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The Question of Re-Presentation In EFL Course Books: Are Learners of English Taught about New Zealand?

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Abstract

Increasingly intercultural dimension of communication in the 21st century has brought about challenging aims in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) pedagogy, such as ascertaining the enhancement of the learners' intercultural awareness and promoting their ability to communicate in intercultural settings. Taking the disadvantage of EFL environment in terms of intercultural input into account, course books can be considered as one of the most crucial tools used in these settings. Thus, the links between culture, language teaching, and course books deserve a closer investigation carried out with a critical eye. Hence, the present study was conducted: (1) to explore the extent and number of the cultural representations present in course books (2) the distribution of cultural representations across different English-speaking countries (i.e., the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). To this end, 17 English course books written by international publishers and used at preparatory English schools of universities in an EFL setting were examined by using a quantitative content analysis. The results were discussed and implications were made.

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1. Introduction

With the aim of preparing language learners for today's fast-paced world and helping them to become communicatively competent in a foreign language, a need for a departure from earlier theoretical frameworks which considered language as a formal system based on grammatical rules towards a more communicative perspective has become a prominent issue on the agenda. This viewpoint has led to a consequential 'social turn' in our understanding of knowledge about language learning and teaching (Block, 2003), which is rooted in the inference that a study of language solely as an abstract system might fail to equip language learners with intercultural communicative competence.

As Kramsch (1993) puts it in her book entitled *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, "if language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency" (pp. 8-9). In view of this idea, it is possible to recognize that language use is inseparable from the transmission of culture.

Given the increasingly intercultural dimension of communication in the 21st century, one of the aims in EFL pedagogy has been to ensure the development of the learners' intercultural awareness and to enhance their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various situations. In other words, the changing pedagogical perspective has had a considerable influence on EFL teaching-learning process and also on its indispensable component: course books, which constitute the core of the present study.

Consistent with a view of language as an intercultural behaviour, course books are considered to be one of the most important tools used especially in an EFL setting (Altbach, 1991). As Herlihy (1992) emphasises, the evidence is so clear and overwhelming that course books and other print materials are a major part of the teaching-learning process. Thus, the links between culture, language, course books, and teaching-learning process which have been discussed in

the following sections, deserve a closer and detailed investigation carried out with a novel and systematic perspective.

Though a substantial body of literature on examining the cultural contents of course books exists, the emphasis has mainly been on investigating how these course books are thematically organised (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Oliver, 1942) or how local and global cultures have been presented (Matsuda, 2003; Ogden, 1981; Wandel, 2001), with scant attention given to examining how textbooks present cultural elements across inner circle countries. Such an examination would be of interest and would also provide insights into the target culture representation prevalent in EFL textbooks, in an environment where recently there has been a wide interest in recognising English as an international language and where discussions pertaining to the ownership of English have been taking place (Widdowson, 1994). Thus, the present study with a twofold purpose sets out to examine the extent and number of the target cultural representations present in EFL course books and the distribution of these cultural representations across different English-speaking countries (i.e., the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. What is Culture?

"In a rainy London afternoon an English gentleman was resting in his rocking chair sipping his tea and enjoying his chocolate cookies in front of the window pane watching the rain. Suddenly he caught a glimpse of the cuckoo clock and realized that he had to hurry to meet his friend on time at his favourite pub to have some British beer. At this time his American girlfriend, in her cosy couch in the living room, was watching her favourite talk Show on TV and having the pizza and the coke which she had ordered before".

In this scenario which depicts an imaginary situation, it would not be a difficult task for readers to detect some cultural stereotypes that could be associated with the target culture. Such stereotypical views of the target cultures can be commonly held by language learners all round the world especially in EFL contexts,

since the students do not start learning a foreign language as a *tabula rasa* as indicated by Joiner (1974).

