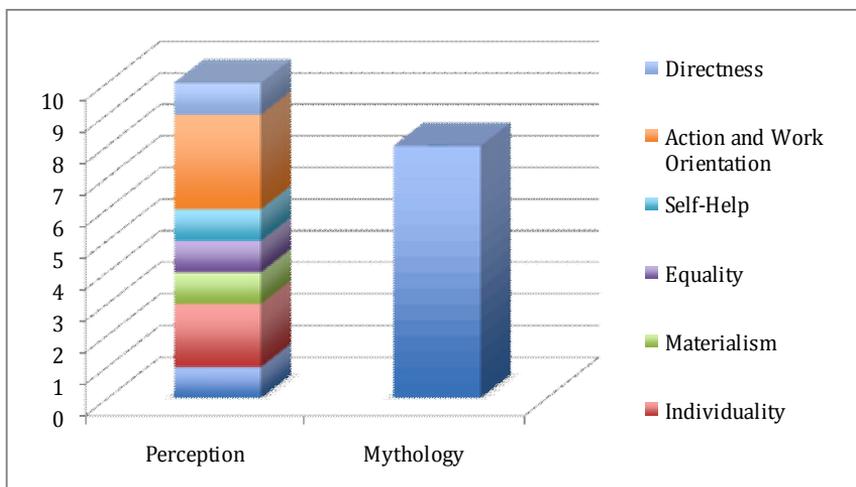


Some other minor sociological aspect such as measurement scale, facilities that support daily activities, rules and the mentioning of an organization had been included to enrich the introduction of English through its sociological sense. It is quite rare for Indonesian to measure temperature in Fahrenheit. Instead, the learners are more familiar with Celsius as a measuring scale. This requires language learners to think both in cross-cultural and cross-curriculum through language learning. Thinking cross-culturally means that learners will be given the idea that in some parts of the world, people use different methods in describing temperature and that Celsius is not the only measuring method in-use. Then, thinking in cross-curriculum requires learners to be able to convert the number of the temperature scientifically in Celsius and draw conclusion of the weather condition in the mentioned temperature.

Semantic sense is represented by conceptual system embodied in the language, conditioning perceptions and myths. The perceptions could be the inspiration and perspective in life. The notion of way of thinking and superstitions are examples. A certain cultural group could possibly hold some identical perspective as those of some other culture, but the data collected in the table below, were allocated based on the context of the presented texts. Then, in order to support the judgment, the researchers always referred to the theory of mainstream culture.

Semantic data noted down in Figure 3 was the result of interpretation over a set of unit of analysis in the course book. Semantic sense can refer to both perspectives and mythologies. Both categories found to appear in the same frequency in the course book. The semantic sense was found both implicitly and explicitly in the written text. Data stating the presence of mythologies were the belief in myth such as *Fairyland*, *dwarfs*, *elves*, *goblins*, *leprechauns* and *gremlins*. The mentioning of the belief was counted as culturally loaded.

