Cultural Representation in ESL Textbooks in Pakistan：A Case Study of "Step Ahead 1"

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Abstract
The issue of culture inculcation in EFL/ESL learning and teaching has gained attention in 'World Englishes' scenario along with the voices of 'Glocalization' (Tiplady, 2003), acculturation and international culture, advocating the concepts of the amalgamation of global and local aspects of a phenomena, the mixing up of learner's native and target culture and overall world culture as a whole respectively. There are two views regarding the cultural representation in ESL/EFL learning and teaching; the source culture i.e. learners' native culture should be presented or only the exposure to target culture i.e. the culture of the countries where English is spoken as first language should be given. The present study is an attempt to highlight the cultural representation in ESL textbook using the model presented by Byram *et al*. (1994). The results reveal that the major focus of the textbook Step Ahead 1 is non-native culture, inadequate insufficient inter-cultural harmony is found in it and the least consideration has been given to the source culture, which is likely to alienate the learners from their own culture. The researchers argue that there should be 'glocalized' approach in such a sensitive issue and conclude with some suggestions that the books used as ESL textbooks should contain some aspects of both the target and source culture and there should be the intercultural harmony as well.
Keywords: culture, source culture, target culture, ESL textbooks

1. Introduction
Language and culture are inter-related and inter-dependent aspects of social life and cultural competence is an integral part of foreign language learning. As languages are the most comprehensive reflections of the complex cultures of societies, the teaching of culture is considered to be an important part of modern foreign language learning and teaching. Culture provides grounds for contents, materials and class-discussion and also creates the practical situation in language learning and teaching (McKay, 2003).

In their book Byram *et al*. (1991) observe that foreign language teaching includes cultural aspects to prepare the learners for better and well informed national and international life as one major aim of language teaching is to increase the understanding and tolerance between cultures (Corbett, 2003). This aim of language learning and teaching will become even more important in the future since the world is constantly becoming more global. The importance of the teaching of culture is also stated in the Common European Framework of Reference for language as there is a strong relationship between teaching and learning of ESL/EFL textbooks and culture (Council of Europe, 2001).

Before moving ahead, it is better to introduce the terms used in the study. Cortazzi & Jin (1991: pp. 204-5) define the types of culture which can be presented in ESL/EFL textbooks:

　i)　Source culture i.e. native culture of the learner
　ii)　Target culture i.e. culture of the countries where English is spoken as first language
　iii)　International culture i.e. the culture amalgamation of English and non-English speaking countries.

Byram et al. (1991) presented the idea that foreign language should introduce the target culture as well so that the learner may be able to understand and use the language in its original setting (p.18). However, in the scenario of 'World Englishes' (Kachru, 1992) and 'Glocalization' this notion has been challenged. Pennycook (2010) considers language as local practice and the 'central organizing [factor of] a social life that is acted out in specific places' (p. 2). Cortazzi & Jin (1999) find the advantage with source culture in English language teaching so that the learners may learn language in their own social context and they may be able to explain their own culture using English. Wesche (2004) remarks that being open to the foreignness or otherness of other people requires distancing oneself from one's own cultural assumptions and seeing oneself as possessing a learned culture just as the people from the target culture do, there is need to be sure that the young learners are well familiar with their own culture first and that learners'

native ideology and culture is also represented in the ESL books particularly at junior level when students do not have well developed evaluation sensibilities. The researchers, however, argue that there should be proportionate representation of source and target cultures following the 'Glocalized' approach, i.e. 'Think Globally and act Locally' (Tiplady, 2003: p. 4).

Culture inculcation into young generation is a very sensitive issue. The stakeholders and teachers are to be very careful while recommending or designing books that teach foreign language and consequently foreign culture. Unfortunately, the ESL teachers in Pakistan teach what they find in the textbooks with least consideration to the contents. Present study is an attempt to bring the (foreign) culture and language relationship to the conscious level of acknowledgment of stakeholders especially syllabi designers and teachers. This study investigates the cultural aspects present in STEP AHEAD 1 recommended for Class 6 at Beacon House School System. It highlights the focused culture and explores the intercultural harmony, if present in the book. It also investigates the book to find out the representation of the learners' native culture and its likely implications. The method of analysis is a theory-based content analysis and the model presented by Byram et al. (1994: pp. 51-52) has been followed with minor changes.

1.1 Research Questions

The present study aims at finding out

- Does the ESL textbook (Step Ahead 1) have to do anything with culture?
- If yes, which culture is being presented in the ESL textbook (Step Ahead 1)?
- Is there any glimpse of learners' native culture found in the textbook (Step Ahead1)?
- Is the textbook (Step Ahead 1) suitable for Pakistani learners?