Although these views might be called as 'stereotypical', when language learners are asked to reflect on their definition of the target culture, it is quite likely that they associate these images (e.g., tea, British beer, rainy weather, coke, etc.) with the target culture. Thus, a need to define the concept of culture occurs to ensure the validity of these images. As noted by Kramersch (1998) culture is a "membership in a discourse community that shares a common space and history and common imaginings" (p. 10). Nieto (1992) offers another definition and states that culture is composed of the ever changing values, traditions, social, and political relationships, and world view created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combinations of factors that can include a common history, a geographic location, language, social class, and religion. As can be inferred from these definitions, culture is a complex, dynamic, multifaceted, and context bound concept whose nature makes it difficult to arrive at a clear-cut definition.

While it is no easy task to provide a clear-cut definition of culture, some distinctive features of it can be noted. For instance, culture is "largely automatic" (Lund, 2006, p. 26), passed on to members of a cultural group through socialization and differs across time, place, community, and generation. The 'software of the mind' as Hofstede (1991) calls it, culture is learnt and once learnt it turns into automatic and subconscious. Moreover, culture can be considered as arbitrary since members of a different cultural communities act in different ways given different circumstances (Kramersch, 1997).

2.3. Culture and Language

The link between language and culture has been described as "intricate and interdependent" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 235) and this relationship manifests itself in notions such as 'linguaculture' (Friedrich, 1989), 'languaculture' (Risager, 2005), 'language-and-culture' (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003) and 'culturelanguage'

(Papademetre & Scarino, 2006). To better describe this relationship, several metaphors have been used in the related literature. For instance, language has been considered to be the 'mirror of culture' since it is possible to see the culture through its language. Another metaphor used to reveal the connection between these two concepts is 'iceberg'. While the language represents the visible part of the iceberg, culture symbolizes the underlying and hidden part (Jiang, 2000).

Culture and language are so interdependent that knowledge of cultural contexts and frames is essential for successful and effective language use in both one's mother tongue and target language. As Thompson (1993) indicates, knowledge of social values, norms of behaviour and interaction, and cultural discourse can be considered as a crucial component of overall linguistic competence. Likewise, language functions as a primary agent in the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Though language and culture systems have close relationships, affect and shape each other to a great extent, when it comes to English, the issue of ownership of standard English stands controversial. In a similar way, Widdowson (1994) casts serious doubts related to the ownership of Standard English by a particular community and culture and furthermore proposes that the notion that English is an international language means no nation can claim the ownership of it. This issue poses crucial problems as to which variety and culture should be taken as basis in foreign language pedagogy. The next section will concentrate specifically on the links between culture and language teaching and prominent views dealing with this issue.

2.3. Culture and Language Teaching

The rise of the communicative movements in language teaching since the 1980s has given way to a shift of focus from a structural view of language teaching directed toward the mastery of grammatical, phonological, and lexical accuracy to a communicative view of language teaching which has deemed 'intercultural communicative competence' as a key component of overall linguistic repertoire. The term 'intercultural communicative

competence' refers to the "ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 10). This concept is often associated with the notions of 'intercultural speaker' and 'third space'. An intercultural speaker according to Byram (2003) "is always a mediator between his/her own culture and others present in the situation, and must be constantly able to interpret and re-interpret (*savoir-apprendre*) the cultural phenomena implicit or explicit in the communication" (p. 61). The other related term, 'third space' proposed by Kramsch (1993), refers to the unique stage at which language learners of different cultural backgrounds observe, explore, and reflect on both their own and the target cultures and gain insight into and spot the similarities and differences between the cultures in question. A learner in the third space could synthesize different cultural elements and establish his/her own understanding of cultural differences.

