

Towards an Understanding of the Appropriate Cultural  
Content of EFL Textbooks for a Specific Teaching Context:  
The Case of EFL Textbooks for Saudi Secondary State  
Schools

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the appropriate cultural content of EFL textbooks for Saudi state secondary schools according to the students' and their teachers' opinions. The design of this study is a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, and each stage is informed by the results of the previous one. Forty-five teachers and 151 students in Saudi secondary schools returned completed questionnaires. Of them, 11 teachers and 18 students participated in follow-up interviews and only two teachers were observed. Aside from this, the process of EFL textbook evaluation was applied to six EFL Saudi secondary school textbooks for students. Means were used to analyse the participants' answers on a 5-point Likert scale, and inferential statistics were used to test the differences between the students' and teachers' answers. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The results showed that the participants were interested in including cultural items from all the suggested categories of culture and from a mixture of cultures as long as these cultural items were related to their learning goals and are committed to Islamic standards. However, it seems that many difficulties have reduced the effectiveness of the suggested ways for teaching the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks relevant to the students, teachers, and administration practices. The process of the textbook evaluation showed a prevalent result, that the participants' preferences rarely coincided with their inclusion in their EFL textbooks. Furthermore, the ways for improving intercultural communication skills are purposefully neglected by or go unnoticed by the teachers.

**Keywords**— Cultural Content, EFL textbooks, Secondary School students in Saudi Arabia, EFL textbooks evaluation.



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my work to the memory of my father, the first person to call me Doctor Maryam

since the age of five,

To my Mom, for her continuous support,

To the memory of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al- Saud, the Godfather of the Saudi

scholarship program,

To King Solomon bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and His Son, MBS, for empowering women in

Saudi Arabia and for the positive transformation of Saudi culture.

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Regarding my health issues, I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder (thyroid and gut) in mid-March 2020, in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. This diagnosis was made after two difficult years of uncertainty and uninterpretable depleting symptoms.

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everything and for having a healthcare infrastructure with the best minds in the world. Thank you to my department of language and linguistics, my supervisor and the officials of University of Essex for being understanding and for their humanity. Thank you to all of my practitioners. I cannot be thankful enough to Dr. Philip Kelly (consultant endocrinologist) for his kindness. He is not a money-oriented health practitioner. Dr. Kelly offered me free consultations (though I apologised for being unable to accept) when he suspected that my symptoms might indicate cancer; he knew that I had no health insurance from my sponsor and had been warned I would be fired if I did not return on the expected date, which was a life-threatening act due to the pandemic.

In contrast, those officials in charge at my work and SCB, my sponsors, required me to provide extensive evidence that I needed help. They did not help. I complained because it affected me badly, both emotionally and physically.

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## Chapter 1: Study Background

### 1. Context of the study

This chapter discusses the context of the study: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It is organised into five main sections. The first section offers a brief glance at the social, religious, economic, and political context of the KSA. The second section provides an overview of the KSA's education system. The third section focuses on the importance of learning English in the KSA. The fourth section presents information about English teaching and learning in KSA, focusing on EFL textbooks, and giving insights into the challenges faced by students and teachers in learning and teaching EFL.

#### 1.1.Overview

The KSA was unified by King Abdulaziz bin Abdurahman Al-Saud in 1932. The nation has a special status for every Muslim worldwide because it is the place where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) started his mission to spread Islam and because it has the two sacred mosques in Makkah and Madinah, which Muslims visit every year to perform two important Muslim religious practices: the *Hajj* and the *Omrah*. It is also of an importance to the whole world for being the world's largest exporter of crude oil (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019) and the fourth-largest producer of natural gas (Meccawi, 2010). It is the largest country of the Arabian Peninsula and has a strategic location in the Middle East linking Asia, Africa, and Europe (Al-Seghayer, 2005; see Figure 1). Thus, it has one of the largest economies in the world ("Saudi Arabia", 2020).



**Figure 1.** KSA administration districts

KSA has 13 administration districts: Qassim, Riyadh, Tabuk, Madinah, Makkah, Northern Borders, Jawf, Ha'il, Bahah, Jizan, Asir, Najran, and Eastern Province. The capital Riyadh is in the country's centre. The KSA has large deserts, but districts like Ha'il, Asir, and Bahah have incredible nature. The districts also have different customs. For example, Hijazi people's customs, like in Mecca and Jeddah, differ from those of the Bedouins, who used to live in isolation in the deserts.

KSA used to be in poverty situation until the discovery of oil in 1938 (Karmani, 2005b). The KSA has a population of 29,000,000 (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019). One-third of the population comprises foreign experts and workers from different nations, including Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, and the Philippines, and other Arab countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). This population has played a crucial role in building a solid infrastructure for all of the signs of modernization after the Saudi government obtained gradual control of its oil profits between 1970 and 1980 from CALTEX



(an American company), which then became the famous Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco; Elyas & Picard, 2019).

The KSA is unlike multicultural countries like the United Kingdom because it has a homogeneous culture (Al-Seghayer, 2005). According to Alrahaili (2019), Saudis are unified by Islam as their religion, Arabic as their language, and family and tribal relationships. In these ways, the country has a strong sense of nationalism.

In the KSA, Islam is not only a religion but also a way of life. It is deeply rooted in the Saudi culture and impacts every single act of Saudis' lives (Alrahaili, 2019). For example, the KSA follows Hijri, or the lunar calendar, because it is “calculated from the time the Prophet emigrated from Mecca to Madinah and marks the beginning of the establishment of the Islamic State” (Meccawy, 2010, p. 27). The Arabic language has “huge political, social, and symbolic power because it is the language of the Qur’an [ Muslims' holy book]” (Elyas & Picard, 2019, p. 80). Arabic has two versions: classical Arabic and colloquial spoken Arabic, which differs by region and country, although Arabic writing only follows classical Arabic (Meccawy, 2010). The KSA has a collective society with strong family and tribal connections. Saudis have a “sense of brotherhood [which is extended to] other Arabs that comes from the tribal ties, and Islamic brotherhood with non-Arab Muslims is even stronger” (Meccawy, 2010, p. 26). According to Meccawy (2010), there is always a confrontation between any threat that can weaken these principles and the need to meet the expectations of the society's individuals, even when they secretly hold different opinions.