Figure 3: Semantic Sense

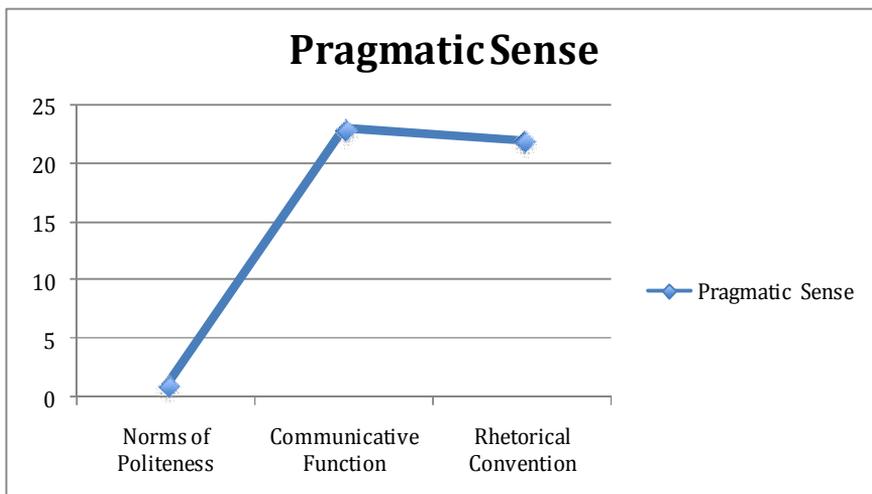


Since perceptions are more on manifestation, they were found in mostly in the body of functional texts of various genres. The value of being future-oriented, for example was manifested by the statement of preparing food for to get ready for the upcoming hard season as it was mentioned in *The Ant and the Grasshopper* with “I am helping to lay up food for winter”. Then, there were cases when a particular perception was followed by another value in a single functional text. The action and work orientation in unit 1 for example, followed the value of future orientation. In the same story, the notion of action and work orientation was interpreted from the statement of “...when the winter came, the Grasshopper found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing, every day, corn and grain from the stores *they had collected in the summer.*”

Finally, the pragmatic occurrences were quite predominant probably because the forms and functions of language such as *complaining, predicting, assessing* and *criticizing* were included in almost all the units. According to Adaskou et al (1990, pp. 3-4), the pragmatic sense includes “the ability to use various exponents of communicative functions”. This is translated as the knowledge of using various genres for message transfers. The rhetorical conventions in different genres for example types of letters were introduced in the sub-section of the course book on the writing skill part. This part was found in every chapter of the course book.

In order to collect the data on pragmatic sense, the researchers observed the general characteristics of the book, *Interlanguage XII*. This included the number of units, approximate number of tasks in each unit and the titles of tasks in the course book.

Figure 4: Pragmatic Sense



There were eight (8) units in *Interlanguage XII*. Each of the unit had various language function and genres that depict communicative functions and rhetorical convention. The first unit had twenty-four tasks. Its theme was about *Gecko Has Come to Lodge a Complaint*. The genre of the first unit was mainly on discussing narrative texts. The communicative function it offered was about how to state a complaints and accusations. Meanwhile, the second unit had less taks-twenty two tasks. Its theme was about *Illegal Drugs Can Damage Important Organs*. The genre of the second unit was mainly on discussing explanation texts. The communicative functions offered were how to express curiosity and to discuss possibilities. The third unit had twenty-three tasks. It brought the theme of *The Impact of Global Warming Could be Devastating*. Similar to the second unit, the third unit brought explanation texts to discuss, along with the elaboration on how to give proposal and instructions. Then, unit four allowed learners to experience arranging discussion texts with twenty-seven tasks altogether. The communicative function offered in the unit was more various compared to the previous units. They included expressing stance and requesting. The fifth unit was the final unit in the first semester. Discussion texts were still delivered in addition to the communicative function of accusing and admitting as well as expressing intentions discussed in twenty-six units. The chosen theme was *The Penalty Should be Increased*.

Units in the second semester were rich of language features in them. This might be because the second semester was only represented by three units. While there were only two or three communicative functions were introduced in the first semester units, more communicative functions were introduced in the units of the second semester. The second semester started with unit six, having twenty-seven tasks. As a repetition on the first unit, narrative texts were presented. The introduced communicative functions were asking/stating plans, persuading, regretting and preventing. The seventh unit had *There is definitely a lot of Helpful Information in the Book* as its theme and review texts as its functional texts. The communicative functions presented were expressing hopes and intentions, stating objectives and encouragement covered in twenty-three tasks. Finally, the eighth unit was presented to give the end to the whole academic year. The theme of this final unit was *Check Out These Great Friendship Movies* in review texts as its genre. The communicative function covers assessing, criticizing, predicting and speculating. The activities were covered in twenty-nine tasks. This final unit had the most tasks compared to the rest.

It had been found that the cultural senses of inner-circle English countries were included in *Interlanguage XII*. Four cultural senses covering aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic sense were found in course book. The senses were in all eight (8) units in the book.