With the emergence of communicative movements underlining these concepts, the current foreign language pedagogy specifically aims to help language learners to be 'ethnographically sensitive' and 'culturally self-aware'. This aim requires the teaching process to engage learners in exploring their own culture and the target culture and develop cultural empathy and awareness. In line with this view, Kramsch (1993, p. 356) suggests that language classrooms should provide the learners with the opportunity to experience "the back-and-forth of cultural border crossings". This can be realized using effective techniques and a material which is closely associated with the transmission the target cultural knowledge. On the other hand, McKay (2003) proposes that the cultural basis of English teaching has been closely related with inner circle countries while this situation should be challenged by the World Englishes movement. However, let alone to treat English as an International Language (EIL), in our context, many Turkish EFL teachers and students tend to recognize English as being the language of the UK and the USA. Hence, it could be observed that the presence of other inner-circle countries (i.e., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) is neglected to a great

extent. Though it seems to be a heuristic assumption and observation which lacks empirical validation at first sight, the fact that EFL teaching in Turkey taking place in a highly course book-driven context makes the EFL course books come under the scrutiny. The following section will present the relationships between culture, language teaching, and course books.

2.4. Culture, Language Teaching and Course Books

The development of intercultural communicative competence in language learners requires linking knowledge of culture to the curriculum, teaching-learning methods, techniques, and use of materials. As Byram and Risager (1999) point out, culture is a significant dimension of communicative competence and therefore should receive specific attention of teachers, curriculum, and material developers. One of the practical and convenient means of achieving the aforementioned aim might be seen as course books. Course books are assumed to supply a route into the target culture learning. The common framework followed in course book writing presents cultures in four categories namely the aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic (Gray, 2010).

Nevertheless, Schultz (2006) argues that:

In the United States, as yet there are no commonly agreed upon minimal cultural contents that textbook authors are expected to include in materials. For instance, there is no agreement among teachers of German as to which representatives of German culture their students should know about [and] what events related to German history they should be familiar with. (p. 13)

In other words, the distribution of target cultural elements in course books of 'inner circle' countries - countries where English is spoken as a native language - deserves scholarly attention since course books remain as the main source of cultural input particularly in foreign language teaching settings. The distinction between second and foreign language teaching-learning settings is worth taking into account as the nature of EFL context puts the learners at a disadvantage in

terms of the quality and the quantity of the cultural input presented.

It is often observed that course books could never be totally neutral in terms of the cultural content they include. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 90) claims that:

If they have any subject content, course books will directly or in directly communicate sets of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up. This is the so called 'hidden curriculum' which forms part of any educational programme, but is unstated and undisclosed. It may well be an expression of attitudes and values that are not consciously held but which nevertheless influence the content and image of the teaching material, and indeed the whole curriculum. A curriculum (and teaching materials form part of this) cannot be neutral because it has to reflect a view of social order and express a values system, implicitly or explicitly.

The term 'hidden curriculum' mentioned above refers to the unplanned or inexplicit values embedded in the practices carried out in the classroom and educational institutions through the application of the curriculum. In other words, the hidden curriculum mostly refers to the "subtle or not-so subtle messages that are not part of the intended curriculum" (Nieto, 2009, p. 28). Since course books are one of the core elements of a curriculum and they adopt a crucial role in transmitting cultural knowledge with the development of modern language pedagogy, the implicit messages they convey about target culture should be viewed with a critical eye. Especially in a course book-driven EFL context, this scrutiny should be carried out more thoroughly, for the course books constitute the main component of English language teaching process, provide teachers with a road to follow in the course of their instruction and remain almost as the only source of input for EFL students. For these reasons, it could be hypothesised that course books assume a significant role in shaping the perceptions of EFL learners and teachers with regard to the ownership of target language and culture.