Men are the dominant gender and decision makers in the KSA (Alrahaili, 2019), regardless of the recent improvements in the KSA. For example, Reema bint Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud was assigned in 2019 as the first female ambassador to the United States (Wikipedia, n. d.). Men are also used to being *mahrms*—a “woman's closest male relative and her guardian, usually her father or husband, or someone to whom the woman could not be legally married” (Doumato, 2003, p. 246)—who represents a woman and sometimes acted

on her behalf, as without his presence, she cannot obtain social representation. This is considered as a paradox for some Saudis but is a governmental obligation due to the strict application of sharia law (Islamic law) that constitutes Saudi law. This obligation started to change slightly in 2017 and was eventually suspended in 2019 by King Salman Bin Abdulaziz (BBC NEWS, 2019). Nevertheless, respecting elderly people is a characteristic of Saudi culture; thus, elderly women gain huge appreciation and respect from men at all times, although men are still the head of the family.

*Sheikhs* (the head of the tribe) are extended historical and social power (see Elyas & Picard, 2019) because they solve tribal issues. Meccawy (2010) pointed out that Saudi Arabia's tribal culture is interwoven into every aspect of Saudi life. Moreover, the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) are political and social powers because they represent a moral authority (Doumato, 2003). Nevertheless, the KSA is a hereditary monarchy, and the king is alternatively called a father and must be respected. Saudi society has a strong sense of conservatism.

The KSA is still a developing country with a short history, as compared to first-world countries like UK. Saudi culture is conservative (Meccawy, 2010), and this extreme conservativeness makes Saudi culture resistant to change (Al-Saraj, 2014). Nevertheless, the KSA recently set plans to accelerate its development process and enhance the conservative Saudi culture to fit global demands. This was reflected in the new national Vision 2030, which represents a new dawn in the history of the KSA. Since the vision's announcement by Muhammad bin Salman (a Saudi crown Prince and the King's son) on 25 April 2016, the country is celebrating the serious intention to grow. Saudi Vision 2030 "guides our aspirations towards a new phase of development—to create a vibrant society in which all citizens can fulfil their dreams, hopes and ambitions to succeed in a thriving economy".

(*Saudi Vision 2030*, 2020)

By applying this vision, Saudi culture is starting to be more accepting of change. In fact, it has totally changed the typical picture about the KSA. For example, segregation of unrelated men from women used to be “the highest social value” and was enforced by law in every aspect of public life (Doumato, 2003, p. 240–241). This started to change in 2019, when women were allowed to drive, work, learn, and travel without the permission of their *mahram*; allowed to visit their sons at school; and were no longer obligated to wear an *abaya* (female Muslim attire). Because of this vision, in 2019, the KSA started to gain a modern infrastructure and to embrace some Western forms of entertainment, initiated by the General Authority for Entertainment, which hosts events from national and international entertainers. For the first time in the KSA’s history, the country formally appreciated the arts, as represented by the initiation of the Ministry of Culture in 2018. This governmental institution was important for finding a solid infrastructure for the arts in Saudi Arabia, like for music and movies. The country is also becoming more accessible to tourists. For example, limited restrictions exist on gaining a visa. These changes were drastic and may be heated by some Saudis, and Saudi culture fought them for decades due to Arab Bedouin culture and the culture’s strict version of Islamic traditions.

The social, religious, economic, and political contexts of the KSA briefly discussed above have impacts on Saudi education and on Saudis’ English learning, as can be seen in the following sections.

### **1.1.The Saudi education system**

The first formal educational system in the KSA was established in 1925, when the Directorate of Knowledge was founded (Ministry of Education, n.d). It had a limited number of schools, which were only available for males, until the discovery of oil in the 1930s caused the expansion of schools (Elyas & Picard, 2019). In 1951, the Ministry of Knowledge was established, but women were allowed to access formal education in 1960 under a different institution: The General-Presidency for Girls’ Education (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

According to Doumato (2003), girls' education was supervised by a board of *ulama* in this institution because secular education was viewed as having no value for girls (Almutairi, 2008) and because of opposition from religious conservatives (Doumato, 2003). Although the Saudi educational system sharply segregates formal education and has been a single-sex schooling system since its start, one exception exists to overcome the unavailability of a female lecturer: a male lecturer can use a closed-circuit television network to answer his female students' questions by phone. He cannot see them, but they may see him (Meccawy, 2010). This form of education is based on Islamic and Arabic cultural values (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). It is a sign of the conservative Saudi culture with regards to matters related to women.

Saudi culture is overprotective of women. For example, women are alternatively called *awrah* (human private parts) to indicate privacy and *hurma* (not allowed to be interacted with because of her dignity) to indicate the right to always defend women. Thus, it was difficult for families to allow their daughters to go to school without segregated education being ensured. However, both genders receive the same educational quality, stages of schooling, and facilities (Al-Johani, 2009), with one exception: girls study home economics instead of taking physical education (Doumato, 2003). A royal decree issued in 2002 had the Ministry of Knowledge supervise girls' education, which was renamed in 2016 as the Ministry of Education (MoE) (Ministry of Education, n.d.) after a famous fire incident in a school for girls.

Nevertheless, from 2017 onward, many issues were revised and changed with regards to restrictions on women's choices in education. For example, in 2019, boys were optionally allowed to study with girls at the early stages (Grades 1–3) of primary school and be taught by female teachers. Before that, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology was the only mixed-gender university in the KSA in 2006 because it is concerned with postgraduate degrees and research. Female students were allowed to use mobile cameras in

university state education. In 2017, physical education was allowed to be introduced for girls. Women are also allowed to travel alone and rent apartments so that they can choose the college where they wish to pursue higher education. Universities like King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals and police colleges also allowed women to enrol.

With regards to higher education, the Ministry of Higher Education was established in 1975, but the oldest and largest university is King Saud University in Riyadh, which was founded in 1957. Currently, the number of higher education institutions reached 30 government universities, 10 private universities, and 41 private colleges (Ministry of Education, n.d.). In 2015, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education were merged into one entity, the MoE (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Currently, state education is a free education for all residents (Al-Seghayer, 2005), and university students receive motivational allowances every month from around \$225 to \$250 (Alamri, 2011), in addition to free transportation during general education. Full scholarships are also offered for Saudis to study in world-leading universities, in a programme introduced in the early 2000s (Moskovsky & Picard, 2019). However, the current tendency is to privatize education, especially higher education. According to Picard (2019), the new Vision 2030 seeks international educational cooperation to improve education. International and foreign schools are available and have the same curriculum as that provided in the child's home country, whereas other schools are multinational and use English as the language of instruction, with a curriculum that meets high educational standards (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015).

