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Sociological and Aesthetic Senses of Culture Represented in Global and Localized ELT Textbooks

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Abstract

The relationship between language and culture has become a rich source of inquiry in the context of English language teaching. Learning materials can depict cultural content in different cultural senses, namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic. The present study aimed to investigate the way cultural aspects are represented in the reading and dialog sections of global (*American English File*) and localized (*The ILLI English Series*) ELT textbooks which are widely used in Iran. The framework adopted to analyze the cultural contents of the materials was Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) to explore how culture in aesthetic and sociological senses is realized in the series. The findings demonstrated that more emphasis was put on the sociological sense and that this aspect of the culture dominated the aesthetic sense in the cultural contents of the two series. The cultural and culture-free contents represented in the two global and localized series were found to be entirely different in frequency and sense realization. Most of the contents in the localized series were culture-free, while the culture-free contents in the global series were reasonably less than the sociological and aesthetic senses. Additionally, the findings revealed that compared with the worldwide series, the localized textbook was less representative of cultural features in sociological and aesthetic senses. The results imply that ELT materials should be inclusive enough regarding the sociological and aesthetic senses of culture to help learners get engaged in the development of their cultural understanding.

Keywords: aesthetic sense, culture, global textbooks, localized textbooks, sociological sense

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The global community of the 21st century has made the communication between people with different cultural perceptions and backgrounds more inevitable than ever. To communicate successfully across languages, one needs to appreciate culturally different norms of interaction and people's thought and values (Saville-Trike, 2003). Communicating in an additional language necessitates developing an awareness of how culture interrelates with language (Liddicoat, Papademetrio, Scarino, & Kohler, 2003). What language learners need in the educational context is, therefore, to develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of language and culture, so that they can communicatively survive in the world of different cultures (Brown, 2010). In language education, the close tie between language and culture in the foreign language classroom has been the focus of many investigations (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2002, Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Brown (2007) emphasizes the interrelatedness of culture and language learning, stating that “one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition [...], is also the acquisition of a second culture” (pp. 189-190). According to Gao (2006), the link between language learning and cultural learning is so evident that it can be claimed that language learning is cultural learning and accordingly language teaching is cultural teaching. Wang (2008), also, stresses that foreign language teaching is nothing but foreign culture teaching. To Tomalin (2008), the global function of the English language and globalization are the two strong motives to teach culture as fifth language skill, along with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, it appears that teaching culture cannot be avoided when teaching a language.

Textbooks, which occupy a central place in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), are considered as carriers of culture and can exhibit a great variety of cultures around the world through various senses and manifestations (Bagozzi, Wong, & Yi, 1999; Hinkel, 1999;

Kramch, 1993; Modiano, 2001, 2005; Phillipson, 1992; Prodromou, 1992; Taki, 2008; Thomas, 2008). However, textbooks as carriers of culture should have the required features to broaden learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which is defined as the skill to understand and interact with people of different social identities (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Designing textbooks is based on various commercial, ideological, and pedagogical requirements and interests. Hence, trying to satisfy the cultural interests of a wide variety of textbook users would be a challenge to global textbook developers. This can lead the global ELT textbook designers to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach which, in turn, can diminish the cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic quality of the textbooks. Such textbooks get away from authenticity and therefore do not give learners the chance to encounter real and meaningful communication (Gray, 2002). Localized books, on the other hand, are culturally and pedagogically sensitive to the needs, wants, and objectives of learners of a particular setting (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) and can also be more inclined toward the appropriateness end. However, this can diminish the interculturality of these textbooks. Although the cultural evaluation of global and localized textbooks by elucidating the magnitude and intensity of different senses of culture can reveal the power of books in raising intercultural awareness of English learners, scant attention has been paid to evaluating whether textbooks contain adequate material to help learners foster their intercultural competence. Against this background, the present study aimed to investigate how culture in its sociological and aesthetic senses is realized in both global and localized ELT textbooks which are extensively used in Iran.

