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A Diachronic Analysis of the Cultural Aspect of Local English Coursebooks

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Abstract
Delving into a wide range of the cultural elements, the current study endeavoured to reveal the tortuous path the secondary school English coursebooks have passed in Iran. To this end, the secondary school coursebooks of level one were diachronically investigated for the commonly unnoticed side of culture, ie the perspective aspect of culture, names, and images. In so doing, the above-mentioned elements of culture in the coursebooks from 1939, when the very first English coursebook was introduced to the country, till the latest series published in 2016 were scrutinised. The results suggested that not only have cultural elements lacked a coherent framework to be translated into English coursebooks, but they have also been an uncharted island on the English coursebook authors' map. Additionally, the researchers suggest that the haphazard representation of culture might be partly due to the fact that a viable definition of culture, at least in the realm of applied linguistics, does not exist and some studies may need to be carried out on this issue.

Introduction
Research into culture has been an important line of enquiry in recent journals (Klarer, 2014). Despite such popularity, a sound and all-agreed definition of culture has always been a bone of contention. Part of this predicament might be due to the inherently overarching concept of culture while other challenges could be due to attempts to define culture in respect of its local context.

Culture, in whatever sense, materially affects English language learners in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In fact, in a country like Iran, the majority of the EFL learners do not have direct access to the culture of English-speaking countries. Therefore, the type of the cultural information they gain is mainly dependent on the presentation of English materials along with few passing comments of their teachers. Unfortunately, these English materials, which are considered as a window to the Western world, do not reflect the true image of Western culture. For one thing, virtually all the English language materials and books imported to the country are written by either English native speakers or non-native speakers who are not Iranian. While it seems natural to be the cooperation of both sides, it seems that native speakers do not possess enough knowledge of the culture of foreign countries, especially those in the EFL context such as Iran, to include in their materials. Additionally, attempting to motivate English learners and/or to boast of their own culture, these native English writers may sometimes be tempted to portray their culture as an unrealistically exciting utopia (Dahmardeh, Tmicheh Memar, & Timcheh Memar, 2014). Conversely, localised English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks taught in schools written or compiled by non-native English writers appear to be neutral or lack sufficient cultural elements so as to enjoy a theoretically sound and well-known framework as far as cultural aspects are concerned (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015).

In so doing, it is not surprising if most of English learners come to know a fake picture of target culture. Worse still, since a good many of learners see their culture grey, eg they attribute various problems in their society to their culture partly due to economic and subjective view, they might arrive at the hasty conclusion that target culture is superior to their own culture, especially when target culture is from a more economically developed country and they live in a less economically developed one. Obviously, such an erroneous conclusion could be mainly due to the lack of cultural awareness on the part of English learners as well as language planners and experts. The awareness is in line with what Widdowson (1994) pointed out about the ownership of English language. He holds that the ownership of the English language is no longer restricted to its native speakers, and that non-native speakers have virtually the same right about it. The present study is aimed at identifying and elaborating on the main root of such a predicament, if any, in the Iranian EFL secondary school English coursebooks from a historical perspective.

Review of the Related Literature
The concept of culture, to date, has been viewed differently and thus has taken various definitions and positions in education in general and in applied linguistics in particular. Suffice it to say, according to an often-quoted statistics tracing back to approximately half a century ago, culture was reported to have 156-plus definitions (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963). Such a vast array of definitions is so striking that made Hinkel (1999) asserts that there exists 'as many definitions of culture as there are fields of enquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviours and activities' (p.1).
Therefore, cultural scholars, attempting to address this problem, have made a number of proposals. Of importance is discarding the term culture in spite of its principal role in language, a decision against which some scholars have warned (Tseng, 2002). It has also been suggested that the term culture should be reduced to more tangible terms such as difference, identity, discourse to name but a few (Atkinson, 1999). Others, attempting to be loyal to the term culture, have differentiated between two classic senses of culture. In so doing, through looking at a vast body of definitions for culture, they have come to find two major types. The two types of culture are commonly referred to as capital C culture and small c culture (Chastain, 1988). The capital C culture is also known as *formal* (Brook, 1964), *high* (Durant, 1997),

