

## **A Cross-National Investigation of Cultural Representations in Iranian and Turkish ELT Coursebooks**

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### **Abstract**

Acquiring second/foreign language competence inherits target culture knowledge and awareness. In this regard, English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks play a significant role in culture acquisition especially in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context in which learners have little or no opportunity to practice English outside the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate and compare the cultural content of local EFL textbooks used in two Muslim countries; Iran and Turkey. Kachru's concentric model was used to explore cultural contents of Iranian and Turkish 9th grade EFL coursebooks and the data was analyzed through content analysis. Results showed that the Iranian coursebook was vastly filled with native culture along with a few subjects from expanding circle countries such as Russia and China. On the other hand, the main cultural focus of the Turkish EFL coursebook was inner-circle countries while little emphasis was made on native culture. The results were discussed in terms of intercultural competence and material design in the EFL context.

**Keywords:** *Culture, coursebook, EFL, ELT, Kachru's concentric model*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The English language has long been considered an international language due to its widespread usage among non-native speakers of various languages from different countries. The status of English differs among countries all over the world; while it has a first language (L1) status in some countries; it is adopted either as an official language or as a foreign language (EFL) in several countries. Such diversity in the status of the English language led to a categorization decade ago and Kachru (1985) classified the status of the English language into three main circles the inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle. Inner circle countries are countries where English has an L1 status which comprises countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. (Crystal, 2003). On the other hand, outer circle countries adopted English as the official language and used it commonly in their borders having roots in the colonization period. There are also diversities of English such as standard, pidgin, and creole which were developed as the local language. These outer-circle countries include countries such as Singapore, India, or the Philippines. (Crystal, 1997; Kachru,

1985). Expanding circle countries refer to the third category encompassing countries in which English is regarded as a foreign language and intensively taught as a part of the curriculum. Learners in this category learn English only to enable international communication effectively. Examples of expanding circle countries can be countries such as Iran, Russia, Turkey, and China.

According to Kachru's concentric circle, Iran and Turkey, which are also geographically neighbors, are categorized as expanding circle countries where English is considered as a foreign language. Due to the nature of the expanding circle, learners' communication opportunities are limited to the classroom context. In this category, the English language is only a topic of formal or informal education and no or little feedback is taken out of the classroom. This limited learning opportunities make English language classrooms more important and thus, increasing the significance of well-designed language materials including textbooks. Textbooks are widely and intensively used in language pedagogy by these countries and they seem like the only chance for EFL learners to acquire the target language and culture. However, it is still not clear how these two expanding circle countries approached and designed these coursebooks regarding intercultural awareness. This study aimed to evaluate high school (9th grade) local English coursebooks in terms of Kachru's concentric model by scrutinizing cultural themes from 3 circles.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For EFL learners, gaining only systematic knowledge of the target language can never be enough to achieve competence; target culture motives are also vital elements of the learning process (Alptekin, 1993). Inclusion of target culture themes requires intensive scrutiny since L1 culture may sometimes do not correlate with the target culture. Sensitive content (see Gray, 2002) is commonly avoided by international publishers who regularly sell EFL textbooks to the middle east and gulf region in which the majority of the population is Muslim. Cultural sensitivities and worries led Muslim governments to design and publish their local textbooks in which they felt more flexible regarding cultural themes. These local textbooks are open to debate since designers were mostly local and native people rather than being international which causes several questions regarding culture acquisition. The rate and intensity of global and local cultures are not clear which may lead to some problems regarding intercultural competence. In these countries, as the key source of input for L2 learners appears to be textbooks, it is significant to embody unbiased cultural content in the textbooks.

Several studies have explored the cultural contents of English language textbooks used in Iranian and Turkish contexts for several years. In the Iranian context, Majdzadeh (2002) studied ELT textbooks in Iran to discover the extent to which ELT textbooks develop learners' intercultural competence. He explored Islamic culture and traditions in ELT textbooks used at the eighth and ninth-grade levels. He stated that textbooks' local cultural contents were not enough, and he suggested that the integration of western culture with the local culture could promote the learners' intercultural competence. Similarly, Aliakbari (2004) studied the previous ELT textbooks used in Iranian high schools, stating that these textbooks were not useful and could not promote learners' intercultural competence. His findings also displayed that Iranian learners could not focus on cultural content since no cultural motives from other countries were given.