Literature Review

Textbooks and Senses of Culture

Textbooks fulfill valuable and substantial functions in language teaching and learning. Based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999), a textbook has numerous functions. It acts as a map, a resource, an authority, a teacher, a

trainer, a de-skinner, and an ideology. Therefore, one of the functions of a textbook is to provide learners with the cultural qualities of language. In other words, a textbook can constitute a precious source of cultural elements and promote learners' knowledge of the language. Studying culture rationalizes students' learning of the target language and makes it meaningful (Stainer, 1971). Moreover, culture acts as a tool to strengthen motivation in learners to get closer to a language and as a medium to bring real life into the classroom. Hence, through culture, learners can get familiar with traditions, the way of life, literature, music, values, religion, etc.

Adaskou et al. (1990) divide culture into four dimensions, including aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic senses. The four dimensions bring a real substance to the abstract nature of culture. In the aesthetic sense, culture concerns what people produce in the form of media, cinema, music, literature, and the like. In the sociological sense, culture is portrayed as the organization and nature of family, home life, interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs, and institution. In the semantic sense, it refers to a conceptual system in the language, conditioning all our perceptions and thought processes, emotional states, time and space relations, and colors. In the pragmatic sense, culture implies the social skills, background knowledge, and paralinguistic skills that result in the success of communication with respect to (a) the ability for using appropriate models of the various communicative functions, (b) the ability for regulating norms of politeness, (c) the awareness of conventions in interpersonal relations, obligations, questions of status, license, and (d) familiarity with the primary rhetorical conventions in different written genres. Compared with the other definitions of culture, the one proposed by Adaskou et al. (1990), defining culture in four senses, seems to be more comprehensive. Furthermore, their definition is exhaustive enough to exemplify the types of culture found in societal life.

The Cultural Dimensions of ELT Textbooks

Many teachers are in favor of cultural components in ELT textbooks, since it can help learners recognize internationalism, deepens an understanding of learners' own culture, inspires learners to visit foreign countries, and motivates learners to learn the language (Mckay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). Textbooks can serve different functions through which cultural knowledge in language teaching and learning is shared (Kilickaya, 2004; Kobia, 2009). Also, they can expound a worldview of a culture and its social construction and can act as an ideology (Aliakbari, 2004). Therefore, textbooks can change the way learners and teachers perceive culture.

Many studies have analyzed culture in ELT textbooks from different perspectives (e.g. Abdullah & Kumari, 2009; Adaskou, et al., 1990; Aliakbari, 2004; Alpay, 2009; Asgari, 2011; Baleghizadeh & Jamali-Motahed, 2010; Hamiloğlu & Mendi, 2010; Lee, 2009; McKay, 2003; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). Certain studies have specifically explored the cultural dimensions of global or localized ELT textbooks drawing on the framework proposed by Adaskou et al. (1990) (e.g. Abdullah & Chandran 2009; Ahmed & Shah, 2013; Hermawan & Noerkhasanah, 2012; Rajabi & Ketabi, 2012; Santosa, 2015; Susanto & Harjanto, 2014). Susanto and Harjanto (2014), for example, investigated a localized ELT textbook in Indonesia approved by the regulator of Indonesia's national educational standards and found that all four senses of culture (sociological, aesthetic, pragmatic, and semantic) were present in the textbook in a significantly unbalanced manner. The findings of the study demonstrated that pragmatic and sociological senses scored the highest and lowest frequencies, respectively. In another study, Ahmed and Shah (2013) evaluated a localized ELT series published in Pakistan and found that in the aesthetic sense of culture, target culture-related cinema themes had the most frequent occurrence among the others. A study conducted by Santosa (2015) in Indonesia to explore the cultural features of the localized textbook for junior high schools revealed that the

sociological sense was the common sense throughout the textbook and that the aesthetic was the second frequent sense.

The above studies clarify how culture in its different dimensions can be embodied in ELT textbooks. Nevertheless, what differentiates the present study from the rest is that the studies carried out to evaluate ELT textbooks using Adaskou et al.'s (1990) framework have not elaborated on the specific components of the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture; they have just portrayed the quantitative representation of the senses as units rather than investigating the cultural subcategories classified under each sense. An additional advantage of this study over the other similar studies including the one conducted by Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) is the size of the materials under analysis. While Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014), for instance, focused on a small materials size for analysis (6 volumes), the current study analyzed 21 volumes of textbooks. Given that ELT materials can represent different proportions of cultural senses with all their fundamental constituents, we can assume that both global and localized ELT textbooks are worth such a cultural evaluation. This could be significantly important for English teachers as they are the ones who should be cognizant of the cultural content of the textbooks to decide on how to choose appropriate textbooks or even how to culturally adapt them to teach.

