Sociocultural Values In 2nd Intermediate Textbook "English For Iraq"

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Abstract: The current study aims to evaluate socio-cultural values included in English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate class in Iraq and to show the types of cultures that appear in the English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate class in Iraq. Is it target culture, source culture, or international culture? For this purpose, a checklist has been drawn from Brook's list of sociocultural references to analyze the content of the Pupil's Book and Activity Book of English for Iraq 2nd Intermediate. The socio-cultural values include social references, historical references, and geographical references. After analyzing the Pupil's Book and Activity Book of English for Iraq 2nd intermediate, the results reveal that sociocultural values are mainly based on the International culture. The source culture is dominating over the target culture.

Keywords: Evaluation, Culture, textbook, Socio-cultural theory

1.Introduction
1.1 The Problem of the Study and its Significance

it is important to understand the culture when we are going to learn a language". Studying the culture is important for language development, and it is important to maintain the cultural content in the textbooks. Also, it is important to make a balanced target and local cultures in schools' textbooks to increase the knowledge of students for the value of cultures.

The EFI textbooks series have not been so far examined with a lot of quality studies in the literature available in terms of its sociocultural load. To the researcher's knowledge, a few studies are dealing with the cultural content of the textbooks in an evaluating sense with little reference to socio-cultural values. Therefore, there generally remains a literature gap that also raises a need for good studies for examining the socio-cultural values of these textbooks because EFL learners may face problems in dealing with language effectively when they are placed in an authentic real-life situation if English language textbooks for the 2nd. intermediate classes in Iraq did not base on real-life situations. "

"A complete understanding of the many types of meaning that are encoded in the grammar and vocabulary of a language only comes with a full understanding of the culture, or cultures in which it operates".[1][2]

The researcher thinks that the results of the current study will enrich the cultural values, and fill in the gap.

1. 2 Research Questions
The study aims to answer the following questions:

1.How are the socio-cultural values (social, historical, and geographical) represented in the written texts and the visuals of "English for Iraq" textbooks currently used in 2nd intermediate schools in Iraq?

2.What are the types of culture manifested in the English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate class in Iraq?

1. 3 Aims
The current study aims at:

1.Analyzing socio-cultural values (social, historical, and geographical) found in the English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate class in Iraq.

2.Showing how are "the cultural types (source, target, and international) represented in the written texts and visuals of the "English for Iraq" textbook series used in 2nd intermediate schools in Iraq".

1.4 Limitations
The analysis is conducted according to the following limitations:

1.This study is limited to evaluate the 2nd Intermediate Textbook "English for Iraq" in the Light of Sociocultural Values.

2.The present study is carried out in the academic year (2020/2021).

3.This study is limited to Sociocultural Values.

2.Theoretical Background and Previous Studies
2.1 Evaluation

"Evaluation is used to define many processes in the field of ELT". Lynch defines evaluation as the systematic attempt to gather information to make judgments or decisions".[3][4]

From Cunningsworth's viewpoint, textbook evaluation ensures "that careful selection is made, and that the materials are chosen accurately reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program".[5][6]

2.3 Textbook

A textbook refers to the teaching materials used in learning. "The textbook is usually briefly written, tightly structured, and largely condensed". "Callahan mentions that a textbook is the most famous source of information used in our classroom". [7][8]

2.4 Types of Textbook Evaluation

Tomlinson distinguishes the different types of evaluation based on when they are taken and what they are aimed to evaluate in the textbook. The categories of evaluations are Pre-use evaluation, whilst-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. The Pre-use evaluation involves "making predictions about the potential materials' value to its users".The whilst-use evaluation measures the value of a textbook either by observing its use or by its use. post-use evaluation allows evaluators to measure the real effects of the textbook on the users showing its intrinsic value which makes it more valuable than the two previous evaluations. (9)(10)

2.5 Textbook Evaluation's Needs

"Choosing a textbook can have a great impact on the teaching and learning process as teachers would make references to the textbooks"."The quality of a textbook might be so important that it can determine the success or failure of an ELT (English Language Teaching) course". However, "reality shows that textbooks are often sold without careful analysis".[11][12]