In the last decade, Naji Meidani, and Pishghadam (2012) studied four popular series of English textbooks in Iran. They used Kachru's (1985) classification model to discover the extent to which these books represented cultural content of inner circle, expanding circle, or outer circle

countries, how these textbooks varied in representing foreign accents and other varieties of English and how did the learners' own culture presented in these textbooks and the extent in which these textbooks varied in representing famous people. The result showed that although there were improved representations of cultural content about outer and expanding circle countries, there were biases in what content should be selected from these cultures. Furthermore, only two out of four textbooks contained the demonstration of foreign accents and varieties of English. Although in some of the textbooks, the learners were asked to contrast the existing culture with their own culture, there was no reference to the learners' own culture in some of the textbooks. Finally, in the case of famous figures' presentation, the American way of living's values was generally represented by Hollywood superstars.

Alimorad (2015) investigated the intercultural content that existed in the Right Path to English 1, and 2 and Prospect 1 and 2. The study results showed that the right path contained inauthentic and cooperative dialogues while Prospect 1, 2 consisted of consensual exchanges that lacked meaning negotiation. The study did not assess the textbook according to its potential to promote Iranian EFL learners' intercultural competence. Moreover, Saeedi and Shahrokhi (2019) compared the cultural contents of Vision (I & II) and Pre-University English (I & II) textbooks recently. They used Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework and the framework proposed by Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990) in their study. They found significant differences between these textbooks. The result showed that the Vision series consisted of more L1 and Neutral-cultural contents while the Pre-University series comprised of L2 and L1 cultural contents. And more recently, Azimzadeh and Özkan (2021) analyzed Iranian high school EFL textbooks. They used Kachru's model to explore the cultural contents of English language textbook that is being used in high schools in Iran. The results of the study exhibited that the native culture dominated the cultural framework of the coursebook.

In the Turkish context, Çakır (2010) studied three coursebooks from the 6th, 7th and 8th grades that are used in elementary education in Turkey. He tried to find out culture-specific expressions within these course books. The results of the study showed that coursebooks do not include enough culture-specific expressions to foster students' intercultural competence. In another study, Iriskulova (2012) examined Spot On, which was used for 8th grade, and results showed that the textbook contains a small amount of native cultural contents and cultural elements mostly referred to the target culture. Demirbaş (2013) conducted a study to investigate cultural elements in 'My English 5, Unique 6, Spring 7, and Four Seasons English 8' for English language instruction in Turkish primary schools. The findings demonstrate that all the textbooks mostly consist of cultural elements related to Turkish, Japanese, French, and German culture. Arslan (2016) conducted another study to investigate cultural contents in EFL textbooks that are utilized in 3rd and 4th-grade students in state schools in Turkey. The finding revealed that although the cultural contents of the textbooks contain cultural contents of the native, target, and international, cultural contents are not distributed equally. It means that native cultural contents are less than target and intercultural contents in both 3rd and 4th-grade textbooks.

Rather than focusing on a single context, the current study aimed to compare an Iranian local textbook to its counterpart in another Muslim country, Turkey, to see any similarities or differences regarding cultural themes and approaches to intercultural understanding. The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the rate of cultural themes regarding Kachru's 3 circles in Iranian and Turkish local textbooks?

2. What are the similarities and differences between the two textbooks in terms of target culture acquisition?

## **METHODS**

### **Research design**

The method used to investigate cultural representations in the textbooks is content analysis. This sort of analysis involves the analysis of the cultural contents of language course books. Weber (1990, p. 117) defines it as "content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the text". Accordingly, Krippendorff (2004) describes it as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". He then describes the text stating that it refers to any written interaction resources proposed to be read, understood, and agreed upon by people other than the specialists. In effect, it merely defines the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

### **Materials**

Iranian and Turkish locally developed English language textbooks were selected and analyzed for this study. Prospect series have been approved and published by the Ministry of Iranian National Education and have been used in Iranian junior high schools since September 2013. Among these series 'Prospect 3' was used in this study. It is used in the ninth grade of Iranian high schools and consists of 6 units and 136 pages. Each lesson includes five parts: vocabulary, language melody, grammar, see also, and key language.