Given the above gaps, the present study aimed to investigate the nature and the way the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture are represented in the reading and the dialog sections of a global and a localized ELT textbook series which are widely used in Iran. The research question developed to guide the study is: How are the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture represented in the global and localized ELT textbooks?

Method

Textbook Materials

Students' books of two ELT textbook series across proficiency

levels for adults used in many language centers in Iran were selected for analysis: *American English File* and *The ILI English Series*. The first series was the internationally well-known global *American English File* series, second edition (Latham-Koenig & Oxenden, 2013). *American English File* retains the popular methodology developed by Cristiana Latham-Koenig and Clive Oxenden: Language+motivation=opportunity. With grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation practice in every lesson, students are claimed to be provided with a solid foundation for successful speaking. This global series contains 66 units for all the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels offering a total of 252 readings and 102 dialogs. Each of the volumes comprises ten units.

The second series was *The ILI English Series* (2004), compiled by local experts and taught in the Iran Language Institute (ILI), one of the leading language centers in Iran with over 150,000 learners studying English and other foreign languages in its branches nationwide. In developing and publishing *The ILI Series*, its authors claim that they aim to introduce a textbook series which can compete against the internationally well-known textbooks available on the market. This localized textbook contains 113 units with 180 readings and 93 dialogs for all levels. Each of the total 15 volumes includes eight units.

Data Analysis Framework

The framework introduced by Adaskou et al. (1990) was adopted to investigate the cultural contents of the textbook materials. They proposed four distinct areas of meaning or senses of culture to categorize the cultural elements presented in textbooks: aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic senses. The aesthetic sense, which is equivalent to big 'C' culture, includes the media, cinema, music, and literature. Many of these realizations of culture are sources of information on culture in the second sense. In the second sense, they attribute a sociological meaning to culture. This is analogous to small 'c' culture which includes "the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal

relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions" (Adaskou et al., 1990, p. 3). The third sense of culture is called semantic, which refers to the system of conceptualization of language about culture. Adaskou et al. exemplified this in the statement that "you cannot use the name of meals without learning the main meal times" (p. 3). The last, which is called the pragmatic sense, is "the background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication" (Adaskou et al., 1990, p. 4).

The focus of the present study was on aesthetic and sociological senses. Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) depict two main reasons why aesthetic, and the sociological senses are of more cultural values: (a) these two are likely to be more culturally "laden" while the other two are more sociolinguistically or conceptually oriented, and (b) the conceptualization of culture is more inclined toward aesthetic and sociological senses as the principal components of culture. Culture-free contents were also investigated to give an overall comparative view of the approaches of the two series in representing the cultural themes. Culture-free themes are those that carry no clear sense of a culture of any kind. "Calculator", for example, could be a theme which mirrors no definite sense of culture. Furthermore, "Items" in this study stands for the readings and dialogs to be addressed as the unit of content analysis. □

This study was primarily of a qualitative nature in which the content analysis of a localized textbook series and a global textbook series was carried out. Content analysis is a "strict and systematic set of procedures for rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of the contents of written data" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 475). The main purpose of the content analysis conducted in this study was to locate specific cultural concepts within the readings and dialogs of the two textbook series and to quantify them through frequencies and percentages. An evaluation checklist was developed based on the definition of aesthetic and sociological senses presented by Akadkou et

al. (1990). Then, the contents of the two textbooks were evaluated for cultural relevance. This evaluation checklist was established to reduce the subjectivity of the rater (content analyst) in applying the checklist. In order to ensure consistency in applying the checklist, the rater went through the "consensus estimates" process. For this purpose, the rater was examined against two of his colleagues who held a Ph.D. degree in TEFL. First, a paper elaborating on the framework introduced by Akadkou et al. (1990) was given to them to study and let them be informed on the subject matter. Then, as a pilot study, they, including the rater in the study, were asked to explore the first 10 sample readings of the first volume of the global textbook under the study. Then, they were asked to run through the evaluation checklist presented to them to identify the sense, i.e., aesthetic or sociological, and components of each sense. In order to calculate the consensus estimate of the data, the "percentage of agreement figure" was used. The agreement was calculated to be 88%, which is believed to be an acceptable agreement level. Therefore, it can be claimed that the result of content analysis of the present study carried out by the rater was 88% in line with that of his colleagues regarding the interpretation of the criteria developed in the evaluation checklist and the application of the rating scale.