or *achievement* (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, Pulverness, 1995). In this sense, it includes a number of subjects such as literature, art, history, scientific achievements and the like. In contrast, the small c culture, also dubbed as *behaviour culture* (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, Pulverness, 1995) or *anthropological culture* (Scollon and Scollon, 2000), views culture as a way of life (Larsen-Freeman 2000). Not surprisingly, though each of these definitions has mainly generated its own jargons, they have also shared a couple of terms, which certainly muddy the waters. Therefore, some scholars, aiming to reveal different aspects of this catch-all concept and to make it more tangible, have provided a number of metaphorical models such as culture as an atom, an onion, a tree, and an iceberg (Bennett, 2013). Of these metaphors, the often-quoted metaphor of culture as an iceberg catches more attention as it implies that culture is similar to an iceberg in that only a small portion of culture, say one tenth, is visible, while the main portion is not easily visible (Weaver, 1986). It is evident that according to this metaphor, those invisible aspects of culture are included in deep culture, while the visible aspects are embraced in surface culture.

From another interesting angle, culture is so intertwined with language that it is commonly believed language is *culture-bound*, a term employed by Valdes (1986). In other words, language always carries fundamental underpinnings of its culture when passed on. In fact, as most of cultural scholars note it is wrong to consider language and culture as separate issues (Byram, 1989, 1994, Kramsch, 1993, Seelye, 1993). However, such common knowledge of culture has not been put into practice. One of the best prominent examples reflecting this chasm between knowledge and practice is the absence of a clear plan for the representation of culture in Common European Framework of Reference for languages, (CEFR). For instance, Risager (2007) holds that although culture is an inextricable part of language, CEFR has nothing to say in terms of its representation.

Addressing the above problem, cultural scholars have carried out a wealth of studies on teachers and language planners' attitude on culture in general and its implications in the EFL materials in particular. For instance, Aydemir and Mede (2014) conducted a study on the significance of teaching target culture from EFL teachers' perspectives in Turkey. Collecting the data through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview from a sample of eighty participants, they reported the important implications of integrating target culture in an EFL class passed on by a well-informed teacher. In another study, attempting to get learners' attitudes and preferences of learning culture, Kirmizi (2013) conducted a study on a sample of 92 participants in Turkish context. It implied that the learners conceive culture as both capital C and small c. Additionally, it was reported that the learners did not realise the importance of culture. Finally, Dahmardeh, Tmicheh Memar, and Timcheh Memar (2014) carried out a study on cultural elements of Top Notch Series (ELT series published by Pearson Longman) as one of the representative and most dominant EFL books in Iran. Their findings implied that the representations of target culture in this series were quite biased. In effect, they concluded that Western culture was exaggeratedly dominated in the series. They also suggested providing specific English books for major areas such as the Middle East.

One of the most interesting projects on the role of culture in foreign language education has been undertaken under the label of National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1996) in America. Based on this project, culture in the realm of language falls into three parts: practices, products, and perspectives. National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (1999) considers practices as the patterns existing in social interactions and behaviours. It is also related to the way interactions within a particular culture take place. In the latter one, products are considered as the creations whether tangible or intangible of a particular culture. In fact, these creations are the reflections of a culture's perspectives, and perspectives are the representations of a culture's view towards the world as well as the philosophical perspectives, beliefs, values, ideas which are the roots of the cultural practices and products of a given society. Finally, one of the seminal studies using the cultural classification of National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project is that of Yuen (2011). Having added one more category, persons, to the classification, he studied two coursebooks used by students in Hong Kong. Yuen reported that the coursebooks in Hong Kong are not fair in terms of

culture. That is to say, he noted that the proportion of the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries was quite larger than others.

Methodology
The Purpose of the Study
Culture has always been treated as an enigmatically over-arching term with numerous blurry definitions. Consequently and not surprisingly, its importance in language teaching materials and the method as well as the quality of its presentation in the English language coursebooks have also been a matter of great dispute. To clarify the above vague points in general and to shed lights on the position of target culture in the Iranian EFL coursebooks taught in secondary school from a historical point of view, in particular, the following questions were developed:

1. How is the representation of culture in the secondary school coursebooks from a historical point of view in Iran?
2. How are local and target culture treated in the secondary school coursebooks?

Delving into the issue of culture in the Iranian EFL context from a historical perspective, this study was designed to answer the above-mentioned questions. To this end, thirteen editions ranging from 1939 when the very first English coursebook was introduced to the country (Dahmardeh & Nemati Limaee, 2017) till the latest series published in 2016 of the first level of the secondary school English coursebooks were investigated.