"EFL textbook evaluation aims to ensure that ELT textbooks can effectively facilitate the achievement of our teaching goals, and at the same time, to be economically viable to teachers and students". Thus the wrong choice of textbooks is likely to negatively affect both teaching and learning. Financial resources will also be wasted. [13] [14]

2.6 Culture

Thompson defines culture as "the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, speech and meaningful objects of various kinds, through which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions, and beliefs"[15]. "Westerhuis defines culture as the customs, values, laws, technology, artifacts, and art of a particular time or people".[16]

2.7 Types of culture

There are three types:

1.The content culture: is based on the learner's own culture as "the content C1" "

2. The target culture: drawing on the culture of a

3. International target culture material: which uses a wide range of materials from a variety of cultures in English and non-English speaking countries all over the world. [17][18]

2.8 Culture in EFL Learning and Teaching

"Culture considers as a vehicle for teaching language in a textbook of teachers. The teaching of a foreign language is the teaching of foreign culture and teachers of a foreign language are teachers of a foreign culture".[19]

According to Tomalin who claims that "the international role of the English language and globalization are two of the main reasons to teach culture as fifth language skills, in addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing". "It involves understanding how language is used to accept differences, being flexible, and tolerating ways of doing things that might be different at all". "It is a change in attitudes expressed through language. This means that teaching language must include cultural knowledge". [20]

2.9 Socio-cultural theory

"The origins of socio-cultural theory go back to the writings of the Russian Psychologist L.S. Vygotsky and his colleagues". "SCT considers human mental functioning to be fundamentally a mediated process organized by cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts". [21]

According to this view, "the cultural artifacts that exist enable human beings to regulate and modify their behavioral and biological activities".[22] "Language is also believed to be the primary means of mediation".

"Developmental processes occur a result of the child's participation in cultural, linguistic, and historical settings such as getting involved in interactions within families, peer groups, educational institutions, workplaces, sports activities, etc". Although Vygotsky does not reject the neurobiological factors for a higher level of thinking ability, he stresses the importance of interactions within social contexts in developing the cognitive ability of the human being. [23]

Nagel argues that sociocultural theory "reflects the view that learning and development is not just a process of increasing mental sophistication but is also mediated through social and cultural interactions".[24]

Bates argues that through sociocultural theory, "knowledge and interactions are constructed through social interactions with friends, family, peers, and teachers".[25]

Leonard states that "socio-cultural theory focuses on the causal relationship between social interaction and individual cognitive development".[26]

2.10 Previous studies

This part will be a survey of relevant previous studies that are somewhat relevant to the present study. These previous studies will be reviewed in chronological order. Then, a comparison is made between these studies and the current study.

1. Mathi

This study aims to explore cultural aspects of English for Iraq's 6th primary. For this purpose, a checklist of nine-cultural aspects was developed to survey and analyze the content of the Pupil's Book and Activity Book of English for Iraq 6th primary. Cultural aspects include characters' names, titles (terms of addressing people), man's jobs, woman's jobs, pictures, food, celebrations, geography, and currency. After analyzing the Pupil's Book and Activity Book of English for Iraq 6th primary, the results reveal a lack of appropriate cultural content; Arabic culture dominates the foreign culture. Moreover, the foreign culture tends to be international. [27]

3. Methodology

The study is descriptive-evaluative content analysis. Kirana states that descriptive research is used to characterize an occurrence of an incident and to provide a clear and reliable explanation of the phenomena being studied. The present study is conducted by using qualitative design particularly the content analysis of textbooks. This research aims at gaining in-depth data about the sociocultural values of in-use English textbooks in Iraq. (28)

3.1 Research Procedures:

The following procedures are adopted to achieve the objectives of the current study: constructing the research tool by collecting all the necessary data from various sources. Then reviewing the (student and activity book) carefully as well as obtaining the content validity of the tool by sending it to a group of specialists in the field of English, EFL methods of teaching, assessment and evaluation. After that, the researcher used the tool, and the data was handled statistically. Finally, the analysis and discussion of the results have been accomplished.

3.2 Research Sample:

English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate level "English for Iraq" series represent a sample of the study. It is including the whole material of "English for Iraq "2nd intermediate student's book and its encounter activity book, namely the written texts and the visuals of these books which are intended to be analyzed. . Student's book consists of eight units. Each unit has 10 lessons. Units 4 - 8 are a revision for the materials presented in previous units and are shorter with four lessons each instead of ten.