The collected data were coded and examined by aspects of aesthetic and sociological senses. The coded data were assigned to the evaluation model based on the frequency of occurrences in the texts as well as the categories specified in the evaluation model. The data organized in this way were transferred to Microsoft Excel 2016 for further analysis. This was carried out using frequency distributions and percentages. The data were double checked to prevent any entry errors. After completing the data coding, the frequencies were checked, and the results were drawn. Chi-square (goodness-of-fit) test was also run to find out whether there was a relationship between the textbook series and the cultural occurrences in the two senses under study: aesthetic and sociological.

Results

The purpose of this research was to investigate how the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture are represented in the global and localized ELT textbooks. Tables 1 and 2 present the analyses of cultural content of the localized series. They illustrate that the two senses of culture were present to different degrees. Based on the framework adopted for the study, the sociological sense was tracked concerning material conditions, organization and the nature of family, home life, interpersonal relations, work and leisure, and customs and institutions. The aesthetic sense was dealt with in such categories as media, cinema, music, and literature.

As Table 1 depicts, media and literature rank the top themes with four occurrences each or 36.3% of the total frequency of aesthetic sense occurrences. Cinema and music come next with 2 and one incidents or 18.1% and 9% of the total occurrences. The total number of contents representing senses in the localized series was deficient; that is, 11 out of the entire 273 instances. Among the representations of the aesthetic sense in the localized series, there were references to a story by Edgar Allan Poe, the story of Beethoven and Mozart, a discussion on the classical period of music, art, and literature, the entertainment section of a newspaper, an article about Walt Disney, and a passage on Star Wars.

Table 1.

Frequency and Percentage of Aesthetic Sense Representation in the Localized Series

	media	cinema	music	Literature	Total
frequency	4	2	1	4	11
Percentage	36.3	18.1	9	36.3	100

Table 2, which presents the distribution of categories of the sociological sense, shows that material conditions were the predominant category with 75 occurrences or about 90.3% of the total frequency of sociological sense occurrences in the localized series. What came under

physical requirements based on the classification in the framework presented by Adaskou et al. (1990) were weather, status of things, places, food, naming, figures, brands, etc.

Table 2.
Frequency and Percentage of Sociological Sense Representation in the Localized Series

	material conditions	organization & nature of family	home life	interperson al elations	work & leisure	customs & institutions	total
frequency	75	0	3	1	3	1	83
Percentage	90.3	0	3.6	1.2	3.6	1.2	100

Altogether, in the localized series, items in the sociological sense were far more than those comprising the aesthetic sense. Tables 3 and 4, on the other hand, present the cultural content of the global series. They show the presence of different degrees of the two senses of culture. As Table 3 demonstrates, cinema was the dominant element of the aesthetic sense in the global textbook. Twenty occurrences in the global series in contrast to two cinema-related items in the localized series could be of significance. This means that 31.2% of the readings and dialogs representing the aesthetic sense in the global series were cinema-related contents, while only 18.1% of the contents of the same sense in the localized series were related to cinema.

Table 3.
Frequency and Percentage of Aesthetic Sense Representation in the Global Series

	media	cinema	music	Literature	Total
frequency	17	20	17	10	64
Percentage	26.5	31.2	26.5	15.6	100

As for culture in its sociological sense in the global series, contents related to material conditions stood at the top with 115 occurrences or about 65.3% of the total frequency of the sense occurrences (Table 4). Work and leisure, interpersonal relations, home life, customs institutions, and organization and nature of family were the categories ranking next regarding the frequency of occurrences. Like the localized series, the number of contents represented in the sociological sense was far more than that of the aesthetic sense.

Table 4.