2. Literature Review

Language and culture are interrelated, when one is learnt or taught the other is sure to accompany. English has become a global language and is learnt and taught everywhere in the world along with the glimpse of culture of the 'inner circle' (Kachru, 1992). In his Three-circle Model, Kachru (1992) places Pakistan in the 'outer circle' where English is used for institutional and educational purposes and has got the status of second language. It is claimed that "culture is the heart of ESL teaching" (Rowell et al., 2007: p.142). There have been numerous studies on the cultural representation in ESL textbooks in the last few decades. Politzer (1959) in this regard says: "[i]f we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the students attach the wrong meaning" (pp. 100-101). Furthermore when ex-language learners, retired language teachers, and university professors were asked about the outcomes of foreign language learning, they consistently responded that exposure to culture and cultural insights were the most valuable aspect of foreign language (FL) learning (Dvorak, 1995).

Culture shows its presence and consequent reflection from the very title page of the book and remains until the last page. Culture is not only depicted through verbal communication but also finds its shadows in non-verbal communication and graphics. Lesikin (2000) highlights the role of graphics in the understanding of culture and presents that typographic and graphic representation can help comprehend the culture being presented.

Moreover, it is noted that not all the aspects of a culture find their place in a single textbook. Some ESL/EFL textbooks tend to deal with culturally greater issues i.e. religion, morality, history etc. while some textbooks tend to deal with minor aspects i.e. sports, geography, eating habits etc. However, a society can only be depicted thoroughly only when all greater and minor aspects of the culture are given proper representation in the textbook. Ndura (2004) studies cultural reflection in ESL textbooks in US. She highlights the important cultural aspects which are missing in ESL textbooks. She also points towards the stereotypical presentation of the characters and consequent lack of dynamic representation of the natives of the target culture.

It is acknowledged and now goes without saying that foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers, having the ability to experience and analyze both the cultures (Byram et al., 1994). According to Straub (1999), what educators should always have in mind when teaching culture is the need to raise their students' awareness of their own culture (source culture), to provide them with some kind of metalanguage in order to talk about culture, and 'to cultivate a degree of intellectual objectivity essential in cross-cultural analyses' (Straub, 1999: p. 3). What is more, another objective permeating the teaching of culture is 'to foster…understanding of the target culture from an insider's perspective—an empathetic view that permits the student to accurately interpret foreign cultural behaviors' (ibid, p.3).

Some researchers have also pointed towards the need of inter-cultural harmony in ESL/EFL textbooks. They are of the view that textbooks should contain at least some of the contents of native's own culture and the target culture. Kramsch (1993) studies the relationship between the target culture and learner's native culture and observes that to

communicate with the natives of the target culture there should be an understanding on the part of the learners and they, to understand the target culture, must learn the target culture and they should always be "put [ting the target] culture in relation with one's own culture" (p. 205).

Textbooks have been objects of study for decades. However, it is only during past few decades that they have been studied systematically. (Elomaa, 2009: as quoted in Lappalainen, 2011) It was not until the 1990s when researchers started to pay more detailed attention on the teaching materials. Nowadays the importance of the teaching materials has been acknowledged and because English is an international and global language, the critical study of EFL/ESL textbooks is considered very important.

Johnsen (1993: p. 28) divides textbook studies into three main categories: 1) ideological research traditions, 2) studies dealing with the use of textbooks, and 3) studies dealing with the development of textbooks. The present study belongs to the first category; typical studies belonging to this category investigate to what extent certain groups have received attention in textbooks. They also try to find out ideological and attitudinal constructs behind the selection of the material. In other words, they try to locate the hidden curriculum of the textbooks. These studies make use of a method called content analysis, which includes, for instance, counting the frequency of certain key words in a text (Johnsen, 1993: pp.28-29, 67-153). For such content analysis to highlight the presence of particular culture and the attention given to some cultural contents and negligence towards some other aspects, the model given by Byram et al. (1994) has been used.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The present study is a theory based content analysis and follows the model presented by Byram et al. (1994) to explore the cultural contents in the textbook. This model includes the categories that determine the culture related aspects such as social identity, beliefs & behaviors, sociopolitical institutes, socialization & life cycle, national history, geography and stereotypes.

As culture finds its expression in language and it bases itself on words, so the calculation of words was mandatory. Words representing a particular cultural aspect are denoted and counted according to the model designed and used by Byram et al. (1994) for similar study.