The Coursebook Corpus
Prior to proceeding further, it may be a good idea to continue this discussion by presenting a summary about educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is important to notice that the information about the methods of coursebooks is given to the readers to have a better picture of the relation between the cultural elements and the methods, and this part may not have a direct relation with the purpose of the study.

Since 1979, when the Islamic Republic has come into power and replaced the previous monarchical regime of the Pahlavi Dynasty, the educational system of Iran has changed several times. At the moment, the educational system is divided into four (4) cycles: pre-school, primary, secondary (first & second level) and post-secondary (university). The Iranian coursebooks[2] include those for students in:

➢ Primary school for ages 6-12, Grades 1-6;
➢ Secondary School (first & second level) for ages 13-17, Grades 7-11.

The schools are under the administration of the Ministry of Education. All the syllabuses, materials as well as coursebooks are prepared and developed by this ministry and must be followed and used by all teachers and schools across the country. Also, it must be clarified that there is not any coursebook available to Iranian teachers and students other than the ones prepared by the ministry. Regarding the status of ELT, at present the dominant trend in Iran is towards more ELT. As a required course from the first grade of secondary school, English is taught three to four hours per week. There is an extensive and still growing private sector of education in the country, a distinctive feature of which is introducing English at primary school and even pre-school levels. In almost all private schools functioning within the two levels of general education in Iran, namely primary and secondary schools, English receives striking attention and probably extra hours of practice.

In terms of the public attitude towards the ELT in Iran, Aliakbari (2004, p. 2) claims that 'English is so crucial a factor that the quality of the English programme and the skill of the teacher or teachers working

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[2]These coursebooks are available to view online via http://chap.sch.ir/

in each school may determine the families' choice to send their children to one school or another. Private language schools or institutes have attracted an increasing number of interested students from young children to adults. The multiple variations observed in the programmes delivered signify a great tendency to learn English in Iran, on the one hand, and a notable endeavour to fulfil the students' communicative needs, on the other'.

Having stated that, for the purpose of this study, a content analysis of thirteen series of the ninth grade of the secondary school English language coursebooks was conducted. The coursebooks, written for EFL students of the ninth grade of secondary school, aged 15 years old, were chosen for analysis because they include more cultural elements comparing their higher level counterparts. These coursebooks could be roughly categorised into two main time periods: before the Islamic revolution and after the Islamic revolution. Those series belonging to the period after the revolution enjoy virtually similar structures and lessons, ranging from six to twelve lessons. Each lesson consists of a dialogue or a reading component with some exercises on grammar and vocabulary without any components on listening or speaking. However, it must be pointed out that in the last two years a new version has been published claiming that it focuses on four language skills. On the other hand, those series belonging to the period before the revolution do not share a similar number of lessons ranging from eleven to fifty lessons. Additionally, they enjoy diverse types of structure. The oldest series (1939) has a simple structure of the presentations of the grammatical points along with some new words followed by some questions or explanations. The second series (1961) including twenty eight lessons enjoys a simple structure of a reading or some sentences with some grammatical explanations followed by some exercises for each lesson. Interestingly, some of the exercises ask students to perform some tasks and some aim to teach students cursive handwriting. The third series (1970) consisting of twenty five lessons enjoys a reading, dialogue or a number of sentences along with new words followed by different types of exercises. Surprisingly, some of its exercises are intended to be answered orally. Lastly, the fourth series (1977) being composed of twenty lessons enjoys a reading or dialogue along with new words plus comprehension questions followed by different types of exercises for each lesson.

The other important point colouring the type and amount of cultural elements in the coursebooks concerns the method or methods which the coursebook authors intended the teachers to follow. There seems to be six methods involved in the implementation of the coursebook series: Reading approach, Grammar translation, Direct method, Conversation Approach, Audio-lingual, and Communicative Approach. Furthermore, except for those of the first three years, ie 1939, 1961 and 1970, the series of the other years pivot on a combination of two methods for the teachers to follow except the ones published in 2015 and 2016. The detailed account of the methods employed by the authors in the series is provided below.