Frequency and Percentage of Sociological Sense Representation in the Global Series

	material conditions	organization & nature of family	home life	interpersonal relations□	work & leisure	customs & institutions	Total
frequency	115	6	9	12	26	8	176
percentage	65.3	3.4	5.1	6.8	14.7	4.5	100

Comparing the two series, Table 5 shows that the total frequency of the aesthetic sense in the global series (N=64) is in sharp contrast with the frequency of the same sense in the localized one (N=11). Media and music with 17 occurrences, which were each 26.5% of the total number in the aesthetic sense, came next. Moreover, Table 5 indicates that the number of music-related items in the global series is quite higher than the one in the localized textbook. Literature came last regarding the total frequency of the aesthetic sense (N=10).

Table 5.
Frequencies of Aesthetic Sense Items in the Localized and Global Textbooks

	media	cinema	music	Literature	Total
Localized Series	4	2	1	4	11
percentage	36.3	18.1	9	36.3	100
Global Series	17	20	17	10	64
percentage	26.5	31.2	26.5	15.5	100

Table 6 demonstrates the frequency of representation of items in the sociological sense in the two series. As the table reveals, the total number of contents in the sociological sense in the global series (N=176) is far higher than the one in the localized series (N=83). □

Table 6.
Frequencies of Sociological Sense Items in the Localized and Global Textbooks

	material conditions	Organization & nature of family	home life	interpersonal elations	Work & leisure	Customs & institutions	Total
Localized Series	75	0	3	1	3	1	83
percentage	90.3	0	3.6	1.2	3.6	1.2	100
Global Series	115	6	9	12	26	8	176
percentage	65.3	3.4	5.1	6.8	14.7	4.5	100

To determine whether there was a relationship between the type of textbooks and the realizations of the aesthetic sense, one-sample chi-square (goodness-of-fit) test was run. As Table 7 reports, the Pearson chi-square statistics is $X^2 (1, n=75) = 37.5, p < .001$. So, the relationship between textbook series and the aesthetic sense is significant.

Table 7.

Chi-square Test Result of Aesthetic Sense Representation in the Localized and Global Series

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-square	df	P value
localized	11	37.5	-26.5	37.453a	1	.000
global	64	37.5	26.5			
Total	75					

To ascertain the significance of the relationship between the number of sociological sense items and the types of textbooks, the same test was run. Table 8 shows that the chi-square statistics is $X^2(1, n=259) = 33.5$, $p < .001$. Hence, the relationship between the two series and sociological sense realization can be claimed to be significant,

Table 8.

Chi-square Test Result of Sociological Sense Representation in the Localized and Global Series

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-square	df	P value
local	83	129.5	-46.5	33.394	1	.000
global	176	129.5	46.5			
Total	259					

Table 9 displays the number of culture-free contents in the localized and global series. About 65.5% of the contents were free of cultural senses, while 67.5% of the readings and dialogs presented in the global series contained the two discussed senses of culture and only 32.5% of the contents were culture free. It follows that the majority of readings and dialogs in the localized series were culture-free, referring to no specific type and sense of culture.

Table 9.
Frequencies of Culture-free and Cultural Contents in the Localized and Global Textbooks

	localized textbook	global textbook
culture-free	179	115
percentage	65.5	32.4
cultural	94	239
percentage	34.4	67.5

To find out whether there was a relationship between culture-free items and textbook types, a chi-square test was administered. As Table 10 reports, the chi-square statistics is $X^2 (1, n=294) =14, p<.001$. Therefore, the relationship between the two series and culture-free items is statistically significant, with the local textbook embodying more culture-free items.

Table 10.
Chi-square Test Result of Culture-free Items Representation in the Localized and Global Series

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-square	df	P value
local	179	147.0	32.0	13.932	1	.000
global	115	147.0	-32.0			
Total	294					