The present research is both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative aspect follows the model presented by Byram et al. (1994) thus explores the cultural elements and determines whether the culture presented is target culture, source culture or both. Furthermore, the frequency of every counted item is then presented in percentages to determine the prominence and absence of some particular cultural aspects.

4. Data Presentation & Analysis

The table below shows the overall findings of the cultural aspects in Step Ahead 1, including the total words as well as neutral words.

Total Words	Cultural Words	Neutral Words
96570	2013	94557
100%	**2.084%**	**97.91%**

The following tables show the frequencies and percentages of the particular item under the particular category set by Byram et al. (1994).

Social Identity=69.3%					Beliefs & Behaviors=11.3%			
Ethnic ID	National* ID	Professional ID	Personal ID=59.1%		Greetings/Ritual	Religious/Moral Beliefs	Eating Habits	Sports
			Male 72.3%	Female 27.6				
10	29	168	862	329	20	6	181	22
.5%	**1.4%**	**8.3%**	**42.8%**	**16.3%**	**1%**	**.3%**	**9%**	**1%**

Socio-Political Institutes=3.11%					Socialization and Life Cycle=4.1%	
State Institutes	Health Care	Defense/Law and Order	Tourism	Transportation	Schools/Education	Employment offices
1	7	7	33	16	10	73
.04%	**.34%**	**.34%**	**1.6%**	**.79%**	**.5%**	**3.6.%**

National History=0.92%			National History=0.92%		Stereotypes
National*	International	National* Events	National*	International	Observational
7	9	3	161	59	
.34%	.44%	.14%	7.99%	2.93%	

National*=Singaporean

The table below shows frequency and percentage of total cultural words along with learners' native culture, non-native, and inter-cultural aspect found in Step Ahead 1.

Frequency of Cultural words	*Rep. of Learner's Native Culture	*Rep. of Non-Native Culture	*Rep. of Intercultural Aspect
2013	3	1747	263
100%	0.15%	86.7%	13%

*Rep=representation

4.1 Analysis of the Cultural Contents

4.1.1 Social Identity

Social class, regional identity, ethnic minority, professional identity, and personal identity based on gender fall under this category. The result of data based analysis shows that social class indicators are not prominently mentioned. However the perception records that the social class which is dominant in the book is upper class, frequently mentioned technology and modern facilities support the view, in chapter 1 upper privileged class is introduced which is well familiar with modern facilities. In the same chapter social class indicators are clearly mentioned as "landlord' "middle men" etc. Chapter 4 is all about upper class; the mentioning of disco club and possibility of drinking alcohol support the view. Chapter five presents ruling class along with middle working class. Such references are also found in non-verbal communication, as is obvious from the mono of Nike brand on the shirt of a boy who is discussing about Standard English with some elderly woman (P-268). All other verbal and non-verbal material hints to this social class in one way or the other.

However there is a glimpse of middle class (the people in the financial crisis); one such glimpse can be noticed in Chapter 2, where working class is shown non-verbally (as a picture on P-30 shows a male and female who belong to working class and the background of the picture also supports the idea). Chapter 3 mentions villagers and soldiers thus showing lower middle and middle class. Again a hint of middle class is found in the non-verbal communication where a middle-aged man is shown in rain with tense face and his appearance betrays his financial problems (P-181). The other glimpse can be felt from the movie review of *Babe: Pig in the City* (P-271), in which there is the description of a farmer who has hurt himself while his wife has taken a pig to the city to earn some money. However there are no direct hints to this social class. The villagers are projected as simpletons.

As far as ethnic identity is concerned it is not highlighted except in a ballad "Knight" (P-120) where ethnic prejudice is also obvious with ethnic identity. As black Knight is given a dark spiteful role while white Knight is savior and thus projected positively.

National identities from around the world are found in the book. French, Greek, Roman Italian, American, Samaritan, Australian, Indians, Chinese, Malay, Singaporean, African-American are mentioned at different places in the first half of the book. Regional identities are also hinted upon as 'Eskimos' in chapter 9. However Singaporean Identity is mentioned several times and is highlighted at the expense of others. It is likely to direct the learners' attention to an unwanted culture beyond the objectives of ESL learning and teaching in Pakistan.

Professional identity is prominent almost in the whole book. People are depicted serving different professions. What is noteworthy here professions related to business and industry are not found in the text. However civil services like soldiers and independent working class as middleman, farmers, carpenter, shoemaker, salesman, newscasters, news reporter and film directors are introduced. Professions related to education and religion are also mentioned.