Table 1 Methods

Coursebook	Method
1939	Direct Method (Persian equivalents of the words are at the end of the book)
1961	Conversation Approach
1970	Audio-lingual(Persian equivalents of the words are at the end of the book)
1977	A combination of Reading approach, and grammar translation(Persian equivalents of the words are at the end of the book)
1979	A combination of Reading approach, and grammar translation(Persian equivalents of the words are at the end of the book)
1981	A combination of Reading approach, and grammar translation(Persian equivalents of the words are at

	the end of the book)
1987	A combination of Reading approach, and grammar translation(Persian equivalents of the words are at the end of the book)
1997	A combination of reading method and audio-lingual with some emphasis on pronunciation
2005	A combination of reading method and audio-lingual with some emphasis on pronunciation
2010	A combination of reading method and audio-lingual with some emphasis on pronunciation
2014	A combination of reading method and audio-lingual with some emphasis on pronunciation
2015	Communicative approach
2016	Communicative approach

Data Analysis Framework
The data collection and analysis were directly carried out by the authors. In effect, the authors collected the elements relating to local and foreign cultures, including all the texts and the images. These data were viewed from three aspects of culture: Perspectives, Persons, and Images. Each section takes up a separate entry in the table. The same item from any of the four aspects is counted more than once if it appears again in a different section. The length of each section may vary from a few sentences to a word such as some grammar examples. However, the primary concern of the present study is the frequency of appearance, which reflects the breadth of foreign and local cultures represented in the coursebooks, whereas the impact of the placement or the length of the content, affected by how the cultural elements are used and perceived by teachers and students, is beyond the scope of the present study.

Results
This study was intended to provide answers to the following questions: How is the representation of culture in the secondary school coursebooks from a historical point of view in Iran? How are local and target culture treated in the secondary school coursebooks? To this end, the researchers collected thirteen series of the English language coursebooks for the first level of secondary school over a period of 77 years (1939-2016) and analysed them based on three aspects of culture: Perspectives, Persons, and Images. The following graphs only reveal the findings of the three aspects respectively.

Graph1: Perspectives

As can be seen, there is no element of cultural Perspectives in 1961's and 1970's series, which is parallel to Reza Shah Period. In sharp contrast, one can see the highest number of cultural elements in 1977's and 1979's series, which originally belongs to Muhammad Reza Shah period (before the Islamic
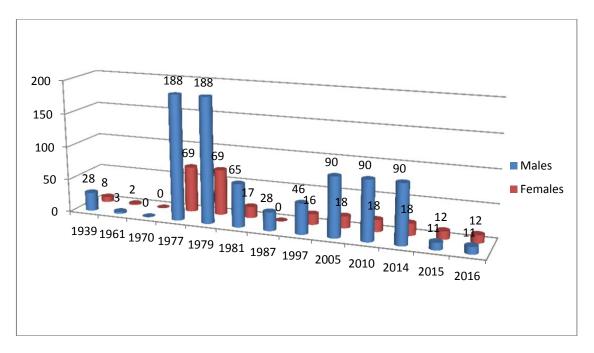
Revolution). Not dissimilar to 1977's and 1979's series, the series of 1981 and 1987 are rich in terms of similar cultural elements. Experiencing a marked shift, the series of the other years, fundamentally similar to each other, share a low number of cultural elements as far as the Perspective aspect of culture is concerned. However, the 2015's and 2016's series have experienced a rich content in terms of cultural elements.