2.5. Remaining Issues

Matsuda (2002) pointed out that appropriateness and presentation of cultural content in course books deserve attention since course books help learners become aware of sociolinguistic complexity of English. Up to now, studies conducted to examine cultural content of course books mainly have focused on either the thematic organization of course books (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Oliver, 1942) or the distinction between the presentations of local or global culture (Matsuda, 2003; Ogden, 1981; Wandel, 2001). However, in his article released in 1988 Prodromou says:

Globally designed textbooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglo-centric: appealing to a World market as they do, they cannot by definition draw on local varieties of English and have not gone very far in recognizing English as an international language either. (p. 76)

To date, no study to our knowledge has dealt with the distribution of cultural elements across inner circle countries except for Chapelle (2009), who investigated the representation of Canada in French course books. It is an oversight that English course books acting as almost the only agent to teach both target culture and language in foreign language contexts have not been thoroughly examined with regard to distribution of cultural content across inner circle countries; which are the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand while discussions related to World Englishes are taking place. Hence, the present study sets out to explore the extent and number of the target cultural representations presented in EFL course books and deals specifically with the distribution of cultural re-presentations across different English-speaking countries (the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). It is hoped that the findings of the study would provide us with a snapshot of the current situation of course books used in an EFL setting, in terms of distribution of target cultural contents, where debates related to English as an International language are held.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context

The present study examined EFL course books used at the English preparatory schools of universities located in Turkey. The study specifically focused on this context where English is intensively and comprehensively studied at least during a year before the students embark on their bachelor program. EFL teaching provided in these schools is taken seriously by both instructors and students since successful completion of the programme determined by the proficiency exam taken at the end of the year is a prerequisite of further field studies. Course books that are used in preparatory classes are written by writers from inner-circle countries, especially the UK and the USA.

3.2. Corpus

A quantitative content analysis was used to investigate the extent and number of the cultural representations presented in ELT course books and the distribution of cultural representations across different English-speaking countries (the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). Berelson (1952) defines quantitative content analysis as “a research technique for the systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). Content analysis was conducted on a corpus of 17 course books used at the English preparatory schools of universities in Turkey. These course books were widely used at the leading universities in Turkey. They ranged from beginner level to advanced level and have been published by internationally popular, leading publishers like Cambridge University Press or Oxford University Press. To determine the names of the course books to be analysed, lecturers working at the preparatory schools of these universities were contacted and necessary information was obtained. Detailed information about the course books analysed is provided in Appendix 1.

3.3. Analysis

Each of the course books was comprised of a number of units and these course books were thematically organized into sections such as

‘Environment’, ‘Sports’, ‘Medicine’, and ‘Literature’. These sections were analysed by excluding grammar sections and vocabulary lists from the scope of the analysis. Two experts, specializing in English Language Teaching and having conducted content analysis before, performed the analysis. The researchers employed a systematic method for identifying units of analysis that was developed by Chapelle (2009), who examined the Canadian content in French course books. After a pilot analysis on two course books, each researcher completed the coding independently. The percentage of interrater agreement ranged from 97% to 100%. Few differences in the ratings were easily resolved by re-examining the content.

Similar to the methods of analysis employed in Chapelle (2009) and Oliver (1942), different levels of cultural content were defined and placed under different categories: a) a simple mention b) depiction c) a display of something. These levels are described in detail below.

- a) *A simple mention*: The name of a person, thing or place without any further details about its nature.

“I live and work in *London*.” (Headway Beginner, p. 34)

“Do you take *American Express*?” (English File, Elementary, p. 48)

- b) *A depiction*: A description beyond sentence level which gives detailed information about the nature of the subject.

Alexander complained that in England he felt ‘like the village idiot’ because in Russia if you smile all the time people think that you are mad. In fact this is exactly what my husband’s friends thought of me the first time I went to Russia because I smiled at everyone and translated every ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ from English to Russian! At home we now have an agreement. If we are speaking Russian he can say “Pour me some tea,” and just make a noise like a grunt when I give it to him. But when we are speaking English he has to add a ‘please’, a ‘thank you’ and a smile. (New English File, Intermediate, p. 38)

c) *A display*: A visual input (a picture, a map, a figure etc.) showing anything contextual or cultural. For instance the pictures showing the flag of the UK, Winston Churchill, Queen Elizabeth, Johnny Depp, Michael Jordan, Opera House in Sydney, people skiing in Quebec and maps of the inner circle countries etc.