The other textbook, "Teenwise 9" was approved and published by the Ministry of Turkish National Education and has been used in Turkish junior high schools since 2017. It contains ten units and 142 pages. Each unit includes sections such as function, grammar, vocabulary, listening and reading, speaking and writing, and pronunciation.

### **The Model of Analyzing Course Books**

The model that was used to analyze the textbooks was Kachru's model. Kachru (1985) categorized the use of English into three circles according to the natures of widespread, the patterns of learning, and the role which English plays as:

a) Inner Circle Countries: It includes countries where the English language is considered the first language. Countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States are included in inner circle countries. In these countries, approximately 320-380 million people use English as their first language. It contains about 20-28% of the total English users (Crystal, 2003, p.61).

(b) Outer Circle countries: English language nations colonized outer-circle countries and developed the English language in these countries. In countries such as Singapore, India,

or the Philippines English language was used as an official language in the 19th century due to British colonization. In these outer-circle countries, English varieties appeared and developed as the local language (Kachru, 1985). 300-500 million people use English in this circle, containing about 26% of the total English users (Crystal, 2003, p.61).

(c) Expanding Circle countries: In these countries, the English language is used as a language for international interactions. In countries such as China, Japan, or Taiwan, it is studied as a foreign language. Learners learn English as a result of understanding the importance of English as an international language.

So, the codes are the names of the countries represented in the unit. Cultural themes were described in percentages and frequencies regarding three circles for each textbook. The textbook was divided into units by theme, and the materials were then coded and divided into categories by following Cohen, Manion and Morrison's model (2007).

## RESULTS

The textbooks were evaluated with Kachru's concentric model. Cultural themes related to each circle were given in percentages and frequencies. For each circle, sample texts were given for each textbook. Findings related to cultural themes in the Turkish textbook were given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Cultural Themes in Turkish Textbook "Teenwise 9"\*

<i>Unit Number</i>	<i>Unit Name</i>	<i>Inner Circle (%/f)</i>	<i>Outer Circle (%/f)</i>	<i>Expanding Circle (%/f)</i>
1	Studying abroad	26%/9	2%/1	72%/35
2	My Environment	30%/3	-	70%/7
3	Movies	73%/27	37%/10	-
4	Human in Nature	48%/10	19%/4	33%/7
5	Inspirational people	71%/22	3%/1	26%/8
6	Bridging Culture	27%/6	5%/1	68%/15
7	World Heritage	6%/1	-	94%/15
8	Emergency and Health Problems	-	-	-
9	Invitations and celebrations	75%/15	20%/4	5%/1
10	Television and Social Media	94%/15	-	6%/1
Average %		45%	8,6%	37,4%

\*Please see Appendix 1 for a full list of countries mentioned

The analysis of the Turkish book resulted in a total of 95 mentions for inner-circle countries, 98 mentions for expanding circle countries, and only 8 mentions for outer-circle countries. In the first unit of the Turkish book, expanding circle mentions were dominant (72%, n= 35). A few inner-circle countries were mentioned but outer-circle countries were observed to be minimal.

Lesson one consists of historical places related to expanding circle and inner circle countries such as the Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, and Cappadocia. Similarly, reading passages and dialogues are related to people and characters in expanding and inner-circle countries. For example, in the reading and writing part, an Egyptian engineer talks about himself.

*My name is Ammon. I'm Egyptian. I'm an engineer. My roommate Adrian is from Sweden. He is a fashion designer....(page. 17)*

Similarly, "Wise up" part of the textbook is about a Turkish musician.

