Research Article

An Investigation of Culture-Specific Items in English Textbooks Taught at Iraqi State-run High Schools and Private Institutes

Shahad Qays* iD

University College of Science and Technology, Basrah, Iraq

*** Corresponding author**: Shahad Qays, University College of Science and Technology, Basrah, Iraq.
Email: shahadqayss@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Introduction: The issue of culture has been a controversial topic in foreign language teaching. One of the best resources for familiarizing foreign language learners with another language culture is a textbook. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the culture-specific items in terms of Kachru's (1985) concentric circles in English textbooks used in state-run schools and private language institutes in Iraq. **Methodology:** Two textbooks of **the** *New Interchange* series and *English for Iraq* series were analyzed in terms of their culture-specific items using Newmark's (1988) framework. Cultural items related to categories of ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs and ideas, gestures and habits, as well as anthroponyms, were identified, and their frequency counts were computed. The Chi-square test was run to test the significance of each category. **Results:** The results of a Chi-square test indicated that there were no significant differences between the *New Interchange* and *English for Iraq* series in terms of culture-specific items related to the expanding circle. However, a significant difference was found between the two series of textbooks as to the culture-specific items related to the inner circle. With regard to cultural items related to the Iraqi native culture, Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, and Concepts were found to be the most frequent items, while Anthroponyms turned out to be the least frequent cultural items reflected in *English for Iraq* series of textbooks. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that English textbooks published in English-speaking countries (inner circle) and those published in non-native countries, such as Iraq, include items from expanding circle countries.

1. Introduction

Phenomena, such as globalization, diversity, and intercultural interactions, have urged the need for the study of language and culture. It seems that communities are more concerned about their unique cultural identities as globalization has grown throughout the world. Several researchers have focused on the relationship between culture, language, and identity (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). The issue of culture in second language learning is, by its nature, a controversial one although culture is an inevitable part of any language. Campbell (2000) believes that the ability to move across cultural boundaries is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) suggest that language and culture are so interlinked that ignoring culture-specific elements of language may cause failure in understanding and communication. If such familiarity leads to alienation from one's native and home culture, then it may cause social and cultural problems.

The importance of culture in English as a foreign language (EFL) education becomes more evident when individuals understand that culture is necessary for communication. One of the best resources for familiarizing EFL learners with another language culture is textbooks. Students take the cultural information from textbooks more seriously and valid as they have the perception that they are valid sources of information. Textbook evaluation in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has not received the attention it deserves. There seems to be a lack of literature on the evaluation and analysis of textbooks in ELT. However,

---

► *Cite this paper as*: Qays Sh. An Investigation of Culture Specific Items in English Textbooks Taught at Iraqi State-run High Schools and Private Institutes. Journal of Contemporary Language Research. 2022; 1(2): 79-86. DOI: 10.58803/jclr.v1i2.11

existing literature shows that researchers use various tools for the evaluation of textbooks. Checklists, scoring assessment methods, and evaluation guides can be used to evaluate books.

In the Iraqi ELT context, the textbooks used in state schools are assigned and prepared by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Private language institutes can choose from a worldwide textbook series developed in one of the English-speaking countries. The English textbook series for state-run high schools is English for Iraq series.

Textbook evaluation in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has not received the attention it deserves. There seems to be a lack of literature on the evaluation and analysis of textbooks in ELT. However, existing literature shows that researchers use various tools for the evaluation of textbooks. Checklists, scoring assessment methods, and evaluation guides can be used as tools for evaluating books.

Kachru (1985) has divided the world of English into three circles, namely the inner circle, referring to countries in which English is spoken as a native language (i.e., United Kingdom, USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia), the outer circle, including countries with a colonial background, which are diverse in culture and language; however, still English has an important role in people's communication, and the expanding circle, involving countries that introduce English as a foreign language in schools and universities, mostly for communicating in English with the inner and outer circles.

Iraq is a conservative country in terms of respect for religions and cultures. The majority of the people in Iraq are Muslims, and some of their social values might be in contrast with Western cultural values. Studies are needed to take into account the cultural issues involved in foreign language learning in Iraq.

Cognitive and semiotic views of culture are different in the ways culture is conceptualized. Cognitive perspectives of culture have been criticized for looking at culture as a psychological construct lacking any social dimension. Semiotic perspectives highlight the relationship between language and culture and emphasize the role of context and interaction. Such an understanding of culture may help learners learn about the mechanisms of intercultural communication. Theories of culture and language have included dynamicity and fluidity as the main components of a language-culture relationship.