General education comprises three main stages: primary school, which lasts for 6 years (from 7 to 12 years old); intermediate school, which lasts for 3 years (from 13 to 15 years old), and secondary school, which lasts for 3 years (from 16 to 18 years old)—nursery school and kindergarten are optional stages (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Education is not compulsory, and a student can leave at any stage (Alfahadi, 2012). According to Alrashidi and Phan (2015), the academic year is divided into two terms, each of which lasts 18 weeks. This was changed in 2021 in which the academic year is divided into three terms, each last for 12 weeks. In the primary stage (from first to sixth grade), students have six 45-min classes per day. At the primary stage, pupils do not take final examinations; instead, teachers utilize continuous assessments to evaluate students' achievement (Alafaleq & Fan, 2014, as cited in Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). The primary stage is unlike the intermediate and secondary school stages, which use exam-based assessments devised by the teachers and based on what the students studied in their classes and their course books (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). According to Alrashidi & Phan (2015), the intermediate stage (Grades 7–9) lasts for 3 years, and each subject has two types of assessments, namely during-term assessments (which include midterm quizzes, homework, and class participation) and a final exam. The during-term assessment accounts for 40% of the total marks, while the final exam accounts for 60%. In order to pass a unit, the student must obtain 50% of the total marks.

According to Alrashidi & Phan (2015), the secondary stage lasts three years (from 10th to 12th grade). When students complete Grade 10, they choose between the (a) scientific or (b) academic arts tracks to study in their 2 final years. Like in the intermediate stage, students undergo two types of assessments: during-term assessments (i.e., attendance, class participation, homework, midterm quizzes, and research projects; 50%) and a final exam (50%). Students pass a unit if they achieve at least 50% of the total marks, with 20/50 (40%) or higher on the final exam. It is also teacher-centred and focused, and administration is centralized. For example, teachers' supervisors work in the MoE's district offices to observe those teachers' progress and commitment to regulations with regards to the curriculum and teaching methods, as does the school principal (Al-Hazmi, 2007).

Although education in the KSA includes secular knowledge and Islamic studies, teaching policy in the KSA places Islam at the centre of the curriculum (Elyas, 2011). Islamic studies are a prerequisite for progressing to the next grade level and used to be the most studied part of the curriculum (Doumato, 2003).

The Tatweer (modernization) project changed the typical education methods (Elyas, 2011). This project is alternatively called the King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Public Education Development Project and was released in 2007–2008 (Elyas, 2011). Saudi education has radically changed since then to meet the highest international standards, so that the focus is not only on Islamic studies (Elyas, 2011), to the extent that education has been accused of focusing on “more English and less Islam” because the number of Islamic studies lessons has become less than the number of English lessons per school week (Karmani, 2005a).

Billions of Saudi riyals were allocated to implement this project (Elyas, 2014), which “promoted the introduction of information technology into school curricula and gave a strong impetus to the development of infrastructure and teachers’ skills to support the pedagogical use of this technology” (Elyas & Picard, 2019, p. 81). The 2030 policy encourages collaboration between government and the private sector with respect to training and curriculum development. One example is Tatweer Company collaborating in the Educational Services English Language Teaching Development Initiative (Alqahtani, 2019). The 2030 policy includes some aspects of neoliberalism, although the Saudi government has tried to reduce the negative impacts while preserving the nation’s national and religious identity (Picard, 2019).

## **1.2. Role of English in KSA**

English is used almost everywhere in the KSA because of its status as a global language (Al-Jarf, 2008). In fact, English has a unique status within Saudi society for social, cultural, historical, and economic reasons (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Saudis acknowledge

that learning English is part of the 21st century (Al-Seghayer, 2005). It affects both the personal and large scales of Saudi society (Al-Hazmi, 2007; Al-Seghayer, 2005) because English is a common language used between people from different cultures in Saudi private and governmental institutions as well as in most Saudi homes. For example, English is used between foreign workers who are engaged in the Saudi economy, like in hotels, companies, industry, businesses, and banks, and generally in commerce (Alfahadi, 2012). It is used in major political and international economic organizations such as the European Union, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Al-Jarf, 2008). Privately employed workers use English as a common language (Al-Jarf, 2008). English has importance in the health care and tourism sectors (Alfahadi, 2012; Al-Jarf, 2008; Elyas, 2008). It also has an instrumental function as a medium of learning at different stages of the Saudi educational system (Al-Seghayer, 2005) and as a medium of instruction in some educational institutions. Examples include international schools, governmental universities such as King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), and private universities such as Al-Yamamah University as well as some scientific departments like engineering and medicine (Elyas, 2008). English also has a huge role in scholarship programmes to English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom and United States (Picard, 2019). According to Alfahadi (2012), English has a political function in diplomatic and international relations and in communicating within political alliances; it is also a lingua franca for Saudis who travel abroad and is generally important to the tourism sector.

English is important in daily Saudi life like in the entertainment sector, such as in video games, popular hip hop, and TV and radio entertainment channels (Elyas, 2008). Saudis may watch TV channels owned by the government that are broadcasted in English, and serious international channels such as CNN and BBC World that are broadcasted in English via satellite dishes (Meccawy, 2010). Saudis may communicate using English via



social media (Alfahadi, 2012) via the spread of the Internet, although the government censors its content (Meccawy, 2010), as are world-famous magazines (Al-Jarf, 2008). English is used alongside Arabic in road signs and the names of shops (Elyas, 2008). English is an international language for seeking secular knowledge and embracing technology due to the advantages of the English target culture with respect to science (Elyas, 2008). According to Al-Jarf (2008), “Most research, references, technical terms, international conferences, electronic databases are in English. . . . 90% of the material published on the Internet use English as a primary language” (p. 197).