Critically speaking, one can see a considerable number of Western-like wise statements in 1939's series, e.g. 'If you drink, don't drive. If you drive, don't drink.' As for its dates and events, it includes an alarming number of Western cultural elements which are against the local and Islamic culture of Iran, e.g. 'Day 17th, 1314 (January 8th, 1936) is another great day. It is a great day in the history of Iran. On that day our women were unveiled.' As for social etiquette, the cases imply the Western presuppositions which revealed Western culture, e.g. 'when you meet a woman or a girl it is polite to tip your hat or take it off and then put it on again,' or 'do not sit down before the ladies are seated' or 'be kind to your pets,' or 'we all love the Father of our Country'. As for the judgmental statements, there are a few number of statements biasedly advocating the then king, ie Reza Shah, e.g. 'He has freed the Iranian women' or 'Tehran [….] in the present reign under H. I. M. Reza Shah Pahlavi it has become a modern city.' As mentioned earlier, the series of 1961 and 1970 are almost void of any cultural elements as far as Perspectives are concerned, which could partially be justified by their different methods, ie Conversation Approach and Audio-lingual. Regarding the series of 1977 and 1979 which are entirely the same, the cases of judgmental statements are more prominent in terms of promoting Western culture, e.g. 'many young people joined the scouts because it is a kind of life that they love' or 'she is the most beautiful actress in the world' or 'the women have easy jobs/there seems more jobs to be open to men that to women… I don't think so. There are many women who have the same jobs as men' or 'Lincoln…he also learned about life by living on a farm/he was a kind president, but he was also just'. The aspect of social etiquette, though not rich, shows few cases drawing on Western culture, e.g. 'Maryam and her American pen friend, Bob, often write to each other about their customs, languages etc.' The series of 1981, including twelve lessons of 1977's, is nothing different. In sharp contrast, the series of 1987 presents a few non-Western elements of culture, mainly concerning the Judgmental statements. For example, 'Many young people join the Basij because it is a kind of life they love' or 'Imam Ali was one of the greatest heroes of Islam' or 'Imam Ali was a great scholar' and partially the social etiquette 'Their motto is help the oppressed'. Dissimilar to the series of to 1987's, the series of 1997 is mostly similar to 1981's in terms of most of the elements of its cultural perspective. In fact, removing the distinguishing lessons of the non-Western elements of 1987's, this series demonstrates the typical elements of Western culture, e.g. 'Friedrich Frobel made school a happier place for little children'. Regarding 1997's series, there is a sharp decrease mainly in the Western elements of culture without replacing them with any elements of the local culture. The series of 2005, 2010, and 2014 which are entirely the same enjoy one new lesson on the local culture: the Holy Prophet. This new lesson presents few instances of the core of Iranian's Islamic culture, mostly on judgmental statements, e.g. 'God has sent many prophets to the guidance of mankind…they all taught us to be good and to do good' in addition to a case of social etiquette, e.g. 'we worship God'. By and large, these latest series could be considered as a sign for embracing the local culture. On the other hand, the new series of coursebooks introduced in 2015 and then reprinted again in 2016 with the same content is a major shift from the previous ones. In these series students are supposed to study six lessons covering claimed to be interesting topics on travel, festivals, media etc. However, these topics again are totally about local culture and mainly talking about Iranian context. The judgmental statements are only taken from the Holy Quran and the Late Supreme Leader of Iran, Imam Khomeini. While it is impossible to find any proverbs or wise statements in these series, they are loaded with social etiquettes like 'She's very kind and patient', 'Zahra and Nadia are generous', 'I guess my brother is praying now', and 'Clara drives her car carefully on the highway'.
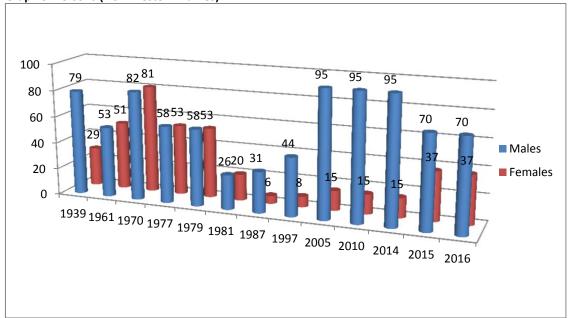
Graph 2: Persons (Western Names)
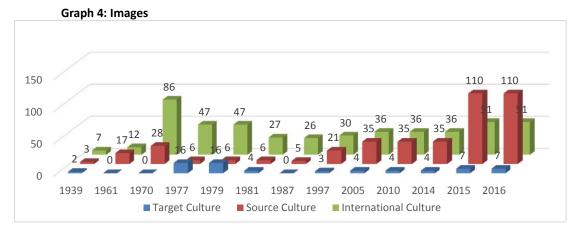
Graph 3: Persons (Non-Western Names)

As can be seen, except for the series of 1977, 1979, 2005, 2010 and 2014, the non-Western names outscore the Western names. The most dramatic change of the direction occurs between the years 1970 (Reza Shah Period) and 1977 (Muhammad Reza Shah Period). In fact, while in 1970's series, all the names are non-Western, in 1977's series the Western names are much more than the non-Western names. For instance, in 1970's series the most frequent typical names are Farhad (15 times) for a male name and Maryam (20 times) for a female name, with no instance of a famous name. In sharp contrast, in 1977's series, the most frequent typical name belongs to Jack (47 times) as a foreign name, and Amir (17 times) as a local male name. As to the most frequent famous names, Shakespeare (12 times) receives the highest number, while Avicenna is the only local famous name which is mentioned once. Regarding the most frequent typical female name, Mehri (18 times) receives the highest number while its counterpart

foreign name, ie Jane, mentioned 17 times. As to the famous female name, Ann Hathaway, Elizabeth I are the only famous female names.