Risager (2007, p. 183) states that communicative events include the mixture of language and culture, "a local integration of linguistic, languacultural, discursive and other cultural flows in more or less differing social networks". Baker (2009) stresses that culture should be understood as a dynamic phenomenon in the EFL context. This issue becomes more important in English language teaching because English is not connected to one culture.

There is a close interrelationship between language and culture, so they are characterized as being synonyms (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Language is employed to show individuals' cultural thoughts and beliefs as well as a means to communicate. In fact, language is a component of culture, and culture is a component of a language (Brown, 2000).

Cultural contents in EFL instruction should consider globalization's impact as it leads to the problem of what culture an L2 teacher should cover. It is unrealistic to learn how to communicate in a foreign language without learning about its culture. Integrating appropriate local cultural content into culture learning modules in the FL classes can be very beneficial to language learning. An analysis of textbooks in foreign language contexts can tell us how local and foreign cultures are reflected in curriculums. A study conducted by Ching (2010) elaborates on two essential advantages emanating from incorporating the second culture in EFL materials and classrooms. First, the incorporation of culture contributes to students' sense of reality as they contemplate the lifestyle, the target community's behavior patterns, and values of real life. Second, the incorporation of a second culture can satisfy learners' needs, including traveling to English-speaking countries to get a job or begin a friendly relationship. Therefore, textbook selection, design, and assessment play an important role in language classes for teachers and researchers. According to Tok (2010), ELT textbooks influence the students' perception of L2 learning and affect their performance in the classroom.

There are numerous types of English textbooks available in the market; however, the inclusion of local culture in these textbooks is still controversial.

The relationship between culture and language can be reflected in the use of words and phrases that are conventionally referred to as culture-specific items (CSIs). The definition of CSI has been difficult because of its intuitive nature (Aixela, 1997). It can be inferred that CSIs are troublesome for second and foreign-language learners due to the gap between the source language and the target language. Newmark (1988) groups the CSIs into six categories, including Ecology, Material Culture, Social Culture, Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts, Anthroponyms, and Gestures and Habits.

Since textbooks can introduce the cultures of different people and locations to learners to increase their cultural understanding and their competence in intercultural communication (Lee, 2012), it is important to be aware of domain presentations. Kachru (1985) defines the three circles (concentric-circles) to show "the types of spread, patterns of acquisition and functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (p.12). Teaching inner circle varieties, using Kachru's (1992) term, corroborates the premise of native authority and, in accordance, looks down on the position of other circles (Matsuda, 2003). Given that the examination of multiple ELT textbooks in terms of linguistic and cultural hegemony revealed that English is still being taught as an inner circle language (Matsuda, 2002), it is of utmost significance to unveil the cultural presentation in the ELT textbook.

Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the

representation of cultural items in English textbooks taught in the Iraqi ELT context. It was set to examine how foreign language learning deals with the native culture of Iraq and to what extent the Iraqi native culture and Western culture were reflected in foreign language teaching textbooks. In this regard, the study evaluated two textbooks of *Interchange* and *English for Iraq series* used in state-run schools and private language schools from a cultural perspective. Textbooks were evaluated in terms of culturally specific items using the framework proposed by Newmark (1988). Comparisons were made between the textbook used in public schools and the one used in private language institutes. Kachru's concentric circles, the inner, outer, and expanding circles, were also discussed.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design of the study

The study employed a qualitative text-analysis design to examine the textbooks with regard to the representation of CSIs. The use and frequency of CSIs were described and compared in the two textbooks.

2.2. Materials

The two textbooks of *Interchange* (Richards, 2005) and *English for Iraq* (MacBurnie, 2013) series used in state-run schools and private language schools were analyzed in this study. Of note, the books were developed for students at different levels, including elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The rationale behind choosing these two textbook series was that they are taught extensively in Iraq.

2.3. Framework of the analysis

In this study, CSIs to categories of Ecology (winds, plains, hills), Material Culture (food, clothes, houses, towns, transport), Social Culture, Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, and Concepts (OCAPC), Anthroponyms, as well as Gestures and Habits suggested by Newmark (1988) were identified, and their frequency counts were computed. In addition, Kachru's (1992) division of inner, outer, and expanding circles unveils the elements that bear some tones of cultural and linguistic imperialism.