*This is the story of a talented Turkish girl. Melda Umur Saguner is a Turkish musician. She is a successful double bass player. Her music story begins from her childhood.....(p. 19)*

The second unit was very similar to the first unit. Cultural contents of expanding circle countries were in majority (70%, n=7) while some mentions related to inner-circle countries were observed (30%, n=3). No cultural contents related to outer-circle countries were mentioned. It contains pictures of cities from expanding circle and inner circle countries such as Vienna, Tokyo, and Hong Kong, and just like the previous unit, the reading passage, and writing part were related to cultural contents of inner and expanding circle countries. For example, there is a text that a boy from Japan describes his room as:

*Hi, I'm Hiro. I'm from Japan. Welcome to my world. This is my bedroom. There is a futon bed in my bedroom. It's traditional Japanese bed.....(p.31)*

Likewise, a Sweden boy describes his room as:

*Hi, I'm Benny. I'm from Sweden. My bedroom is my favorite place in the house. There is a chest of drawers in front of the window....(p.31)*

In the third unit, cultural contents of the inner circle (73%, n=27) and outer circle (37%/10) countries were included in the textbook. No mentions were made for expanding circle countries. It contains movies, actors, actresses, and singers from the inner circle and outer-circle countries. For example, in WISE UP part two biggest industries Hollywood and Bollywood were contrasted.

*Hollywood: The first movie in Hollywood was In Old California. Hollywood is in Los Angeles, California.*

*Bollywood: The first movie in Bollywood was Raja Harischandra in 1913. Bollywood does not exist in a physical place. It is in Mumbai (formerly called Bombay)(p. 43).*

Furthermore, the reading and writing part is about a film called Eddie the Eagle. Some part of the text is as:

.....*The movie is full of fascinating snow scenes and exciting ski jumps. It is the true story of Eddie Edwards. It is a comedy-drama. The stars are Taron Egerton (Eddie) and Hugh Jackman (the coach) ....(p.46).*

As observed in Table 1, in the fourth unit of the textbook, cultural contents of inner-circle countries (48%,10) outnumber cultural contents of the outer circle (19%,4) and expanding circle (33%, 7) countries. For example, in the listening and speaking part, tribal people of inner and outer circle countries were introduced such as The Huli, The Cherokee, and The Maori. Similarly reading and listening part was about a Turkish journalist and an explorer:

*Hasan Söylemez is a Turkish journalist and an explorer. He is also a dream follower. He tries to make his dreams real, so he travels across the continent of Africa by Sahara, his bike (p.58).*

The fifth unit included 71% of the mentions about cultural contents of inner-circle countries. 26% of the mentions were about cultural contents of expanding circle countries. Mentions related to outer-circle countries were at a minimal level (3%, n=1). There are pictures of famous people from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries such as Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep, Michael Jordan, and Canan Dağdeviren. In the reading and writing part, a text describes Norah Jones's life.

*Norah Jones is one of the brightest jazz singers and musicians of our time. She is also a great actress. His father, Ravi Shankar, is a famous Indian sitar player. (p.71)*

Likewise, the reading and writing part is about messages that fans of Brand Fax sent to them. Some of the messages are as follows:

*ERVEXW23 Brand, can you please check out my latest post? I'd like you to send my sister a get-well wish! It really means a lot to her. She's your greatest fan. (p.65)*  
*H45gfb This is exactly what we want to see, celebrities helping people from all walks of life. We're extremely proud of you. (p. 65)*

In the sixth unit, cultural contents of expanding circle countries were in majority (68%, n=15) followed by cultural contents of inner-circle countries (27%, n=6). Only 5% of the mentions were about cultural contents of outer-circle countries. It contains traditional foods of inner, outer, and expanding circle countries such as Masala dosa, sushi, Yorkshire pudding, and Haggis. In the reading and writing part, a girl called Camilla talks about her country's eating habits.

*Hi. My name is Camilla. I'm from Brazil. We usually have ham and cheese sandwiches at breakfast. We love eating tropical fruit, too. They are always fresh and juicy, aren't they... (p.76)*

Similarly, the wise up section is about a birthday party in different countries from inner and expanding circle countries.