A careful examination of the contents was carried out to identify the cultural elements of the inner circle countries (the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) and it was ensured that there was a correspondence between the cultural elements and the categories exemplified above by checking the content four times. Instances such as depiction

of Christmas, Halloween, etc. that are shared among above-mentioned countries were excluded from the scope of the analysis.

4. Results

In this section, the results of the study have been reported in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, respectively. The first research question was concerned with the type and number of the cultural representations presented in English course books used in EFL context. The analysis showed that the course books included target cultural elements in a great number. Table 1 presents the results related to the percentage indicating the levels of target cultural contents in the course books.

Table 1
Percentage of Levels of Cultural Contents in the Course Books

	Frequency	Percentage
A simple mention	1392	58%
A display	589	25%
A depiction	395	17%
Total	2376	100%

As Table 1 suggests, the most loaded category was 'a simple mention' holding 1392 cultural elements which made up 58% of the total elements in the corpus. This category was followed by 'a display' which included 589 elements comprising 25% of the total. The least frequent category was 'a depiction' which included 395 elements, corresponding

to a percentage of 17.

The second research question sought to explore the distribution of cultural representations across different English-speaking countries (the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). Results related to this issue are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Distribution of Cultural Contents Across Different English-Speaking Countries

	Frequency	Percentage
The UK	1146	48%
The USA	999	42%
Australia	151	6%
Canada	68	3%
New Zealand	12	1%
Total	2376	100%

Table 2 illustrates that the largest proportion belonged to the UK (48%, 1146 elements), followed by the USA (42%, 999 elements), Australia (6%, 151 elements), Canada (3%,

68), and New Zealand (%1, 12 elements). Table 3 gives a more detailed account of distribution of cultural content across inner circle countries in terms of presentation types.

Table 3

Distribution of Cultural Contents in Terms of Presentation Type and Countries

	A simple mention	A display	A depiction
The UK	680	272	194
The USA	553	270	176
Australia	111	28	12
Canada	41	16	11
New Zealand	7	3	2
Total	1392	589	395

When these numbers and percentages were reexamined by taking the proficiency levels of the course books into account, an interesting relationship between the level of the course books and the types and frequencies of cultural elements were detected. Though this issue had not been treated as a research question at the onset of the study, the qualitative nature of the

investigation made it possible to detect this link between the issue of cultural representation and course book level. Below, Figure 1 presents the results obtained from Beginner, Elementary, Pre intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, and Advanced level course books.

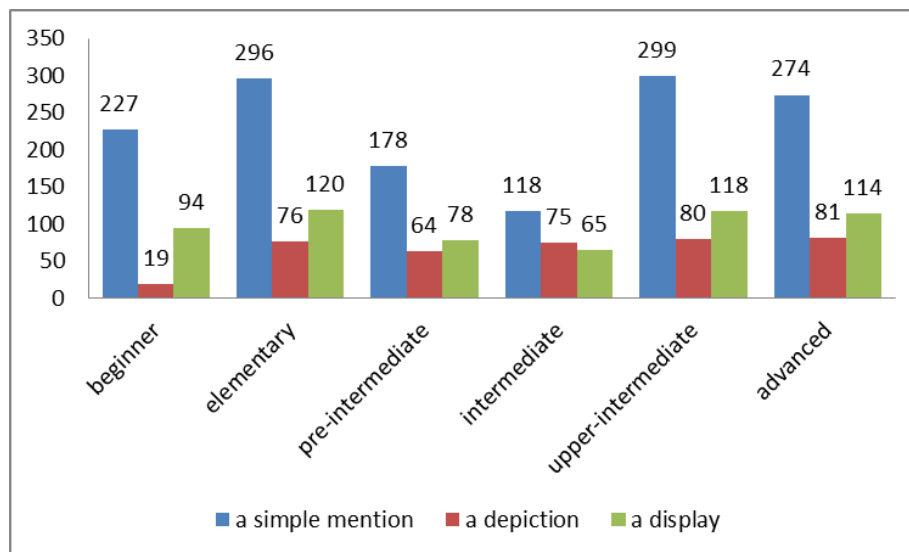


Figure 1

Results Showing the Relationship between the Level of the Course Books and the Type and Frequency of Cultural Elements