It seems that the spread of technology use, satellite television, and the Internet has highlighted the importance of English (Al-Jarf, 2008) because people are starting to live in a borderless society, especially with the use of social media. According to Elyas (2008), Saudi economic growth is bringing a new trend of modernization, which necessitates transferring some Western cultural values carried through English, as a tool for this wave of modernization, such as American media, international fast-food restaurants, and Western style of clothing.

Nevertheless, although English is the official language of many countries, taught as a foreign or second language in almost all countries’ educational institutions, and may be used as the language of instruction (Al-Jarf, 2008), it is still taught as a foreign language in the KSA and is not treated as an official language but as a lingua franca. This might be because the KSA has never been impacted by colonization and been influenced by missionaries (Rahman, 2011, as cited in Elyas & Picard, 2019). Besides, according to Elyas and Picard (2019), English may be “viewed as a threat to Islam, a hurdle to obtaining employment, and a symbol of oppression” (p. 82). For some Saudis, English is important for increasing their chances for employment, as English is a prerequisite for most job posts in the KSA.

According to Al-Hazmi (2007), Saudis considered mastering English as an advantage in the job market after the boom of oil prices in the 1970s. This has made large Saudi companies

like Aramco, Saudi Airlines, and international banks develop their own language programmes to increase their employees' English proficiency (Al-Abed Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, as cited in Faruk, 2013). Beyond this, English has a welcome role in spreading the message of Islam (Elyas & Picard, 2019). For example, it might help in communicating with pilgrims, inviting non-Muslims to Islam, and clarifying misconceptions about Islam (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Elyas, 2008, 2011). Nevertheless, most Saudis lack English skills (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015, Elyas, 2008). According to Elyas (2008), English is considered “a sign of status and high privilege for the educated ones” (p. 9) so that some families send their kids abroad or to local private schools where English teaching and learning is more emphasized.

English might be considered as a threat that could deter Saudis from mastering Arabic and a threat to the Saudi culture because it could alienate Saudis from “their religious commitment, cultural heritage and traditions” (Al-Hazmi, 2007, p. 135).

English in the KSA will be of importance for the Saudi development plans, especially because the new Vision 2030 is encouraging the use of English, among other languages, to contact, sign agreements with, and cooperate with international companies so that the Saudi community will thrive (Picard, 2019). Thus, “The demand for English is always going to be there, stronger than ever with increasing globalization” (Elyas, 2008, p. 45).

### **1.3. English in the Saudi education system**

No exact date or documented day was recorded for when teaching English in KSA began, but it was connected to the discovery of oil in the 1930s (Al-Seghayer, 2005; Karmai, 2005a; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Meccawy, 2010). The primary reason schools began teaching English in KSA was to allow communication with American workers in the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), which had a great impact on the development of EFL instruction (Elyas & Mahboob, 2014). English instruction was initially restricted to the Scholarship Preparation School Makkah in 1936 and was available to very few Saudis. The

decision to teach English to every student in KSA was made in 1958 (Al Ghamdi & Al-Sadat, 2002) and beginning in 1959, English became a required subject in state schools, with a standardized syllabus (Al Ghamdi & Al-Sadat 2002). English was first taught at the beginning of secondary school, and instruction was then extended to the intermediate level in the last decades of the century (1970-2001; Al-hazmi, 2007). Saudi students studied English for six years in their intermediate school and secondary school, three years in each stage of study, in 45-minute lessons four times a week. They were assessed with midterm exams and two final exams, as for any other subject in the school curriculum. This focus on learning English in the late seventies was driven by the need for Saudis to speak English to allow the KSA government to control fully oil trade profits. Rapid development across the country necessitated the influx of foreign workers with certain technical expertise and as trainers for various new professions, such as those in restaurants, industry, and hospitals, and the American military advisors and others who began working in the country around 1948 (Moskovsky, 2019). In addition, in the 1990, the Saudization process that ensures that Saudis are of priority in work (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). As thus, Saudization process encouraged Saudis to learn English to get their dream jobs (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). In the curriculum used, all reference to Western culture (behaviour, customs, and habits) were eliminated, and cultural references were restricted to the local culture and the local cultural norms, with no foreign concept (Elyas, 2008; Elyas & Mahboob, 2014).

In 2003, English instruction was introduced beginning in the fourth grade, although the decision was delayed. Some scholars indicated that this decision was a consequence of 9/11,<sup>1</sup> signaling an attempt to embrace tolerance (Elyas, 2008). The educational system in KSA had been the subject of accusations, according to Karmani (2005a),

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<sup>1</sup> In 9/11, 16 Saudi were accused of hijacking the two airplanes that crush the two international trade towers in USA in 2001. The Qaeda (A terrorism Islamic extremism group) are guided by Usama bin Laden, who was previously a Saudi citizen.

In June 2002, for instance, Congress (H. Con. Res. 432) concurred that some of the textbooks being used in Saudi educational curricula were fostering what it described as a ‘combination of intolerance, ignorance, anti-Semitic, anti-American, and anti-Western views’ in ways that posed a ‘danger to the stability of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Middle East region, and global security. (p. 262)

Other researchers claimed that such reform was the result of the low student achievement (Khan, 2011); and/or because of the lack of real-life situations that require students to communicate in English, they are essentially introduced to authentic English via TV and radio (Elyas & Mahboob, 2014). In either case, there was pressure from inside and outside KSA on the educational paradigm: political and social pressure to change the KSA curriculum around English and a call for more secular education to encourage economic growth and global trade (Elyas, 2008).

In fact, whether to teach English in Saudi Arabia was a debated issue, even years before its inclusion in formal education (Elyas & Picard, 2019). This was justified by a common belief among Saudis:

English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is not a ‘neutral’ language. It is loaded with political, religious, social, and economic overtones and is a topic of heated debate. While the influence of globalisation and modernisation policies adopted [Recently] in KSA has led to an increase in the use of English in the country; there are processes of resistance to English that question its validity and contribute to a shift in the language to suit local beliefs and practices. (Elyas & Mahboob, 2014, p. 128)

Debate around the names of American programs such as ‘American idol’ is unsurprising, because the word ‘idol’ carries sense of worship and essentially means ‘shirk’ in Arabic, or ‘share with God worshipping’, which is ‘haram’ (not allowed). Another example, the word ‘hello’, for some it is ‘haram’ because the root of the word is a religious salutation in the church, ‘hallelujah’. For some, learning English at all is haram, because it is the ‘language of infidels’ (Al-Brashi, 2003, as cited in Elyas & Picard, 2010). Others wondered whether English is ‘a colonising language’, an ‘imperialistic tool’, and a ‘missionary language’ (Phillipson, 1992). It was absolutely thought of as a threat to local values and Islamic beliefs (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Some see the EFL classroom as a means for promulgating Judaeo–Christian tradition and Western values, essentially American values, and the spread of secular thought (Karmani, 2005a, b, c). Because of these beliefs, teaching English was always resisted, and slogans such as ‘more English and less Islam’ (Karmani, 2005a) and ‘English is a threat to Arabic’ (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015) were prevalent in Saudi society.