2.4. Procedure

Data collection took approximately 2 months to complete. The study was conducted using a content analysis research method or, to be more specific, a text analysis, as a sub-category of qualitative studies (Ary et al., 1996). The purpose of this study, the linguistic analysis of the text, was based on Newmark's categorization (1988). In addition, Kachru's (1992) model was applied. The analysis of the book included sentences and images of each unit.

After the classification, the frequency of each category was calculated based on the number of cultural occurrences. Two raters were recruited for this purpose, and the degree of agreement between the two raters was calculated using Holsti's (1969) coefficient of reliability. The Chi-square test was run using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22, to check the significance of the differences.

3. Results

The purpose of the study was to identify cultural elements in English textbooks taught in mainstream education and private institutes in Iraq. It was attempted to relate the CSIs to the Kachru's concentric circles.

The CSIs related to the Ecology category were recognized for frequency count analysis. As can be seen in Figure 1A, the names Scotland and Maclaren's Castle are names related to this category. Material Culture is the second CSI category and includes names of foods, clothes, and housing.

Figure 1B is an excerpt from the *English for Iraq* series containing CSIs related to Material Culture. The names of certain foods like beef curry and burgers are CSIs related to Material Culture category in the *English for Iraq* series. In Figure 2, the names of certain foods are associated with English culture. The CSIs relate to concepts about work and leisure in particular cultures.

The third CSI category is Social Culture, which deals with how people interact with the world around them. Many leisure activities are mainly associated with Western culture; for instance, chat show and soap opera are names that are mostly associated with Western and English culture (Figure 1C). The fourth category, Cultural Items, includes items related to political, social, legal, religious, and artistic concepts. Figure 1D shows how this is reflected in textbooks.

Ramadan is a religious event for Muslims, and Iraq is one of the most religious countries in the world in terms of its religious beliefs and activities. Figure 2A presents a reading/writing exercise about a cultural event in Iraqi culture. This is a CSI related to Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, and Concepts (OCAPC) as it relates to the concept of Ramadan. Figure 2B indicates how CSIs related to Gestures and Habits are related to one another and how they are taught in textbooks.

Figure 2A illustrates greeting behaviors that are culturally loaded. For instance, bowing is a type of greeting in Japan, and a pad on the back is common in Mexico. The last CSI category is Anthroponyms, which refers to the names of actual people in a particular culture. Figure 2B shows the names of Jet Li and Britney Spears as CSIs related to Anthroponyms. Jet Li is a movie celebrity who frequently appears in Hollywood films, and Spears is a well-known singer in Europe and North America.

After closely reading the two English series, each instance of CSIs, such as Ecology, Material culture, OCAPC was coded. The coded items were added up to come up
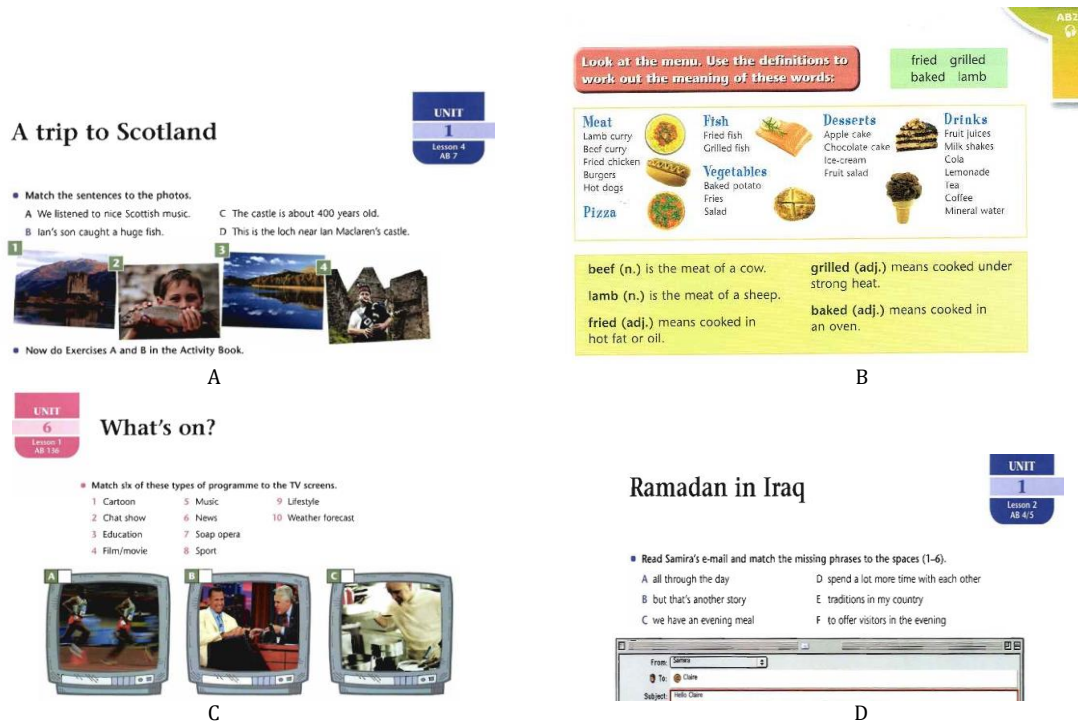
Figure 1.
Excerpt from English for Iraq Series, including Culture-Specific Items