Each chapter in the book consists of different themes. Each theme in the chapters was presented in reading passages, songs and dialogs.

Consequently, if the theme in a particular chapter was general, which could be found in any cultural groups, cultural senses in that chapter were limited.

The cultural sense mostly found in *Interlanguage XII* was the pragmatic sense. This sense was found frequently in sort of explanatory texts, which provided learners with the language knowledge in how to form expressions in the English. Many data pointing to the area of pragmatic was mainly about communicative functions than on rhetorical convention. The communicative function such as refusing, making agreement, persuading and others were discussed in all chapters concentrating on the common expressions used to carry on the message. This aligned with the breath of the communicative approach, which highlights the actual use of language in both written and spoken forms.

Findings of this study were in line with the study on *Cultural Elements in a Malaysian English Language Coursebook* (Abdullah & Chandran, 2009). The study investigated the cultural impact on Malaysian English Language teaching and learning as well as identified the cultural dimensions found in a Malaysian English Language course book. In the study, the sense of culture was also referred to Adaskou, et al (1990). The four meanings of culture were the adapted to describe the inclusion of culture in a Malaysian English course book. The result of the study had also shown that the pragmatic (sociolinguistics) occurrences were quite predominant compared to the rest of the cultural senses.

According to Adaskou et al (1990), the pragmatic sense includes the ability to use “various exponents of communication functions.” Another reason is that the rhetorical conventions in different written genres for example, were introduced in many different text types. Then, since *Interlanguage XII* referred to KTSP, which suggested the presence of spoken and written cycle, the book contained writing activities in all chapters. This implied that the course book conformed to the communicative language teaching approach in Indonesia.

The second cultural sense was the aesthetic sense. This sense was present in the very beginning of the chapter. Aesthetic sense, which included products of civilization, seemed to be the obvious one. The very first product that was found was literary product such as folklores and fables. Folklores were stories discussing the myth or legend of a particular area, which were long believed. Usually, the folklores discussed in the book were stories taken from compiled books, and those, which had gained fame. The story of *A Little Red Hen* for example, had been long known as a famous fable having ‘work orientation’ as its moral value. Not only at the beginning chapter, folklores were also discussed in the sixth unit of the book. However, different from the first unit, the folklores in this sixth unit were mostly about fairy tales of the western European, which was also well. The choice could be after the consideration that at the beginning chapters, language learners were to be introduced to the things they had been familiar with to gain confidence over the learned

materials. Then, in the second encounter of narrative genre, language learners were guided to a more challenging phase of narrative stories. This aligned with Krashen's theories of $i+1$. Krashen as in (Schütz, 2007) suggested that language learning was recommended to take the learners' 'i' or schemata into consideration so that teachers could possibly deliver new materials that learners could still handle instead of delivering those, which were far beyond their reach.

The next products of the aesthetic sense found were songs. It was the frequency of songs, which dominated the findings in term of culture as capital C. Popular pop songs were mostly chosen to give clear description on the actual use of target language. Song such as *Can You Feel the Love Tonight* by a famous English writer and singer was the first in the book. The song was a song from Disney's 1994 animated film, *The Lion King*. It was composed by Elton John with lyrics by Tim Rice. It was described by Don Hahn (the film's producer), Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff (the film's directors) as having "the most diverse history" in the film. It was a chart hit in the UK, peaking at #14 on the UK Singles Chart (Wikipedia, UK Singles Chart, 2013), and achieved even more success in the U.S., reaching a peak of #4 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 (Wikipedia, Billboard Hot 100, 2013). The song was a number-one hit in France. The rationale of including the song in the book can be translated as an attempt to support learners to relate what learners experience in the English classroom with what they will actually find in the real world. Other songs such as *Let the Sun Shine in*, *You've Got a Friend* and *When You Believe* were also found to be at the top of music chart. These songs were those, which had moral values in their lyrics. *Let the Sun Shine in*, for example conveyed suggestions that people should always have positive thinking and be thankful of what they have in life. Then the song *When You Believe* conveyed a different message. It suggested the learners to keep on chasing their dreams and that miracles in life can always be achieved when people believe in what they do. Finally, as teenagers, learners will usually find times when they feel nobody understands their way of thinking. The feeling of alienated was about to be eased by the song titled *You've Got a Friend*. The song mainly talked about friends in life, that problems in life were not necessarily to be handled alone and so, caused depression. Such theme songs were chosen to accommodate the teenage life and their issues.