The second change was a careful one, as described by Elyas (2008), with the introduction of different cultures and ways of thinking, behaviours and practices, with no clash with the local culture. The last drastic change in 2007 was a result of the newly launched *Tatweer* policy. This policy focused on enhancing the curricula with information technology, improving the teachers' skills in using this technology, and improving the infrastructure of schools for the introduction of this technology (Elyas & Picard, 2019).

Including technology in the teaching plan represented a great leap in method. It became especially fruitful during the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic. As noted in this study, teachers and students lacked the aid of technology in their classes. This policy caused a drastic change in the English curriculum, especially with the initiation of English Language Development Project that aims to “raise the internal and external proficiency” of English instruction within general education in order to “improve the teaching and learning of English” so that it aligns with international standards; this is meant to be accomplished “through courses, supplementary learning materials, and training” (Albadri & Alshayie, 2012, p. 41). There have always been challenges for teaching English in KSA; among these challenges is low student achievement, lack of trained teachers, improper teacher education, and inappropriate materials and pedagogy (Al-Hazmi, 2007). The education infrastructure is not well prepared for language laboratories (Khan, 2011). Teachers have too many students to teach language effectively (Alfahadi, 2012). Decisions about the validity of a plan, teaching methods, and assessments were always controlled and made through a top–down process (Albedaiwi, 2014; Alfahadi, 2012; Al-Hazmi, 2017). Students are assessed in the same ways they are for other subjects in the school curriculum. It is an exam-based system. However, students who failed English but passed their Arabic and Islamic subjects could still progress to the next level (Alfahadi, 2012).

Currently, English is a basic component of the Saudi Educational system because it serves the 2030 vision of having a “Globally Competitive Knowledge-based Community” (Vision 2030, n.d.), even though the concepts of ‘Islamic’, ‘national’, and ‘values’ underpin the educational system of KSA and its priorities (Elyas & Picard, 2019). According to Moskovsky (2019), the MoE in KSA have recently recognized the importance of English and now assign it a special status and are trying to raise students’ level of proficiency. For example, they increased the number of English lessons and improved the teaching

methodology and teaching/learning materials. In addition, the KSA government initiated a scholarship program that enables Saudis to pursue higher education in English-speaking countries. This consequently improved Saudi academic research and research on EFL teaching and learning. Based on these changes, the future of English education in KSA is promising.

#### **1.4. Description of the Traveller series**

After instituting the project relating to improving English, Saudi English textbooks have witnessed a drastic change in 2008 (Albadri & Alshayie, 2012; Albedaiwi, 2014). The project's administrators contacted U.K. publishing houses (Macmillan, McGraw Hill, and MM Publication) in search of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) textbooks series:

For elementary level:

1. Get ready
2. We Can
3. Smart Class

For intermediate level:

1. Full Blast
2. Lift Off
3. Super Goal

For secondary level:

1. Mega Goal
2. Flying High
3. Traveller (Aljombaz, November 09, 2018)

These EFL textbooks series were produced for the global market; and some modifications were made to these textbooks to suit the Saudi teaching context (Albadri & Alshayie, 2012). According to Aljombaz (November 09, 2018), these series were first distributed to a sample of schools in four main regions: Riyadh, Qassim, Jeddah, and the

eastern region. Then the distribution was expanded to include the whole country.

Nevertheless, it seems that the choice of the schools and the book series distribution were done in a non-random way. According to Aljombaz, the piloting scheme started from 2008 until 2015.

MoE ended up a piloting phase in 2016 by choosing the KSA Edition: Traveller series (Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, 2016). This series is taught in Saudi Arabian secondary schools at the time of conducting my study, in the last quarter of 2016. Traveller series contains six books as follows:

- 1- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 1*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.
- 2- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 2*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.
- 3- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 3*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.
- 4- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 4*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.
- 5- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 5*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.
- 6- Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, H. Q. (2016). *KSA edition: Traveller 6*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: MM Publications.

This book series was selected by the English Language Development Project, which is part of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project run by Tatweer



Company for Educational Services. It is published “under special agreement between MM Publications and Tatweer Company for Educational Services (contract no. 2013/0040) for use in the KSA” (Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, 2016, p. 145).

In the cover page of the KSA Edition: Traveller series, Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni (2016) claimed that the course “takes learners from Beginner to Advanced level” (p. 146). As such, the course follows the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR), which ranges from A1 to C1. The course’s length and proficiency levels are presented in Table 1.1

**Table 1.1**

*The Course’s Length and Proficiency Levels*

<b>Book</b>	<i>Traveller 1</i>	<i>Traveller 2</i>	<i>Traveller 3</i>	<i>Traveller 4</i>	<i>Traveller 5</i>	<i>Traveller 6</i>
<b>CEFR</b>	(A1–A2)	(A2)	(B1–B2)	(B1–B2)	(B2)	(B2–C1)
<b>Number of pages</b>	144	146	144	154	128	123

The course follows “the modular approach and is organised into topic-based modules” (Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, 2016, p. 146 or messed of *Traveller 2*). The course features the following:

- motivating and contemporary topics with multicultural and cross-curricular information
- lively dialogues presenting real spoken English
- an integrated approach to the development of the four skills
- special emphasis on vocabulary building

- grammar presented and practised in context
- systematic development of reading and listening skills and subskills
- a variety of communicative tasks
- a step-by-step approach to writing
- activities that encourage personal response
- practical tips that help students become autonomous learners
- a round-up section in each module that provides regular revision and consolidation
- a grammar reference section
- cultural and cross-curricular pages [*Traveller 1* and *Traveller 2* only] (Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, 2016, *Traveller 2*, p. 146)

The general topics of the units in Traveller series (adapted from Mitchell-Marileni Malkogianni, 2016, *Traveller 1-6*, p. 1–2) are presented in Table 2. For a detailed description sample, see Appendix 14, p. 99.