with total frequencies for each CSI. Tables 1 to 2 show the frequency counts of CSIs for *New Interchange* and *English for Iraq*.

The most frequent culture item in *Intro-Interchange* was OCAPC followed by Material Culture and Gestures and Habits in descending order. Social Culture-Work and Leisure was found to be the most popular cultural item in *Interchange* books 1-3, and the entire *New Interchange* Series. The total score for each CSI was calculated by adding up the frequencies of each single category across

the *New Interchange* series.

Table 3 shows the most frequent culture items in *English for Iraq* 1 were Social Culture-Work, Leisure and Anthroponyms (frequency Counts), and Gestures and Habits (frequency counts). According to Table 3, it is SOCAPC followed by OCAPC, then Material Culture, then Ecology, then Anthroponyms. Table 3 shows that the most frequent culture item in *English for Iraq* 5 was OCAPC, followed by Social Culture-Work and Leisure and Material Culture, in descending order. According to Table 3, the

Figure 2.
Excerpt from New Interchange Series, including Culture-Specific Items

Table 1.
Frequencies and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items in Intro Interchange

Culture-specific Items	Frequency	Percentage
Ecology	15	4.65%
Material culture	96	29.81%
Social culture-work and leisure	39	12.11%
Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	121	37.57%
Anthroponyms	26	8.07%
Gestures and Habits	25	7.76%

Table 2.
Frequencies and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items in Interchange Books 1-3 and the Entire New Interchange Series

Culture-specific Items	Books	Percentage	Frequency
Ecology	Interchange 1	53	18.86%
	Interchange 2	19	7.03%
	Interchange 3	21	7.16%
	Entire New Interchange Series	108	9.26%
Material culture	Interchange 1	62	22.06%
	Interchange 2	42	15.55%
	Interchange 3	51	17.40%
	Entire New Interchange Series	251	21.52%
Social culture-work and leisure	Interchange 1	67	23.84%
	Interchange 2	88	32.59%
	Interchange 3	65	22.18%
	Entire New Interchange Series	259	22.21%
Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	Interchange 1	49	17.43%
	Interchange 2	85	31.48%
	Interchange 3	96	32.76%
	Entire New Interchange Series	351	30.10%
Anthroponyms	Interchange 1	19	6.76%
	Interchange 2	12	4.44%
	Interchange 3	37	12.62%
	Entire New Interchange Series	94	8.06%
Gestures and Habits	Interchange 1	31	11.03%
	Interchange 2	24	8.88%
	Interchange 3	23	7.84%
	Entire New Interchange Series	103	8.83%

Table 3.
Frequencies and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items in English for Iraq 1-6 and All the English for Iraq Books