*England: children like drinking squash at birthday parties. It's a type of fruit juice. Some families enjoy putting objects into a birthday cake. If the birthday person finds a gold coin, it symbolizes wealth in the coming year.... (p.79)*

Also, in the global understanding part, a Chinese boy talks about their eating habits.

*.....for breakfast, lunch, and dinner we usually have almost the same kind of food. Rice, dumplings, and noodles are always on our menu. We use very little oil to cook the food so Chinese food is rarely greasy.....(p.77)*

The seventh unit included a dominance of expanding circle countries' cultural contents (94%, n=15). Only 6% of the mentions were about cultural contents of inner-circle countries and no mentions were made on cultural contents of outer-circle countries. Historical places of expanding circle countries such as The Great Pyramid in Egypt, the temple of Artemis in Turkey, and The Statue of Zeus in Greece were included in the seventh lesson (p.86). In the reading and writing part, a tourist talks about his journey to China and visiting Great Wall.

*.....I went to Beijing four years ago, but couldn't visit the Great Wall. I always wanted to see it but our tour guide didn't take us there because it was winter.....(p.94)*

The eighth unit of the textbook was about emergency and health problems and no cultural contents were observed in this unit.

Most mentions to outer-circle countries were made in the ninth unit (20%, n=4). But still, inner circle dominance was viable (75%, n=15). Only 5% of the mentions were related to expanding circle countries. The ninth unit of the textbook comprises different parties in inner, outer, and expanding circle countries such as birthday parties, surprise parties, barbecue parties, graduation parties, and farewell parties. The reading and writing part contains examples of invitations for a different part. An example of an invitation for a surprise party is the following.

*Dear Lana  
I'm planning a surprise party for my best friend Erica's 18th birthday. It is going to be at my place this Sunday- I invited her to study for an exam....(p.112)*

The reading and writing part also consists of a text about the Basant Panchami festival in India.

*Basant Panchami means the purity of spring. The festival celebrations take place in North India every year. Most Indians look forward to this colorful party. Preparations usually start months before the celebration.... (p.118)*

In the final unit, the dominance of inner-circle countries' cultural contents persisted (94%, n=15). Mentions related to cultural contents of expanding circle countries were only 6%. No mentions were given for cultural contents of outer-circle countries. In the last unit of the textbook, there exist serials and films from inner-circle countries such as Doctor Who, Star Wars, and Toy Story 3. In the listening and speaking part, two friends, Tina and Brian, are talking about TV programs.

*Tina: There is my favorite TV series, Doctor Who, on TV tonight. Would you like to watch it?  
Brian: well, not really. I don't like it. I think it is too boring.  
Tina: Too boring?? I totally disagree with you. Anyway, I will watch it on the Net later.  
How about watching Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*

The findings related to cultural themes in the Iranian textbook were given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Cultural Themes in Iranian Textbook “Prospective”\*

<i>Unit Number</i>	<i>Unit Name</i>	<i>Inner Circle</i>	<i>Outer Circle</i>	<i>Expanding Circle</i>
1	Personality	-	-	100%
2	Travel	-	-	100%
3	Festivals and Ceremonies	-	-	100%
4	Services	-	-	100%
5	Media	-	-	100%
6	Health and Injuries	-	-	100%
Average %		0	0	100%

\*Please see Appendix 1 for a full list of countries mentioned

Analysis related to the Iranian textbook yielded all mentions related to cultural contents of expanding circle countries while no mentions were made for cultural contents of inner and outer-circle countries. However, cultural contents related to expanding circle were mostly about Iran and just two contents were related to China and Turkey. The textbook said nothing about the cultural contents of inner and outer circles. For example, in lesson one, there exist pictures of students and a teacher with hijab in schools or there is a map with only the Persian Gulf mentioned in it. Similarly, in the second lesson, pictures of a woman were included with a hijab working in a hotel as a receptionist. Likewise, lesson three of the textbook talks about festivals and ceremonies related to Iran and Turkey. For example, in conversation part two friends are talking about Norooz:

*Elham: I just love the New Year holidays!*

*Nasrin: Oh, yes, me too. It's really great.*

*Elham: We normally visit our relatives in Norooz. It's fun.!... (p.50)*

Also, there is a text about Fitr Eid as follows:

*Ahmed is from Turkey and he lives in Istanbul. Fitr Eid is an important religious holiday in his country. He likes this day a lot. It's on the first day of Shawwal. On Fitr Eid, Muslims don't fast. (p.57)*

Similarly, there are pictures of the Iranian national football team singing the national anthem, a family reading Hafiz's poem, people wearing Iranian special clothes, or people going out on Nature day. In the language melody part, two friends are talking about Nature day.

*Sam: Shayan, do you like spring?*

*Shayan: Yes, I like spring a lot.*

*Sam: Do you like rainy weather?*

*Shayan: Oh yes! But not on Nature Day.*

*Sam: Why not?*

*Shayan: Because we always go out on the 13th of Farvardin. (p.54)*

There are not so many cultural contents in the fourth lesson of the textbook. There exists just a woman with hijab in the bus station or bakery.

Just like other units, the cultural contents of lesson five are related to Iran for instance in the conversation part two friends are talking about Fajr International Film Festival.

*Mina: Did you enjoy your weekend?*

*Mahsa: Yes, it was wonderful! I attended Fajr International Film Festival.*

*Mina: Really? I am also interested in its events and movies. (p.82)*

Finally, in the last lesson of the textbook, in the conversation part, two friends are talking about Helal-e-Ahmar.

*Reza: It sometimes happens. I twisted my ankle last winter. I stayed home for two weeks!*

*Ehsan: That's too bad! I didn't know that.*

*Reza: Yeah..., but after that, I participated in Helal-e-Ahmar first aid classes. I learned how to take care of myself....(p.96)*

## DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to investigate and compare cultural elements of two ELT textbooks used for 9th-grade students in Iran and Turkey. The analysis of the Turkish English language textbook, Teen Wise, based on Kachru's model revealed that most of the cultural contents of this textbook are about the inner circle and expanding circle countries presenting a more homogenous distribution although outer-circle countries and L1 culture (Turkey) were not mentioned much. On the contrary, almost all of the cultural content in Iranian textbooks consisted of L1 culture (Iran). No cultural content related to inner-circle countries or outer-circle countries was mentioned in the Iranian textbook. Only a few expanding circle countries were included in the Iranian textbook such as Russia, Turkey, and China.

Since our results related to the Iranian textbook exhibited nearly no cultural richness, we concluded that Iranian ELT textbook designers ignored the notions of the studies mentioned above. Although the Iranian educational system went through a recent change and accepted English as an international language, our findings revealed that lack of cultural diversity and presenting mono-culture persisted in the Iranian textbook. The outcomes of this study confirmed the findings of Majdzadeh's (2002) and Aliakbari's study (2004) who found that the cultural contents of EFL textbooks in Iran are mostly related to native culture, Iran. Apart from these two older studies, the results of this study also confirmed the results of a more recent study, Alimorad's (2015), which explored that cultural contents of Iranian textbook could not promote students' intercultural competence as too much native culture were imposed rather than inner or outer-circle countries. Similarly, Gholami and Ghasemi (2018) evaluated three Iranian EFL textbooks (Prospect 1, 2, and 3) by using the content analysis framework used by Hillard (2014) to explore cultural elements. Our findings were parallel with the results of this study. They found out that the range of cultural topics represented in the series was fairly shallow and superficial. They revealed that the textbook series evaluated were very limited in terms of intercultural elements and mostly local issues were remarked rather than target culture.

And the most recent study related to Iranian EFL textbook evaluation, the study by Derakhshan (2021), carried out a qualitative analysis by adopting the Peircean semiotic theory (the text-image-task semiotic relationship) to explore cultural awareness in the Iranian EFL textbook, Vision 1, from the perspectives of Iranian EFL students, teachers, and teacher educators. The results were in line with the current findings; cultural awareness and associations were almost untouched and the textual and images driving intercultural meanings were not in accordance with the tasks leaving no place for intercultural awareness. Hence, depending on these studies from 2002 to 2021, we speculated that not much change took place in Iranian ELT policy at least for a few decades.