Additionally, it seems in the other series the differences between the two are not that large. The following instances of the other series are just a case in point. In 1939's series, the following are the most frequent names: Parviz as an Iranian typical male name (19 times), John as a foreign typical name (7 times), Pahlavi as an Iranian famous family name (2 times), Stevenson as a foreign famous family name (2 times), Homa as an Iranian typical female name (6 times), Mary as a foreign typical female name (3times), Fowzieh as an Iranian famous female name (once) and Abbie Farwell as a foreign famous female name (once). In the series of 1961, there are no famous names, but Iranian names are more frequent than foreign names, e.g. Parviz as an Iranian male name (9 times), John as a foreign male name (3times), Parvin as an Iranian female name (18 times) and Jane as a foreign female name (2 times). In the series of 1981, though the frequency of the typical names seems to be relatively equal, the frequency of the Western famous names vastly outweighs the only Iranian famous name, e.g. George as a foreign typical male name(9 times), Mr Saba as an Iranian typical family name (9 times), Fleming and Isaac Newton as foreign male famous names (8 times), Avicenna as the only Iranian famous male name (once), Touran as an Iranian typical female name (9 times), and Janet as a foreign typical female name (6 times). In the series of 1997, while the frequency of the typical Iranian and Western names are relatively equal, the Western famous male names have no Iranian counterparts, e.g. Reza as an Iranian typical male name (10 times), Tom as a foreign typical male name (7times), Froebel as a foreign male famous name (12 times), Maryam as an Iranian typical female name (2 times), and Mary as a foreign typical female name (5 times). In the series of 2005, 2010, 2014, the frequency of the Iranian typical male names partially prevails over that of the Western typical male names. The frequency of the Western famous male names is more in number than the only non-Western famous name, e.g. Ali as an Iranian typical male name (19 times), Tomas a foreign typical male name(11 times), Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his progeny) as the only non-Western famous male name (14 times), Isaac Newton as a foreign famous male name (24 times), Maryam as an Iranian typical female name (4 times), and Mary as a foreign typical female name (5 times). Finally, in the series of 2015 and 2016 the frequency of the Iranian names (both males and females) prevails over that of the Western ones. Interestingly in these two editions there is no reference to any famous people neither Iranians nor Western except in couple of cases where Hafez, famous Iranian poet, has been referred to.

Graph 4: Images

The numbers of the images, as one can see, demonstrate important points. The series in the years 1961 and 1970 do not enjoy any images of the target culture as well as the one in 1987. Importantly, there seems to be a number of misrepresentative images germane to the source (local) culture in the series published in 1961, 1970, 1977, 1979 and 1981. However, it seems that from 1987 onwards the misrepresentations of source culture disappeared. To clarify, there seems to be a balanced number of the images in the source culture and the international culture in the series of 1997, 2005, 2010, and

2014. However, in the latest published series, 2015 and 2016, although the number of images has been increased sharply, the gap between the source culture and the international one seems to be increased dramatically as well. Some characteristic pages of the considered coursebooks are given in the appendix.

Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that there are a number of noticeable differences between the series from the different aspects of culture. As to the Perspective aspect of culture, 1936's series was found to be the richest embracing all cases of this category. In stark contrast, 1961's and 1970's series were revealed to be utterly void of that aspect. 1977's and 1979's series demonstrated a strange tendency in embodying a great number of judgmental statements. The other series, after the revolution of the Islamic republic of Iran, were sought to be relatively moderate in terms of the Perspective aspect of culture. The series of 1987 was of course the richest in terms of presenting the local Islamic culture of Iran. However, in the 2015's and 2016's series the Perspective aspect of culture seem to be changed dramatically all in favour of the local Islamic culture of Iran.

Concerning the cultural element of Persons, i.e. names, two turning points could be observed. The first one is that of between the years 1970 and 1977, while in 1970's series the names were entirely non-Western, in 1977's series the Western names greatly outweighed the non-Western names. The second one is the series of 1987 whose non-Western names outweighed its Western names, unlike the later series.