Culture-specific items	Books	Percentage	Frequency
Ecology	English for Iraq 1	21	14.28%
	English for Iraq 2	39	16.95%
	English for Iraq 3	34	15.11%
	English for Iraq 4	33	13.14%
	English for Iraq 5	36	13.58%
	English for Iraq 6	29	10.17%
	All the English for Iraq Books	192	12.96%
Material culture	English for Iraq 1	17	11.56%
	English for Iraq 2	55	23.91%
	English for Iraq 3	55	24.44%
	English for Iraq 4	38	15.13%
	English for Iraq 5	41	15.47%
	English for Iraq 6	41	14.38%
	All the English for Iraq Books	247	16.67%
Social culture-work and leisure	English for Iraq 1	32	21.76%
	English for Iraq 2	37	16.08%
	English for Iraq 3	91	40.44%
	English for Iraq 4	65	25.89%
	English for Iraq 5	71	26.79%
	English for Iraq 6	75	26.31%
	All the English for Iraq Books	371	25.05%
Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	English for Iraq 1	29	19.72%
	English for Iraq 2	62	26.95%
	English for Iraq 3	85	37.77%
	English for Iraq 4	81	32.27%
	English for Iraq 5	73	27.54%
	English for Iraq 6	92	32.28%
	All the English for Iraq Books	422	28.49%
Anthroponyms	English for Iraq 1	32	21.76%
	English for Iraq 2	23	10.00%
	English for Iraq 3	26	11.55%
	English for Iraq 4	23	9.16%
	English for Iraq 5	29	10.94%
	English for Iraq 6	31	10.87%
	All the English for Iraq Books	164	11.07%
Gestures and Habits	English for Iraq 1	16	10.88%
	English for Iraq 2	14	6.08%
	English for Iraq 3	12	5.33%
	English for Iraq 4	11	4.38%
	English for Iraq 5	15	5.66%
	English for Iraq 6	17	5.96%
	All the English for Iraq Books	85	5.73%

Table 4.
Frequency Counts and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items Related to the Expanding Circle in English for Iraq and Interchange book series

English for Iraq	Expanding Circle	
	Frequency	Percentage
English for Iraq 1	27	9.12%
English for Iraq 2	31	10.47%
English for Iraq 3	55	18.58%
English for Iraq 4	57	19.25%
English for Iraq 5	61	20.60%
English for Iraq 6	65	21.95%
Interchange		
Intro Interchange	35	18.51%
Interchange 1	49	25.92%
Interchange 2	50	26.45%
Interchange 3	55	29.10%

most frequently spoken about in the book for Iraq 6 was OCAAPC. The total score for each CSI was calculated by adding up the frequencies of each single category across the books in the Iraq Series.

The expanding circle refers to English language items found in countries where English is expanding, such as China, Egypt, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan. The answer to this question was sought by separating CSIs associated with the expanding circle. Table 4 shows the frequency of CSIs in *English for Iraq* Series. Culture items related to expanding circles are frequently found in books at more advanced levels. The more advanced is the level of English for Iraqi learners, the more frequent are the CSIs in expanding circles. Table 4 shows frequency counts of 9.12%, 10.47%, 18.58%, 19.25%, 20.60%, and 21.95% for *English for Iraq* book series 1-6, respectively.

Culture items related to expanding circles were more frequently found in more advanced *Interchange* books. Culture-specific items in expanding circle were most frequent in *Interchange* 3 and least frequent in *Intro-interchange*. Table 5 shows CSIs had frequency counts of 35 (18.51%) in *Intro Interchange*, 49 (25.92%) in *Interchange* 1, 50 (26.45%) in *Interchange* 2, and 55 (29.10%) in *Interchange* 3. This shows that the higher the level of students, the more CSIs in the books. The same was true for *English for Iraq* book series.

Regarding the reflection of the inner circle, Table 5 shows the frequency counts and percentages of occurrence of cultural items in the inner circle for *English for Iraq* and

Table 5.
Frequency Counts and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items Related to the Inner Circle in English for Iraq and Interchange book series

English for Iraq	Inner Circle	
	Frequency	Percentage
English for Iraq 1	75	17.04%
English for Iraq 2	63	14.31%
English for Iraq 3	75	17.04%
English for Iraq 4	86	19.54%
English for Iraq 5	89	20.22%
English for Iraq 6	52	11.81%
Interchange		
Intro Interchange	113	15.73%
Interchange 1	131	18.24%
Interchange 2	265	36.90%
Interchange 3	209	29.10%

Table 6.
The Frequency Counts and Percentages of Culture-Specific Items Native to Iraqi Culture

Culture-specific Items	Frequency	Percentage
Ecology	19	16.66%
Material culture	21	18.42%
Social culture-work and leisure	16	14.03%
Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	31	27.19%
Anthroponyms	12	10.52%
Gestures and Habits	15	13.15%

Interchange book series. Items were identified using Kachru's (1990) framework, and then frequency count was run.

As can be seen, CSIs in the inner circle had frequency counts of 75 (17.04%) in English for Iraq 1, 63 (14.31%), and 86 (19.54%) in Iraq. 4, 89 (20.22) in Iraqi for Iraq 5, and 52 (11.81%) in Iraq 6.