Discussion

The findings from the content analysis of the two series demonstrated how culture in its sociological and aesthetic senses is realized in ELT textbook series. Both global and localized series were shown to put more emphasis on the sociological sense. Presence of more items related to sociologically-oriented cultural elements is in line with the notion that most culturally distinctive items fall in the sociological sense (Abdullah & Chandran, 2009). Also, this sense comprises a greater variety of culturally loaded items than the other senses. This is in

agreement with the belief that learners who become competent in the sociological sense of culture can efficiently participate in intercultural settings and can develop the ability to communicate about their daily way of life to succeed in cross-cultural communication (Wintergerst & Mcveigh, 2010). Besides, this sense covers everyday culture, including material condition, organization and nature of family, work and leisure, and institutions, which people may frequently experience in their interaction with the immediate environment. Tomalin (2008) maintains that teaching culture in ELT should cover cultural behavior including knowledge of daily routines. Sociologically realized contents could also provide a context which is relevant to the learners' lives and can motivate them to learn a language. Xiao (2010) asserts that in EFL classes more attention should be paid to this dimension of culture since it is the one which can acquaint language learners with beliefs, ideas, and values of another society. Adaskou et al. (1990) argue that when the language is introduced in a context relevant to the learners' lives, they are motivated to learn the language.

As to the significance of the sociological sense, McKay (2002) believes that daily life and living routines are the main issues ordinary people are concerned about and talk about in their daily lives. At the earlier stages of language learning, presentation of culture in its sociological sense can satisfy the needs of learners by making the lessons more fascinating, thereby encouraging them to continue language learning (Paige et al., 1999). Ng and Tang (1997) argue that focusing on the traditional method of introducing culture such as history, geography, and literature, instead of attending to cultural contents relevant to learners' everyday life, can bring about "deaf and dumb" learners with little ability to speak and understand English. More weight put on the sociological sense by ELT textbook developers can also be explained as an attempt to provide opportunities for learners to make comparisons between their own and foreign cultures (Adaskou et al., 1990).

Low occurrences of the sociological items related to organization and nature of family, home life, and work and leisure in the localized series can be revealing. These items could be the most fertile ground for growing the cultural knowledge of learners as they are directly relevant to their lives and everyday culture and can serve as suitable means for comparing and contrasting cultures. However, the question is why the localized series was poor in representing the sociological sense of culture. One possible reason is that materials developers were not sufficiently conscious of the significant role that culture in the sociological sense can play in learning English. This reasoning can be reinforced when noting the number of culture-free contents represented in the localized series. Besides, representing culture-free contents is an observable approach taken by the localized materials developers. The reason could be that the authors either did not believe in culture as an indispensable part of the language or perceived culture-free contents to be more natural for learners to handle. The use of culture-free contents contradicts the belief that teaching materials cannot be neutral. Tudor (2001), for instance, argues that teaching materials cannot be impartial as they must reflect "a set of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up...and explain a value system, implicitly or explicitly" (p. 73). Nevertheless, representation of a large number of culture-free items in the localized textbook in this study may reflect an approach adopted by the authors to neutralize the cultural influences of English or other foreign cultures in EFL settings. Jenkins (2000) believes that utilization of a global language for communication purposes would empower non-native speakers to preserve their cultural characteristics as much as possible. Hence, the findings from the study demonstrated two types of strategies at work in the localized series: one is representing culture-free contents, and the other is attending more to the sociological rather than the aesthetic sense of culture. This causes an unbalanced amount of occurrences of the two senses of culture, diminishes the cultural richness

of ELT textbooks, and deprives learners of sufficient cultural exposure to benefit from the blessings of culture in all senses.

Compared with the localized series, what is transparent throughout the global series is that culture in its sociological and aesthetic realizations was embodied as a significantly vibrant entity. Cultural occurrences were found to be distributed in the subcategories of the two senses in a rather sensible manner. The number of culture-free items was less than a half of the cultural items and less than one-third of the total items. Therefore, learners can be exposed to a wide variety of cultural content and can develop a decent sense of the culture of the two senses through their frequent occurrences.