Personal Identities are analyzed as male and female. The ratio between male and female Identities is found as 34:25 respectively. Male identities are mentioned in outdoor activities as professional workers, or at war, rule etc. while women are found in indoor activities or in social relations or going out for some shopping. This is acknowledged as intercultural aspect as it is a shared phenomenon in several societies.

4.1.2 Social Interaction

Social interaction is oral. Elders show affection toward young and the children are respectful towards their elders. Along with oral interactions a full chapter is allocated for writing communication. The letter writing activity is introduced and informal expressions are found in friendly terms. The use of slang is also introduced. A picture (P-104) also presents the same view where two young fellows are exchanging slang while elders are shown surprised standing with question mark. But contrary to this, another picture (P-268) presents the concept of Standard English where a young boy talking to an elderly woman; the chunk of the text discusses the concept of standard English first and then moves on to describe the differences between Standard British English and Standard American English with some examples.

4.1.3 Beliefs and Behaviors

Age group, moral belief, religious belief, sports, eating habits, dressing, greetings, language, currency, shopping, festivals, and gender behaviors fall under this category. The teenage and youth are the age-groups on which focus is laid. It shows that the major focus of the book is the age group for which it is written. The infancy has been totally ignored while once or twice a non-verbal hint towards the old age is found in the whole book. The only moral belief is that people should be loyal to their professions and the example quoted is that journalists should abide by the code of the ethics and it is found in the Chapter 12.

Religion has not been the main focus of the book, however where ever religion is mentioned it is Christian religion and the rituals related to Christianity are also found (Chapter 3) as "to christen a child, mass, or celebrating Christmas day"

Greetings are also introduced e.g. "hi", "good morning" etc. It is an intercultural aspect that when people meet each other they exchange greetings and these are typical expressions to greet each other. However, the words totally depict the Western tradition of the greetings. Proverbs from different countries have also been introduced.

Eating and edibles are largely focused areas in the first half of the book, cooking recipes from around the world are introduced as Spaghettis (Italian), Pate (French), Soup (Russian) etc. but in the second half of the book these areas remain neglected except a few hints.

Sports and games is the focused area in the second half of the book. motor-cycle racing, mountain hiking, cycling, sand-castle making and swimming are some of the games that are mentioned in the text as well as in the pictures. All the pictures present the western way of dressing except once where the two women are shown in Chinese dress (P-260). There is a glimpse of only one language (i.e. Chinese) other than English, in its own script. The only currency that is mentioned throughout the book is dollar, there are $ signs in the pictures as well. Shopping routines and festivals have been slightly hinted at, but none of the aspects presents the whole picture of the society. Festivals of any particular culture have not been focused in the book, however Christmas and Cat and Dog day in America have been hinted upon.

4.1.4 Social and Political Institutions

Healthcare, tourism, education, transportation defense, state institutions and other non-governmental organizations come under this category. This area is not prominent in the first half of the book while in the second half it gains clear prominence. Hospitals have been mentioned in the book. RSPCA is mentioned on (P-80) but this abbreviated name is not explained because understanding of it is taken for granted on the part of learner. Tourism gains focus in the second half of the book and remains one of the most focused areas in this part. Other areas discussed with prominence are state institutions and NGOs while there is a hint to Electronic and Print media in last chapter of the book.

4.1.5 Socialization and life cycle

School & education is given least importance, rituals and norms of school and education are neglected in the target book, however, Sunday schools and music schools are mentioned in the text both as places of religious activities and educational purposes. Family life is shown in the book. Neighbors have been shown concerned for each other and helping in the hour of need (Chapter 2). Employment offices and gender behaviors are given importance. Other issues pertaining to social and lifecycle are quite neglected.

4.1.6 History & Geography

Singaporean national history is elaborately discussed in the first half of the book. Character of Sang Nila Utma is also introduced as national heritage. Chinese national history is also given focus in a detailed letter by Irene Chua. While in the second half of the book, history of Western countries gets more prominence than national (Singaporean) history. National Singaporean geography is more prominent than international geography. Countries around the world are mentioned. As Italy, France, England, America. Asian countries have been referred to as a whole (e.g.

'Asian countries') but not named individually. However Singapore and local Singaporean places are mentioned frequently.

4.1.7 Cultural Heritage

It has further been categorized into two areas; one deals with Singaporean national people and places, the other with international people and places. Due importance is given to Singapore's national cultural heritage. Here again, the point arises what is the significance of giving that much importance to Singapore's national cultural heritage in the ESL textbook taught in Pakistan.