Figure 1 reveals that at the beginning level ‘a simple mention’ had the highest percentage (67%, 227 elements) followed by ‘a display’ (28%, 94 elements) and ‘a depiction’ (5%, 19 elements). At the elementary level ‘a simple mention’ (60%, 296 elements) was followed by a display (24%, 120 elements) and ‘a depiction’ (16%, 76 elements). At the pre-intermediate level ‘a simple mention’ (56%, 178 elements) was followed by a display (24%, 78 elements) and a depiction (20%, 64 elements). At the intermediate level the results demonstrated a different order, ‘a simple mention’ (46%, 118 elements), ‘a depiction’ (29%, 75 elements) and ‘a display’ (25%, 65 elements). At the upper intermediate level ‘a simple mention’ had the highest percentage (60%, 299 elements) followed by ‘a display’ (24%, 118 elements) and ‘a depiction’ (16%, 80 elements). At the advanced level ‘a simple mention’ (58%, 274 elements) was followed by ‘a display’ (25%, 114 elements) and ‘a depiction’ (17%, 81 elements). These results will be interpreted and accounted for in the following discussion section.

5. Discussion

One of the aims of the present study was to investigate the type and number of the cultural re-presentations presented in English course books used in EFL context. It was found that ‘a simple mention’ was by far the most loaded category and was followed by ‘a display’ and ‘a depiction’. Despite the varying level of the course books, ‘a simple mention’ remained the most frequently detected category in the presentation of the target culture. The reason behind this finding was probably the fact that ‘a simple mention’ might be considered as the easiest and quickest way of stimulating language learners’ curiosity about the target culture. Another possible reason may be related to the very nature of this category. Even a mention of a word such as ‘London’, ‘the USA’, ‘Michael Jordan’ or ‘Sydney’ was enough for that word to be included in this category. Although ‘a simple mention’ had the highest percentage in total, it should be noted that in terms of space allowed in course books, it was the last category. Followed by depictions, displays occupied much more space when compared to other categories. These categories were previously used by Chapelle (2009) who investigated whether

there was a hidden curriculum in published French language teaching materials by determining the number of instances that Canada was mentioned in 9 French course books and their accompanying workbooks and who also found that Canada was mentioned in 14.4% of the units analyzed in the course books. She showed that the mean number of sections with Canadian content in the textbooks was 15.3%, while this percentage was 6.5% in the workbooks. Though we used the taxonomy proposed by Chapelle (2009) for the analysis, in her study she did not report the percentages across the categories of a simple mention, a display and a depiction, but reported the overall percentages of instances of any mention of Canada.

Only at the intermediate level a decrease was observed in the use of ‘a display’ category. The results suggested that except for this instance, target cultural content tended to be conveyed by means of displays at all levels. One possibility behind the use of displays may be their function in making target culture more concrete. Besides, they provide EFL learners who do not have the chance of experiencing the target culture at its place with an opportunity to be exposed to target cultural elements. For instance, a learner can see the Buckingham Palace, London Eye, the River Thames, or the British Museum without actually being in London. Alternatively, the frequent use of displays may be linked with the fact that visuals make learning target culture easier and more comprehensible. In line with this view, Croft and Burton (1994) also points out that ‘memory for pictures’ is superior to ‘memory for words’. Thus, it could be inferred that there was a sound rationale behind extensive use of displays.