Table 1.2

## The General Topics of the Units in Traveller Series

<i>Traveller 1</i>		<i>Traveller 2</i>		<i>Traveller 3</i>	
<b>Units</b>					
Hello		1. Youth Culture		1. Window on the World	
1. Me, Myself, and I		2. What an Experience!		2. Heroes	
2. Day by Day		3. Going Places		3. Work and Leisure	
3. Changes		4. Nowadays		4. Planet Earth	
4. Feeling Good		5. Help		5. That's Incredible!	
5. Thinking Back		6. Time Out		6. On the Move: <b>Optional</b>	
6. Events		7. Good Job: <b>Optional</b>		7. Up-to-Date: <b>Optional</b>	
7. One of a Kind: <b>Optional</b>		8. Diversity: <b>Optional</b>		Appendices	
8. Adventure: <b>Optional</b>		Appendices			
Appendices					
<i>Traveller 4</i>		<i>Traveller 5</i>		<i>Traveller 6</i>	
<b>Unit</b>		<b>Unit</b>		<b>Unit</b>	
1. Success		1. On Holiday		1. Education	
2. Science and Technology		2. The Place to Be		2. Communication	
3. Leisure		Round-Up		Round-Up	
4. Health and Fitness		3. Crime and Punishment		3. The Mind	
5. Nature		4. Adventure		4. The Body	
6. Modern Life: <b>Optional</b>		Round-Up		Round-Up	
7. Places: <b>Optional</b>		5. Lifestyle		5. Success	
		6. The Environment		6. Work and Money	
		Round-Up		Round-Up	
		7. Visual Arts		7. Travel	
		8. The Written Word		8. Culture	
		Round-Up		Round-Up	
Appendices		Appendices		Appendices	

Notably, only one module in *Traveller 5* and one unit in *Traveller 6* directly address culture as a topic. However, some topics, such as Events in *Traveller 1*, Youth Culture in *Traveller 2*, and Window on the World in *Traveller 3*, may indirectly reference culture.

### **1.5. The sequencing of the books' content**

Within the series, every two sequential books have the same content sequence, the first four books have optional units, and only two books (*Traveller 1* and *Traveller 2*) have either a culture page or a cross-curricular page after each unit. Only *Traveller 5* and *Traveller 6* have separate round-up units, whereas the other books include a round-up lesson after each unit. Before each module in *Traveller 5* and *Traveller 6* and each unit in the first four books, an introductory page with two discussion questions and a quick task requires students to flip through the module to search for information about a specific point. In addition, a small box lists the outcomes students are expected to achieve. All books' appendices contain extra pair work activities; a grammar section that summarizes the rules; irregular verb conjugations; an expansion on some units' writing, reading, and speaking tasks; a word list; and a list of differences between British and American standards. However, only *Traveller 1* and *Traveller 2* include learning tips, and only the first four books include audio CD track lists. Tables 3–5 present the books' sequence.

**Table 1.3***The Sequence of the Lessons in Traveller 1 and Traveller 2*

Unit						
A	B	C	D	E	Round-up	An extra culture or cross-curricular page
Listening and Reading	Reading	Vocabulary	Reading	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
Vocabulary	Vocabulary	Grammar	Vocabulary	Listening	Grammar	
Practice	Grammar	Practice	Grammar	Speaking	Speaking	
Grammar	Practice	Intonation	Practice	Writing	Communication	
Speaking	Speaking	Speaking			Listening	
		Listening			Self-assessment	
		Writing				

**Table 1.4***The Sequence of the lessons in Traveller 3 and Traveller 4*

Unit		
A	B	Round-up
Reading	Reading	Vocabulary and grammar
Vocabulary and grammar	Vocabulary and grammar	Listening
Listening and speaking	Listening and speaking	Self-assessment
Writing	Vocabulary and grammar	
	Writing	

**Table 1.5***The Sequence of the Lessons in Traveller 5 and Traveller 6*

Module	
Unit (1 and 2)	Round-up
1- Reading	Examination practice
2- Vocabulary and Grammar	Listening
3- Listening	Self-assessment
Vocabulary and Grammar	
4- Speaking	
Examination practice	
5- Writing	

Notably, the lessons' sequence lacks a direct reference to intercultural communication tasks and a direct consideration of culture as a skill to be improved.

### 1.6. Personal motivations

I chose to carry out this study mainly based on my personal experience. As a Saudi EFL student, I have strictly relied on my schools' EFL textbooks when learning English. I fully understood the negative impact of this reliance after becoming an international student in the United Kingdom. For example, I have noticed that café waiters ask me when I order food if I would like to have it as "take out"; I thought that "take away" was the only expression that could be used in that situation.

Before coming to the United Kingdom, I examined the role of culture in acquiring language in an earlier study (Alrashidi, 2013), which I conducted in partial fulfilment of my

master's degree. That study's participants indicated that their low level of background cultural knowledge of the United States was an important factor with regards to their poor performance in interpreting implied meaning. This was the case even though the participants were studying for—or had already earned—master's degrees in either English linguistics or English literature. My relatively late encounter with the topic was because I learned English with a focus on the linguistic grammatical competence; the course of study for my Bachelor of Arts degree in Saudi Arabia had no courses on the topic of the role of culture in acquiring language. Thus, after I became a teacher, I continued to focus on linguistic accuracy.

However, my obsession with EFL textbooks made me eager to learn more about the design and evaluation of EFL materials so that I could learn how these valuable books are created. As such, I shifted to my current focus because I am excited to discover more about the topic.

### **1.7.Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to understand the appropriate cultural content for state secondary school EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia according to the students' and their teachers' interests. This study sought to achieve this primarily by understanding the opinions of secondary school EFL students and their English teachers regarding the effectiveness of the cultural elements in their EFL textbooks, the sources of these elements, and the way these elements are taught and presented in EFL textbooks and in students' English classes towards language fluency and intercultural communication skills improvements.