As regards the cultural aspect of Images, although its interpretation was not carried out without a subjective point of view, it revealed a tentatively simple pattern plus the fact that one important aspect regarding the representation of culture is that of misrepresentation. In fact, the considerable number of misrepresented images of the series before the Islamic revolution could imply the then shaky status of the local culture of Iran. Running contrary to the status of the local culture in the series before the Islamic Revolution, most of the series after the Revolution did enjoy a relatively stable status of the local culture as far as Images are considered. However, the number of included images in the latest series published in 2015 and 2016 seem to be increased dramatically though majority of them are taken from the local culture.

On the whole, the series of 1977 and 1979 were found to include more instances of Western culture than the other series. In effect, the coursebooks of 1977 and 1979 were fraught with Western names, judgmental statements and images of the target culture as if they had been taken for granted. Finally, the series of 1987 was considered to be more productive as far as the local culture is concerned. This very series, which was written shortly after the Revolution and in parallel with the war between Iran and Iraq, seemingly enjoyed the altruistic and cultural climate of that period. By and large, not surprisingly, none of the coursebooks clearly revealed a solid cultural frame of reference.

Conclusion

It seems that in 1939, the year Western culture materially found its way in Iranian educational system through English coursebooks (Dahmardeh & Nemati Limaee, 2017), it did receive a moderate welcome. In fact, it could be noted that in 1939's series, though only a couple of the coursebook images belonged to Western culture, a number of Western-like judgmental statements, etiquette, proverbs and names were positively welcomed. Whereas in the series of 1977 and 1979, such a tendency towards Western culture was even more prominent, which consequently had Western notions imported to Iran through the English coursebooks without being considered as constructive or destructive. Another marked change which was made at tandem with that period is virtual ignorance of local etiquette, wise sayings, and similar concepts and ideas. Although this tendency towards westernisation resulting in similar organisation of ELT materials is nothing new in the ELT literature, it has been viewed from various perspectives and under different labels. Littlejohn (2012), for example, discusses McDonalidisation which has taken place in ELT materials mainly since 1980's. By McDonalidisation he means that almost all of the materials follow the same procedures and plans, and even the contents of the materials are virtually the

same. This study has a similar ring to that of Littlejohn (2012) in that both view the destructive aspects of westernisation. However, while Littlejohn (2012) sees the intrusion of Western culture in 1980's, the current study considers the late 1970's as the outbreak of that incursion.

All in all, based on the present study the English language coursebooks in Iran after late 1980's, were suffering from lack of well-decided framework for the presentation of culture in general. Also, they relatively took a moderate stance regarding the presentation of Western culture in English coursebooks. However, this trend has been changed again in favour of local culture ignoring the vital role that the target culture would play in learning foreign languages with the latest series published in 2015 and 2016. Moreover, the reason of the haphazard representation of culture might be partly related to the lack of a viable definition or conception of culture. Additionally, although widdowson (1994) asserted the ownership of English language is not limited to its native speakers, the reality is still rather different. Therefore, this research suggests that some studies be done to shed more light on this issue.

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Appendix

1939

1961

1970

1977 & **1979**
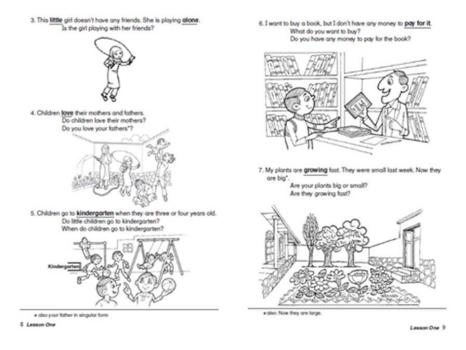

1981
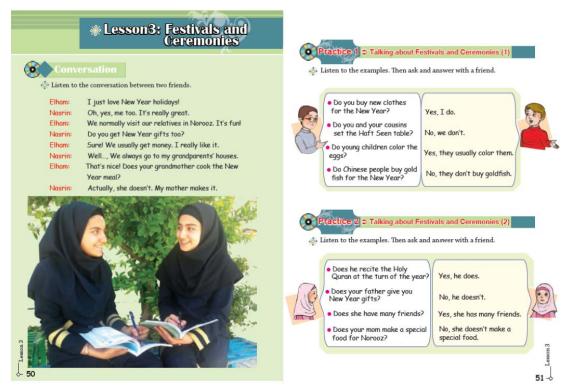
1987

1997

University of Bedfordshire

Centre for Learning Excellence

2005 & 2010 & 2014

2015 & 2016