The distribution of cultural representations across different English-speaking countries (the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) was the main issue that the present study aimed to explore. It was found that (see Table 2) that the largest proportion belonged to the UK (48%) followed by the USA (42%), Australia (6%), Canada (3%), and New Zealand (1%). The findings revealed that the majority of cultural elements presented in course books belonged to the UK and the USA. Lund (2006) in her doctoral dissertation on cultural and contextual elements in English

course books used in Norway came up with similar results as well. This observation is also remarked by Seidlhofer (2005), who contends that there is still a tendency for native speakers to be regarded as custodians of English. As a consequence, the fact that English is being shaped at least as much by its non-native speakers as by its native speakers has been largely ignored in Turkish context.

This situation can be traced back to the role of the UK and the USA as the representatives of English language and culture. Since World War II, the increasing power of the USA in economy, commerce, technology, and politics (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991), increasing number of overseas students in the UK and the USA, the boom in pop culture and its transmission via the world-wide-web, media, and finally the origins of most publishing companies (mostly British or American) may have considerable impact on these two countries gaining prominence over the others.

As Crystal (1997) and Graddol (1997) acknowledge, in spite of the increasing spread of English outside inner circle to outer and expanding circles, it could be said that there is not even an approximate distribution of cultural content within inner circle countries. This could be clearly seen in the case of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand being underrepresented in EFL course books. Specifically speaking of the Turkish EFL context, the observed higher percentage rates in the re-presentations of inner circle countries manifest itself through one of the most striking examples which comes from the 'Brown family'. The Browns were always the main characters in most of the EFL course books used all around Turkey for a long period of time. The *Turkish Daily News* (2007) made the following comment on these characters that were the indispensable figures of English teaching in Turkey:

"This hyperactive British couple set out to teach English to Turkish students almost 50 years ago. They were involved in a series of outdoor activities; they went on picnics, to the zoo, climbed mountains, and indeed they frequently went to the seaside. Though neither Mr. Brown nor Mrs. Brown seemed to be interested in what was happening in other parts of the world, on one occasion they even

went to Mexico to teach airport, customs, luggage, and sombrero. At the end of all these activities, Turkish students could still not speak English except for the sentence: Mr. and Mrs. Brown went to the seaside".

Hence, the target cultural transmission was limited to the adventures of this old British couple. Likewise, in the course books analysed, the cultural representation of the UK and the USA maintained its prominence while Canada, Australia, and New Zealand remained relatively underrepresented. Cultural aspects of outer circle countries such as the Philippines, Tanzania, and expanding circle countries such as Turkey, Brazil, and Japan, etc. were also detected, though the number of these elements was low in frequency. Given that English has become the lingua franca of the modern world and is widely used in outer and expanding circle countries, the aim of the foreign language teaching should be to train language learners to become 'interculturally competent' and 'culturally literate'. For no doubt, it is essential for them to learn about target culture (specifically the UK and the USA) since culture and language are closely interwoven. However, cultural knowledge of underrepresented inner circle, (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand), outer and expanding circle countries should also be presented in course books.

McKay (2003) also draws attention to English as an International Language (EIL) curriculum development by emphasizing the fact that English no longer belongs to any one's culture and, hence there is a need to be culturally sensitive to the diversity of contexts in which English is taught and used. As Kirkpatrick (2004) underlines, with the changing face of English in the world, some important points to consider in the ELT pedagogy appear, one of them being the argument that one variety is not superior to another.

Another noteworthy finding of the present study is revolved around the relationship between the level of the course books and the types and frequencies of cultural elements. The results revealed that there was a positive correlation between the level of the course books and the types and frequencies of cultural elements. Stated differently, a gradual rise in the depiction of the target culture was

observed as the level of the course books increased. More specifically, texts devoted to cultural aspects became much longer and complex in accordance with the level of the course books. Authentic texts such as popular song lyrics, letters to the editor, newspaper and magazine articles, interviews, and novel and short story excerpts were detected more in upper intermediate and advanced level course books. These findings seem to be in line with the findings of Ho (2009), Lund (2006), and Ilieva (2000). The underlying rationale behind this preference may have to do with the suggestion that more complex cultural aspects should be presented to the language learners who have reached a certain linguistic, cognitive, and emotional level, so that they could be actively engaged in abstract reflections on questions with respect to the target culture (Byram & Morgan, 1994).