### **1.8.Significance**

In a practical sense, the new series of official Saudi English textbooks must be further evaluated according to the students', teachers', and schools' wants, as such textbooks are relatively new in Saudi Arabia and may not meet the desired standards. The evaluation part of



this study could bridge this gap. This study's results could also provide a clearer picture of the students' and teachers' wants with regards to the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks. Moreover, the results could raise awareness among local EFL teachers, EFL textbook writers and decision-makers with regards to the issues discussed in this study. This study could also pave the way for future studies on the creation of descriptive frameworks that are exclusively based on students' and teachers' opinions.

### 1.9. Definitions of key terms

As discussed in Chapter 2, *culture* is a difficult term to define. The most comprehensive definition is Moran (2001):

the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts. (p. 24)

In this study, *cultural content* refers to every item in an EFL textbook that could carry cultural meaning. Gray (2000) and Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) each stated that EFL textbooks are cultural artefacts because cultural content exists in every part of those books.

Issues related to the non-linguistic aspects of EFL textbooks include

what topics they include, the subject matter they select and how they treat it... the cultural settings used by coursebooks and what has sometimes been called the "hidden curriculum": the image of life presented by coursebooks, the attitudes they convey, consciously or unconsciously, and the social and cultural values that they communicate. (Cunningsworth, 2005, p. 86)

Further, issues related to intercultural communication. According to Moran (2001), *intercultural communication* is "the capacity to communicate effectively and appropriately, establish and maintain relationships, and carry out tasks with people of other cultures" (p. 5). These issues include biases, generalizations, stereotypes, etc.

## 1.7. Organization

Chapter 1 is a brief introduction to the study context, its significance, and the definitions of the key terms. Chapter 2 is a literature review on the topic of evaluating EFL materials, with a focus on the cultural content of EFL textbooks. Chapter 2 also focuses on issues related to the definition of the term *culture*, the relationship between language and culture, and the related challenges in teaching and evaluating EFL materials.

Chapter 3 contains the justifications for the choices related to the study design and the development of the instruments. It also details the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. It relates to the sampling procedure and the two pilot studies, with reference to ethical approval. It contains information about the cleaning and recording of the data, as well as justifications for both the chosen statistics and the selected quantitative and qualitative data-analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents the students' wants regarding the cultural content of EFL textbooks, as well as the justifications for the participants' choices on the questionnaires. Chapter 5 relates to the results obtained from the checklist (post- use evaluation) and from the interviews and observations (in- use evaluation).

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the results, based on the study's five main research questions. Finally, Chapter 7 briefly summarizes the study's thesis, describes its limitations, and includes some recommendations for future studies. There is a prevalent result that the cultural items and topics, which were suggested by the participants, rarely coincided with their representation in their EFL textbooks. This necessitates considering the EFL students and their teachers from a specific teaching context in the processes of selecting and adapting EFL textbooks.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a review of related literature to the evaluation of the cultural elements in EFL materials are tackled in the following sections. These sections discuss the following topics: Culture, language relation to culture, challenges in teaching and learning culture to students and teachers, and EFL materials evaluation.

### 2.1. What is culture?

According to Robinson (1988), the common answer when someone is requested to define culture is to mention that culture is ‘ideas’ (such as ‘beliefs’, ‘values’, and ‘institutions’), ‘behaviours’ (such as ‘language’, ‘gestures’, ‘customs/ habits’, and ‘food’), and ‘products’ (such as ‘literature’, ‘folklore’, ‘art’, ‘music’, and ‘artifacts’) (p.7). Moran (2001) indicated that a culture is often described by

the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts. (p. 24)

Nevertheless, the definition of culture has undergone many changes over the years (Mishan, 2005). In fact, culture is one of the most difficult terms to define; many researchers indicated that defining and describing culture is an insurmountable task (Chao, 2013; Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2015). Its difficulty stems from the idea that it is connected to everything (Johnson & Rinvoluceri, 2011). In addition, it intersects many academic disciplines that see culture from a different lens (Moran, 2001). As Johnson and Rinvoluceri (2011) stated, the definition of culture stems from two major disciplines: the humanities and the social sciences. In the humanities, *culture* “focuses on the way a social group represents itself and others through its material productions, be they works of art, literature, social institutions or artefacts of everyday life, and the mechanisms for their reproduction and preservation through history” (p. 7). In the social sciences, culture refers to “the hidden patterns, the

hidden rules of belief and behaviour that govern everyday living” (p. 7). These two cultures have also been referred to as Macro and Micro cultures, respectively (Johnson & Rinvolutri, 2011), while Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003) called them objective culture and subjective culture, respectively (as cited in Yuen, 2011).

Accordingly, culture is not a mono-dimensional concept because it contains various elements. As a matter of fact, culture governs both the verbal and non-verbal communication that a group of people perceives and thus is part of their culture (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1998). For example, putting one’s foot in front of people while sitting is not an acceptable act in Arabic countries because this way of sitting communicates to another person that one is insulting him or her. According to Peterson and Coltrane (2003), communication is connected to appropriate cultural behaviour.

Another reason for the difficulty in defining culture is the debate in literature of whether it has a static state or a changing one. Holliday (1999) stated that this is what basically differentiates the essentialist’s understanding of culture from the non-essentialist’s understanding of culture. Accordingly, essentialists believe that culture’s status is fixed and that it can provide a standardized description of a group of people in a geographical place. Meanwhile, non-essentialists believe that culture is in a state of change, that it can be shared among a group of people, and that it may exist in different geographical locations (Holliday, 1999, 2011; Rich, 2011). Moreover, large or small groups in a nation are described collectively by some shared characteristics (Rich, 2011). These characteristics differentiate a nation from another, or a small group in a nation from another (Holliday, 1999, 2011; Rich, 2011). Holliday (1999) likened the sub-culture within a national culture to a Russian doll or an onion skin to illustrate the closeness of the characteristics of sub-cultures within a national culture. The characteristics of the largest group in a nation represent their civilization (Hunington 1996, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008). For example, cowboys represent

American culture and not the minority American Indians because white Americans are the majority in the country. Camels and deserts represent Saudi culture, rather than the high mountains and mountain deer of the south-west of Saudi Arabia, because nomadic tribes form the majority in Saudi Arabia. Differences between the dominant and minority groups in a culture are also reflected in their use of language and/or the language variety they speak. Similarly, Moran (2001) indicated that

The various ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, regional, or religious communities that use English in the United States ... Many of these communities exist alongside the dominant or mainstream culture and do not necessarily share the same practices, beliefs, or values. (p.6)

The typical description of culture in a language teaching context for the essentialist is that it is the description of the national culture (Holliday, 1999). Yuen (2011) explained that culture in this respect is compatible with the part of the definition of culture that is “culture with a big ‘C,’” while the small “c” refers to the branches of sociology and anthropology.