Conclusion

Culture in its sociological and aesthetic senses is so mingled with language that it is practically impossible to detach it and claim that the language is still authentic. English as a global language is intertwined with cultures of different types and dimensions, so it is hard to argue a specific sense of culture as more important than others in developing the intercultural competence for effective international communication. However, what was found in the present study was that compared with the global series, the localized textbook was less representative of cultural features in sociological and aesthetic senses to help learners enrich their intercultural understanding. Therefore, the findings suggest that ELT materials developers should develop teaching materials which are inclusive enough regarding the sociological and aesthetic senses of culture since materials provide the contexts in which learners can get engaged in the language to develop their cultural understanding using the comparison and contrast of the cultural themes. Presenting culture-free contents in the localized series was found to be the comprehensive approach. Ochs (1998, p. 4) argues that "given that meanings and functions are to a large extent socio-culturally organized, linguistic knowledge is embedded in social-cultural knowledge." Thus, from a

socio-cultural perspective, a learner learns a language via interaction in social, cultural contexts. Through learning a language, learners acquire a cultural and ideological knowledge of the world which affects their social being. Therefore, using culture-free materials impedes L2 learners' processes of developing proper social reality and thus deprives them of receiving an adequate amount of cultural input necessary to act as successful communicators. Such materials under-represent authenticity and hence do not give learners the chance to establish real-life communication (Gray, 2002). Findings from this study also demonstrate that in the global ELT series, unlike in the localized one, cultural content is distributed in its various sociological and aesthetic realizations in a rather balanced way.

Crystal (2004) argues that nobody owns English anymore. Besides, Osgersby (2004, p. 172) cites Liechty's (1995) observation that "many theorists have used the concept of 'diaspora' to analyze the cultural impact of population dispersion and travel across borders." The diaspora model observes that local communities engage with commercial goods such as music, sports, and language to embed them in a local culture. Nevertheless, the localized textbook series under study did not apply this seemingly practical model, since it almost did not include the cultural content of the music type, including the local music, as an element of the aesthetic sense. Penacook (1998) draws examples of pedagogic attempts in Singapore and Malaysia to publish poems and native literature in English. He believes that this is an invaluable act since it reinforces an important aspect of Malaysian cultural identity through English. As Addison (2011) argues, English can be used both as a means of protest and exploitation. But, what can be perceived from the localized series is the unawareness of the crucial roles cultural products in different senses can take in the creation of the social and cultural identity of the local learners.

ELT textbooks can also act to legitimize cultural products, behaviors, and activities which are presented as the realizations of

sociological and aesthetic senses. Cultural events and materials can be embedded in textbooks to make the learners admit them as inevitable norms. The textbook *Cutting Edge* (Cunningham, Moor, & Carr, 2004), for instance, present gap-fill exercises which require learners to add verb forms to an incomplete passage of text featuring Nike shoes. However, the localized textbook under study did not take a single step toward even consciously representing, let alone normalizing, specific products and activities as manifestations of the local culture. Whether such an act is ethically or politically appropriate, a textbook aimed to be localized for the local consumers should utilize such a strategy not explicitly to legitimize specific local concepts and products but to let the local learners feel at home with the textbook and have the impression that it has been specially developed for them in order to address their educational needs.

Although individual English language teachers are not customarily assigned active roles in the process of textbooks development and are provided with a ready-to-teach textbook, what teachers can do is to tune the contents to the learners' cultural needs when teaching and to raise the sensitivity of learners toward cultural elements, provided that they believe that "language teaching cannot be separated from culture teaching" (Buttjes, 1990, pp. 55-56). Byram (1997) stresses the necessity for an intercultural competence pedagogy that covers a critical and comparative cultural awareness. He maintains that "this enables them to anticipate cross-cultural communication problems because they are conscious of culture-specific meanings of the cultural identities of their interlocutors" (p. 60). Teacher education programs seem to be a need to raise such a cultural awareness of the teachers. Critical pedagogy can be an approach introduced to the student-teachers at teacher education courses so that they can become vital of and sensitive to the culture offered in ELT materials. Besides, textbooks should help the teachers and learners improve their cultural awareness and consequently critical

thinking and creativity which are noticeably missing in the localized series under study.

There were some limitations in the study which should be considered in future research. This study focused on the two senses, namely sociological and aesthetic out of four senses of culture introduced by Adaskou et al. (1990). Although the sociological and aesthetic senses of culture were assumed to be more culturally laden, exploring semantic and pragmatic senses has its advantages. Besides, the readings and dialogs of the two series were chosen as the units of investigation due to the assumption that they contain richer cultural load in comparison with other sections of the ELT textbooks. Future research might include other sections too to provide a more comprehensive account of how culture is manifested throughout textbooks.

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