Culture-specific items in the inner circle had frequency counts of 113 (15.73%) in *Intro Interchange*, 131 (18.24%) in *Interchange 1*, 265 (36.90%) in *Interchange 2*, and 209 (29.10%) in *Interchange 3*. Culture-specific items were most frequent in *Interchange* books 2 and 3, and least frequent in the intro and *Interchange* 1.

To investigate how frequently *English for Iraq* series reflects items associated with Iraqi native culture, the CSIs native to Iraqi culture were identified and counted. Table 6 shows the frequency counts and percentages of such items as well as their relative importance in Iraqi culture.

The most frequent culture item associated with Iraqi culture was OCAPC, and the least frequent one was Gestures and Habits. Anthroponyms were observed 12 times (10.52%), while Material Culture items were found 21 times (18.42), Social Culture-Work and Leisure had frequency count of 16 (14.03%).

Finally, *Interchange* series were compared with *English for Iraq* series in terms of frequency counts of CSIs in expanding and inner circles. The comparisons were made with the help of the Chi-square test. Table 7 shows the results of the Chi-square test between *Interchange* and *English for Iraq* series. As can be seen, there were no significant differences between *New Interchange* and *English* for Iraq series in expanding circles (X^2 = 2.917, p = .442), but a significant difference was found between the two textbooks in inner circles (X^2 = 2.502, p = .01).

Table 7.
The Results of Chi-square Test Between Interchange and English for Iraq series regarding the Inner and Expanding Circle

Circles		Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Expanding	Pearson Chi-Square	2.917[a]	2	.442
	Likelihood Ratio	2.688	2	.220
	Linear-by-Linear Association	1.061	1	.805
Inner	Pearson Chi-Square	2.502	2	.015
	Likelihood Ratio	2.460	2	.007
	Linear-by-Linear Association	1.665	1	.000

4. Discussion

The present study aimed at identifying CSIs in relation to Kachru's concentric circles in two different English textbook series. One series was New Interchange, and the other one was *English for Iraq*, which is taught in Iraqi mainstream education.

The analysis of data indicated that all culturally specific items were present in *Interchange* series and *English for Iraq* series. The OCAPC was found to be the most frequent one and Anthroponyms were the least frequent one with regard to culture items native to Iraqi culture. Culture items related to expanding circle were more frequently found at more advanced levels of *New Interchange* books and *English for Iraq* books. The main finding of the study indicated the presence of CSIs in both *New Interchange* series and *English for Iraq* series, and the fact that both series included cultural items in the expanding and inner circles are discussed. In other words, the presence of CSIs not exclusive to English-speaking countries like the UK, the US, Australia, and New Zealand indicates that *English for Iraq* series has followed a more global approach in including cultural items. It can also be construed that Iraq is joining the expanding circle of English by contributing to the global nature of English rather than instructing and expecting the narrower from of English exclusive to UK, US, Australia, and New Zealand. The significant growth in the number of ELF speakers, along with the use of English in the expanding circle, has led to many questions about the English in the expanding circle. For example, several research studies and discussions have been about EFL speakers' attitudes and integrated EFL pedagogical approaches (Jenkins, 2006; McKay, 2003; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2006). Although *New Interchange* series is an American English textbook, it should not be forgotten that firstly, American society is a multi-lingual and multicultural society, and secondly, English in the expanding circle has grown to a level that it is no longer considered an outsider. It can be claimed that English is so spread today that the distinction between standard and non-standard English can hardly be achieved (e.g., Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Kachru, 1982; Lowenberg, 2000).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that English belonging to the inner circle is highly valued by English learners in the outer or expanding circle of English. Seidlhofer (2004) points to "unstable equilibrium" (p. 209), which is a situation in which non-native speakers outnumber native speakers, but native speakers of English are still praised for being native English speakers. Native speakers, for instance, enjoy having special status (Graddol, 1999) and various material and psychological benefits.

The study revealed that *English for Iraq* series contained numerous instances of Iraqi culture although they did not outnumber the native and international cultural items. This can be good news as students may not develop the idea that English is just for English culture. Kirkgöz and Ağçam (2011) explored the English textbooks in primary education in Turkey and found that they include many cultural items specific to Turkish culture. However, contrary to the current findings, they found that cultural items specific to Turkish culture outnumber those related to Native English speakers (e.g., Americans and British).