Unlike the Iranian textbook which contradicted with intercultural notion due to its resistance towards inner and outer circle countries and cultures, our findings showed that the Turkish EFL textbook adopted the views of some researchers such as Stewart (1982), Valdes (1986), and Garcia (2005) who believed that that target culture should be intensively taught in English language classes. Hence, the findings of this study were more positive regarding intercultural competence. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Iriskulova's (2012) and Arslan's (2016) study who explored that the Turkish EFL coursebook contains a small amount of native cultural contents and cultural elements mostly referred to the target culture. Arslan (2016) aimed to investigate the cultural content of Turkish EFL textbooks at 3rd and 4th-grade primary schools adopting descriptive content analysis techniques. She obtained quantitative data through a checklist and Item Frequency Analysis. Her results showed that 3rd-grade textbook was found to have more cultural items than 4th-grade textbook does in total. As was found in the current study, Arslan (2016) also found that there was an unbalance among cultural items indicating that native culture items (Turkish) were mostly ignored by presenting a dominance of target culture motives. The most recent study was the one by Ulum (2021) who evaluated the Turkish EFL textbook named "Net 5" which has been freely distributed. Ulum used Kachru's model and found out that outer-circle countries were mostly ignored while inner and expanding circle countries were mentioned frequently. Our results also confirmed his findings since we also found out that outer circle country mentions were about 8%.

## **CONCLUSION**

While the caveats for the Turkish coursebook was the lack of outer circle and native culture representations along with the dominance of inner and outer circle cultures, the issues were more critical for the Iranian textbook which left no room for inner and outer circles but filled the textbook with native culture representations and a few expanding circle countries. The findings clearly showed that the Turkish Textbook needs a few modifications such as adding some more native culture themes enriched with outer circle culture items by decreasing the inner circle cultural mentions. On the other hand, the Iranian textbook contradicted the notion of intercultural awareness which was considered as a competence required for English language proficiency. Inner and outer circles were ignored while only a few mentions related to expanding circle was made. This led to an inflation of native culture representations which dramatically decreased intercultural gains. Our findings related to the Iranian textbook indicated a need for the inclusion of more cultural topics associated with Kachru's concentric model and we emphasize more attention devoted to developing intercultural competence by including more target culture-related tasks. In this way, learners both would be more aware of foreign cultures and communities and become more proficient in EFL.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: Full list of countries mentioned

#### Turkish Coursebook Cultural Content (Teenwise 9)

Inner Circle	Outer Circle	Expanding Circle
Lesson 1		
The UK- Canada- Australia	India	Spain -Italy –Greece- France Germany- China- Portugal-Turkey-Egypt-Bulgaria-Sweden.
Lesson 2		
The UK. America-Australia	-	Japan-Morocco-Sweden-Italy-Hong Kong
Lesson 3		
America-UK-	-	-
Lesson 4		
Canada- America- UK	South Africa	Philippine-Germany-Italy-Japan-Turkey
Lesson 5		
USA-UK-Australia	India	France-Brazil-Turkey
Lesson6		
Scotland-England-Australia-UK-Canada-	India	Japan-Brazil-Italy-China-Mexico- Jamaica-France-Portugal-Argentina-
Lesson 7		
-	India	Turkey-Egypt-Greece- Iraq- China-Peru-Brazil-Jordan-Mexico-Italy-
Lesson 8		
UK-America	-	-
Lesson 9		
UK	India	France
Lesson 10		
UK-America	-	France

#### Iranian Coursebook Cultural Content (Prospect 3)

Inner Circle	Outer Circle	Expanding Circle
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Lesson 1		
-	-	Iran (Native)
Lesson 2		
-	-	Iran (Native)-Germany
Lesson 3		
-	-	Iran (Native)-Turkey-China
Lesson 4		
-	-	Iran (Native)
Lesson 5		
-	-	Iran (Native)
Lesson 6		
-	-	Iran (Native)