Teaching culture as part of language learning has always been a lively practice. Centuries ago language teachers struggled to make classics understandable to language learners who obtained cultural knowledge through literature and arts (Kramsch, 1996). However, the field has experienced a paradigm shift with the advent of communicative movement in language teaching and accordingly changes have been witnessed in the way target cultural aspects are presented and transmitted. Currently, language learners are exposed to popular target cultural elements such as Lady Gaga, fish and chips, E-Bay, Avatar, David Beckham, Sydney Opera House, CN Tower, and i-Phone through their course books.

Since the world is becoming a global village by shrinking, it is essential to equip language learners with knowledge and skills which would help them to effectively communicate with the others. That is, language learners need to function appropriately and adequately both in local and international settings (Alptekin, 2002). To this end, foreign language pedagogy should re-think the function and place of culture in course books. For this reason, course books should include local and international settings that are familiar to the lives of learners. Course books should also help learners to gain an intercultural awareness and insight which will enable them to spot the differences and similarities across cultures and act strategically (Hyde, 1998). At this point,

incorporating a culturally-adaptive English pedagogy (Ghadiri, Tavakoli, & Ketabi, In Press) into EFL course books which would help language learners function appropriately in intercultural settings by making use of adaptive mechanisms could be regarded as a sound approach to the relationship between course books and the teaching of the target culture. Such an approach could also ensure an effective functioning in the target culture through helping language learners avoid a sense of alienation from their own local cultures while enhancing their cultural awareness and promoting tolerance towards the target culture.

The present study attempted to cast light on the issues of representation and presentation of target cultures in EFL course books written by the international publishers. The findings revealed that the majority of cultural elements presented in course books belonged to the UK and the USA while the other English speaking countries remained underrepresented. It was found that 'a simple mention' was by far the most loaded category followed by 'a display' and 'a depiction'. The findings also pointed to a positive relationship between the level of the course books and the types and frequencies of cultural elements. The current study was novel in the sense that it investigated the distribution of cultural representations across different English-speaking countries. Moreover, these findings may be generalizable to other EFL countries with similar situations. Nevertheless, there are some limitations to this study as well. One of the limitations is the size of the corpus used for the analyses. Future research may deal with the issues mentioned above by making use of a larger corpus. Another limitation is that, the course books included in the corpus were the ones that are used in the Turkish university context. Though these course books are prepared by international publishers for the use of English learners in EFL contexts, conducting the same investigation in different EFL countries would improve the generalizability of the study's results to broader contexts.

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Appendix 1*Detailed Information about the Course Books in the Corpus*

Name of the course book	Level of the course book	Publisher
New English File	Beginner	Oxford University Press
New English File	Elementary	Oxford University Press
New English File	Intermediate	Oxford University Press
New English File	Upper Intermediate	Oxford University Press
New English File	Advanced	Oxford University Press
New Headway	Beginner	Oxford University Press
New Headway	Intermediate	Oxford University Press
New Headway	Upper Intermediate	Oxford University Press
New Headway	Advanced	Oxford University Press
Language Leader	Beginner	Pearson Longman
Language Leader	Elementary	Pearson Longman
Language Leader	Intermediate	Pearson Longman
Language Leader	Upper Intermediate	Pearson Longman
Language Leader	Advanced	Pearson Longman
Top Notch 1	Beginner	Pearson Longman
Top Notch 2	Elementary	Pearson Longman
Top Notch 3	Intermediate	Pearson Longman