5. Conclusion

English textbooks published in English-speaking countries like the UK, US, Australia, and New Zealand include cultural items from expanding circle countries such as Iraq. It can be concluded that *English for Iraq* series included not only cultural items related to English-speaking countries but also culture-specific items that are native to the Iraqi culture. Overall, it is concluded that *English for Iraq* has adequately dealt with cultural issues in English language teaching.

The findings of the study need to be presented to the teachers and other decision-makers in the field of ELT and be discussed with regard to the instruction, priority, and appropriateness of cultural items in English textbooks.

The findings of the study can inform the material developers about the cultural content of English textbooks. Such knowledge about the cultural content of English textbooks may inform the material developers how to achieve the balance in the cultural content of the English textbooks.

Finally, it can be inferred that despite the privilege given to native-like speaking and behaving in many non-English speaking countries, English language and culture do not need to be limited to inner circle countries (those countries in which English is spoken as the first language).

Declarations

Competing interests

None.

Funding

References

Aixela, J. (1997). Culture-specific items in translation. In R. Alvarez and M. V. Carmen–Africa (Eds.), *Translation, power, subversion.* WBC Book Manufactures Ltd.

Baker, W. (2009). The cultures of English as a lingua franca. *TESOL Quarterly*, *43*(4), 567-592. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2009.tb00187.x

Brown, D. H. (2000). *Principles of language learning & teaching*. (4th ed.). Longman.

Brutt-Griffler, J. (2002) *World English: A study of its development*. Clevedon: Multi-lingual Matters.

Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2004). Language and identity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 369-394). Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996522

Campbell, A. (2000). Cultural identity as a social construct. *Intercultural Education, 11*(1), 31-39. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980050005370

Ching, H. M. (2010). Cultural studies and motivation in foreign and second language learning in Taiwan. *Language, Culture, & Curriculum, 11*(2), 126-182. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908319808666548

Graddol, D. (1999). The decline of the native speaker. In D. Graddol, & U. Meinhof (Eds.), *English in a changing world (AILA Review)*, *13*, 57-68.

Holsti, O. R. (1996). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Addison-Wesley.

Jenkins, J. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 157-181. http://doi.org/10.2307/40264515

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Institutionalized second language varieties. In S. Cteenbaum (Ed.), *The English language today* (pp. 211-226). Pergamon.

Kachru, B. B. (1990). World Englishes and applied linguistics. *World Englishes*, *9*(1), 3-20.

Kachru, B.B. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, issues, and resources. *Language Teaching, 25*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444800006583

Kirkgöz, Y. and Ağçam, R. (2011). Exploring culture in locally published English textbooks for primary education in Turkey. *CEPS Journal*, *1*(1), 153-167. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:6537

Lee, C. (2012). Korean culture and its influence on business practice in South Korea. *The Journal of International Management Studies, 2*(2)*, 184-191.

Lowenberg, P. (2000). Non-native varieties and the sociopolitics of English proficiency assessment. In J. Kelly Hall & W. G. Eggington (Eds.), *The sociopolitics of English language teaching* (pp. 67-85). Multi-lingual Matters.

MacBurnie, S. (2017). *English for Iraq series*. Garnet Education, UK.

Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation.* Prentice Hall.

Peterson, E. & Coltrane, B. (2003). Peterson, E., & Coltrane, B. (2003). Culture in Second Language Teaching. In *Culture in Second Language Teaching* (Vol. EDO-FL-03-09). (ERIC Clearing House on Languages and Linguistics). Center for Applied Linguistics.

Richrds, J. C. (2005). *New interchange 1*. Cambridge University Press.

Richrds, J. C. (2005). *New interchange 2*. Cambridge University Press.

Richrds, J. C. (2005). *New interchange 3*. Cambridge University Press

Risager, K. (2007). *Language and culture pedagogy: From a national to a transnational paradigm*. Clevedon: Multi-lingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853599613

Rubdy, R., & Saraceni, M. (Eds.), (2006). *English in the world: Global rules, global roles*. Continuum.

Scarcella, R. & Oxford, R. (1992). *The tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Seidlhofer, B. (2004). 10 Research perspectives on teaching English as a lingua franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *24*, 209-239. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190504000145

Seidlhofer, B. (2006). *English as a lingua franca. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English* (7th edition). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719050600002X

Tok, H. (2010). TEFL textbook evaluation: From teachers' perspectives. *Educational Research and Review,5*(9), 508-517. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR.9000329

Tomlinson, B. (2003). Materials evaluation. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Developing materials for language teaching* (pp. 15-36). Continuum.