3.3 Instrument of Data Collection:

Reviewing, previous studies, journals, and various books, the researcher's decision fell on socio-cultural values involving in 2nd intermediate textbook "English for Iraq ". The researcher has adopted Brooks' form of socio-cultural references as a tool of analysis. [21] For this study, three references are included, these are social, historical, and geographical. The researcher used independent special tables of (local, foreign and International culture) based on Brooks' list of references.

3.4 Statistical Analysis:

The researcher used the following statistical processes:
1.The percentage is a means of calculating the frequency of data relating to the selected instrument of analysis.
2. The reliability of the data of the analytical tool is calculated by the reliability coefficient.

4. Results and Discussion

For the Socio-cultural values, three references are used to collect data. It is seen that selected textbooks cover examples in terms of social references more than examples of historical references and geographical references 'Sociocultural references cover social, geographical, and historical references. Social references include covering ways of life, interrelationships among individuals, and other social References like sport, songs, jokes, sayings, and jobs. The values of tolerance and cooperation in the textbook leading learners' understanding of how to be tolerant to other people as well as other cultures and to be anti-violence in communicating and interacting with others. It can motivate learners to voice up their opinions about their culture and other cultures. Accordingly, learners can learn more tolerance, the endurance of ambiguity, empathy, and consequently more respect for otherness. These materials which ask or invite learners to express their thoughts curiously and open-mindedly about a cultural issue particularly a foreign cultural phenomenon are opportunities that help the learner get used to diversity and equality of cultures. [30]

Textbooks, for Wandel, should contain materials that allow and provoke opinions and discussions on the part of students to negotiate meaning so as "to be able to tolerate and endure ambiguity". [31][33][34][35]

Figure (1) Examples of "Social references" of sociocultural values

Table (1): Overall Results Presentation of sociocultural references Analysis

Sociocultural references	Frequencies	Percentage
1-social	**287**	**83.918%**
a-ways of life	85	24.853%
b-interrelationships among individuals	95	27.777%
c-other social references	107	31.286%
2-Historical	**16**	**4.678%**
3-Geographical	**39**	**11.403%**
Total	342	**99.999%**

Social references approve the highest percentage which is (83.918%), distributed on three sub references, ways of life is (24.853%), interrelationships among individuals are (27.777%), and other social references are (31.286%), then (Geographical references) is (11.403%), Finally, (Historical references) is (4.678%). This means that the total approved frequencies in the English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate class in Iraq are (342 frequencies) (99.999%). These references represent various types of culture (source culture, target culture, international culture). International culture approves the highest percentage which is (43.323% %). Source culture achieves (38.872%). Finally, the Target culture is (17.804%). This means that the total approved frequencies in the English textbooks for the 2nd intermediate stage in Iraq are (337 frequencies) (99.999%).

Table (2): Total Frequencies and percentages of types of culture

Types of culture	Frequency	Percentage
Source Culture	131	38.872%
Target Culture	60	17.804%
International culture	146	43.323%
Total	337	99.999%

For McKay, the best one is international target language materials, which supposedly cover a variety of knowledge from different cultures all over the world using the target language. That will most probably increase the learners' interest rather than imposing only one culture all the time and prevent learners from having the fear of assimilation

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into a specific culture and help them respect other people's cultures. Students' own culture should be discussed together with the target culture. In other words, local and target cultures should be integrated. [32]

5. Conclusion

"The textbook writers of the 2nd intermediate stage "English for Iraq" did not seriously take the socio-cultural values of the foreign language into consideration, in the sense that, subjects do not reflect any authentic socio-cultural references". The textbook writers depended on semi-authentic socio-cultural values. Socio-cultural value significantly affects and determines of knowledge system (way of thinking), determines acting and behaving individually or group. Therefore, realistic values of culture should be included.

For the socio-cultural values, three references have been used to collect data. It is seen that selected textbooks cover examples in terms of social references more than examples of historical references and geographical references.

The artificial sociocultural references are highlighted at the expense of authentic socio-cultural references of the target language. This represents a deficit in the syllabus design of the two books under study since the presentation of this factor is of vital importance to achieving effective learning of the target language.

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