4.1.8 Stereotypes

All the characters are stereotypes and not individuals. All the professionals represented are presented in the stereotypical way, e.g. soldier, teacher, doctor, salesman etc.

Gender roles are also presented stereotypically, women are presented only in the teaching profession, the only way in which they are complimented is their physical beauty, and they are shown doing shopping and cooking, however one or two exceptions remain there. Male dominate the book, they are shown participating in the games and adopting various professions to support their families. Whenever they are referred they are talked about in terms of their skills and profession.

Most of the animals presented in adventure and fantasy stories are male e.g. seagull, frog, bear, snake centipede, lion, etc. while in one of the fantasy stories "James and the Giant Peach" a female spider is presented with the description in these words "a spider, (who happened to be a female)".

The analysis of the names given in the textbook reveals that the identity given to them is stereotypically European or non-Muslim. Out of all cultural names in the book there are only 3 Muslim names (e.g. Kamal, Anwar and Amran.) while 7 or 8 names on the whole are eastern (e.g. Radha, Rekha etc.)

5. Conclusion

This study explored the cultural contents in the ESL textbook Step Ahead 1 recommended for Standard 6 in a renowned school chain for the elite class of Pakistan. The findings reveal that the book does not give sufficient information about the target culture i.e. the culture of inner circle, it is only slantingly hinted at and the native culture of the learners is only found in the form of three names, rest of the book represents Singaporean culture. Singapore, like Pakistan, is a member of outer circle where English is used as a second language (Kachru, 1992). If the book Step Ahead 1 is to be recommended in Singapore as ESL textbook, where and for whom it has been written and published, it fulfills the criteria of a good language textbook presenting the intercultural harmony between the target culture and source culture (Kramsch, 1993). Pakistani ESL learners do not learn English as Singaporean language and they have nothing to do with Singaporean culture in the ESL learning process. The learners certainly do not have Singapore in mind when they turn to English language learning. The textbook Step Ahead 1 has not been written as ESL textbook for Pakistani learners but is taught and causes the resultant ignorance on the part of the learners about their own culture. The exposure to two foreign cultures and negligence of the native culture at such a junior level, where the learners are unable to differentiate the source and other cultures around them may cause the misconceptions in learners' mind about their own culture and it may play a role to alienate them from the source culture. Further, it can lead the learners of the textbook step Ahead 1 to superiority complex in comparison with those who have little or no exposure of foreign cultures to this extent. Consequently, it can pave ways for societal breach between the two classes of the learners. Moreover, the book can be least interesting for the learners if it presents only foreign and alienated social elements, i.e. the unseen culture, rather than their own world i.e. the culture around them. The course designers should take this aspect into account while selecting the textbooks for the learners and should choose the textbooks which are written for Pakistani learners having some glimpses of learners' native culture.

6. Suggestions

In the light of exhaustive discussion done on STEP AHEAD 1 with reference to cultural suitability it seems quite justified to put forward some suggestions and pedagogical implications which can prove insightful for course designers and curriculum setters.

The researchers suggest that there should be gradual exposure to foreign cultures from junior to middle and secondary level students i.e. source culture should not be altogether put aside in language text books. The books recommended for second language learning should contain comparable amount of native (i.e. Pakistani) culture of the learner if not equal to the foreign culture.

Aspects of foreign culture that are absolutely opposite to the native culture of the learner, e.g. the possibility of drinking alcohol at the age of 13 is mentioned in unit 4 "The secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 ¾, should be

constrained in junior classes and in order to enhance intercultural harmony similar aspects of culture should be presented at this level.

The contents revealing ethnic bias should be avoided in language text books, as Black and White knights are projected as negative and positive characters in the ballad Knight in the book under discussion. Exposure to foreign culture should be comprehensive and language should be introduced as being used in various aspects of life. (Noticeably missing aspect of the book is that the children are not shown in direct contact with their parents or teachers or other relations. The reader gets most of the information either through diaries or letters).

While reading about other national identities in the text book, learners' own national identity should be a tangible part of whole. Pakistan and Pakistanis, however, are absent entities in STEP AHEAD 1, it mentions various countries and keeps special focus on Singaporean identity.

English language text books should, ideally, present **TARGET CULTURE** to the learners instead of any other culture that itself is not English as is the case with STEP AHEAD 1 that projects **SINGAPORE** more than any English Country. Step Ahead Series should be reviewed in this context and the source culture should be given due representation along with language related culture.

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