The third cultural sense was the sociological sense. Sociological sense in the book was mostly represented by the description of climate and practices in the book. The rationale of the mentioning could be because of the different weather condition and the possible practices after the difference. The mentioning of snowball and shuddering after cold weather were introduced to let the learners see how life was carried out in the countries of the target language. The study by Abdullah & Chandran (2009) also mentioned this sociological sense as one among the four senses, which was mostly found in foreign language Course books. This

sense played a central role to assist students to be aware the way of life of people in the target language, their practices and customs. Sometimes, the sociological sense also pictured what ceremonies held in a particular country.

The last cultural sense is semantic sense. Semantic sense refers to the values of the target language. The values were usually inserted in form of literary products such as narrative stories, movies and songs. The value of being future-oriented, action and work orientation, equality, materialism, directness, individuality and change were found in various frequencies. This provided the learners with pictures of the mainstream culture of the target language. This sense was found the least in the study. The way of thinking or perspective of people in a certain cultural group could be different from one to another, but the researchers always tried to describe the mainstream culture of the group. The rarity of the presence of this sense can be because the course book was to avoid over generalization on a particular cultural group.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The result revealed that all the cultural senses, namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic and pragmatic senses, which had been discussed earlier in this research, were found in *Interlanguage XII*.

Even though the frequency of each cultural sense was not balance, the all 8 were accommodated in the book. The cultural sense mostly found in the course book was pragmatic sense. This cultural sense was present in all chapters in the book in two three (3) forms, namely: norms of politeness, rhetorical conventions and communicative functions. Among those three categories, the communicative functions were the most frequent one in the book. This implied that *Interlanguage XII* was mainly aimed at providing learners with good communicative skills. Then, noticing at the slight difference between the number of communicative functions and rhetorical conventions, it seemed obvious that the books had also placed its concentration that learners were equipped with a competence in which they can deal with texts of different genres.

The second most presented cultural sense found was aesthetic sense. The most frequently found body of aesthetic sense was songs, since they were spread in almost all eight (8) chapters of the book. The other bodies of aesthetic sense found were stories and book and movie reviews. It was through these products of civilization that language learners were introduced to the culture of English since quite a number of other cultural senses were found in the stories, songs and reviews.

Semantic sense was in the third place in term of frequency. This cultural sense was represented by perspectives and mythologies. The frequency of the two categories was found to be quite similar. This finding justified that the book did not favor one aspect at the expense of the other one.

The cultural sense, which was found to be the least was sociological sense. The inclusion of sociological elements was about the mentioning of practices in the English culture. Even though the frequency of sociological sense was found to be the least, it did not mean that the sociological sense of English culture was neglected in the English learning since the gap between the frequencies of the senses was slight.

In conclusion, justified by the findings, in which pragmatic sense was favored, *Interlanguage XII* seemed to give a picture that as an English course book, the ultimate aim of *Interlanguage XII* was to assist language learners to achieve communicative competence. However, the other senses were not totally neglected. The other three cultural senses were still given a room to present in a quite similar frequency. The fine distribution of aesthetic, semantic and sociological sense in *Interlanguage XII* was interpreted as the attempt of the course book to introduce students with senses beyond language use and appropriateness. The knowledge on the products of culture in aesthetic sense, the way of thinking in semantic sense and the way of life in sociological sense were also presented to language learners to support them so that their cultural awareness becomes whole.

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