Still, Holliday (2011) and Rich (2011) stressed the importance of the non-essentialist view of culture in teaching English by reflecting the global status of English, in that English is not merely spoken by people in native English-speaking countries. In this view, culture is represented by the characteristics of a group of people that can be distinguished from those of others during a specific time, as the changing state of culture is not restricted by geographical location but rather by other factors, such as people’s interests or needs (Holliday, 1999). For example, lawyers share the same profession and cultural group around the world and can be described in a certain way during a certain period. Furthermore, non-essentialists believe that a culture is a learned system in a particular society and not an inborn system (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). It is important to understand the concept of culture comprehensively because focusing on one definition provides one side at least of culture (Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2015). These definitions have an impact on the domain of language learning and teaching,

which will be discussed in the next few sections.

### 2.1.1. Language and culture

Byram (1991) rejected the common metaphor of “languages as the “key” to a culture” (p. 17) because it implies a separation between them. However, he confirmed that the thought that understanding the culture of a specific social community dependent on mastering their language is common. Language is an element for describing a culture (Robinson, 1988). Language cannot be understood comprehensibly without culture, and they have an intricate interwoven relation with each other (Brown, 1994).

Jiang (2000) described culture’s relation to language as being metaphorically as adjacent to language as “flesh is to blood”, “swimming skills are to water”, and “vehicles are to traffic lights.” Interestingly, Jiang (2000) investigated the relation between language and culture empirically with a word-association questionnaire. The word-association questionnaire was in Chinese with Chinese native speakers and was in English with English native speakers. The Chinese and English participants associated the terms in the questionnaire to examples from their own cultures. Her study’s result confirmed the inseparable relation between language and culture. She considered culture to be a general symbolic representation of a group of people because “it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking” (Jiang, 2000, p. 328). Nida (1998) indicated that culture shapes the meaning of language in both a micro and a macro way. Forms in a language are connected to meanings that can be perceived differently from one culture to another. According to Johnson and Rinvulcri (2011), “what we perceive as reality is in fact culturally *encoded*, and thus becomes culturally *loaded*.” (p. 13). For example, the word “dog” in English and Chinese refers to an animal of the same type. Nevertheless, the concept of dog for most English speakers is culturally perceived in relation to the concept of loyalty, as a dog is considered man’s best

friend. Meanwhile, most Chinese culturally perceive the concept of dog in relation to the concept of discomfort, as a dog causes noise. Another example is ‘car’. The idea or concept it represents could be ‘freedom’, ‘luxury’, ‘financial liability’, or simply ‘a form of transport’ (Johnson & Rinvoluceri, 2011, p. 13). These semantic features or what words represent could differ by individual and culture. Accordingly, language is a social activity, and culture is a “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting” (Kramsch, 1998, p. 127).

Canale and Swain’s (1980) model of communicative competence has four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. It was later improved by Canale (1983) by expanding “on the contents and pedagogical applications of the theoretical framework for communicative competence” (p. 19). It indicates that successful communication requires appropriate knowledge of the cultural aspects of language usage from the native speaker’s world view. For example, Yuen (2011) indicated that to understand the word “McJob,” a person needs to know the cultural background of this word; it means a low-paid job in the culture of the American fast food industry, primarily MacDonald’s which is a sub culture all of its own. Similarly, the idioms of a language have their own cultural backgrounds and thus are not fully understood without first understanding the cultural backgrounds of these idioms. For example, “break a leg” means “good luck” in English. Yet, one cannot understand this expression without knowing the cultural background of this phrase, or *Jibt aleid*, translated literally as “I brought celebration,” is used to indicate that the utterer performed very poorly, (I messed up), in colloquial Saudi. When the appropriate usage of language in its specific social context is inadequate, the mutual understanding of it will be incomplete, or a misunderstanding could occur between communicators because meaning is affected by the social group and thus its

culture. A misunderstanding may happen between people from different countries when their speech does not adhere to the cultural rules of interaction (Kramsch, 1998). As a misunderstanding can occur between people from different cultures, some researchers, such as Hinkel (1999), Kramsch (1998), and Byram (1997), indicated that the communicative competence model has to be supplemented with the knowledge of intercultural competence. For example, Jiang (2001) explained that Chinese people might ask questions that are too personal when they meet their English-native-speaker colleagues—for instance, questions about their age, number of children, and place of origin, etc. English native speakers might mistakenly think that the Chinese are intruding in their personal lives, although the Chinese really view asking these questions as a polite way of greeting someone. Another example is the use of some speech acts as thanking. In English, the word “thank you” is used for thanking, while in colloquial Arabic, people thank others by saying “God bless you” (*Barrak Allaho fik*), “May Allah reward you with all goodness” (*Jazak Allaho Khair*), “May Allah give you health” (*Allah ya’atik alafiah*), etc. Also, even within the same language or nation, there may be different cultures which affect understanding. Intercultural communicative competence is added to the Canale and Swain model of communicative competence for foreign language teaching because this model is restricted to the cultural communicative norms of native speakers that resemble the essentialist point of view about the concept of culture although such norms may be in constant flux or change. As indicated above, the practice of culture in a specific place affects language in several ways, representing the essentialist point of view about culture’s relation to language (Holliday, 1999).

Adding the intercultural communicative competence component is a valid demonstration of the changing state of culture and thus language, as indicated by the non-essentialists’ view of culture’s relation to language. Baker (2011) stated that language is changing dynamically, and it is also affected by the dynamic change of culture. For example,



the cultural status of English as a global language necessitates the non-restriction of English to the norms of its native speakers' norms because of its status as a global language as indicated by many researchers (Gray, 2006, 2010a; Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002, 2003b). This is due to the fact that English is mostly used not with the language's native speakers but with its non-native speakers (McKay, 2002) although the definition of native and non-native speakers is controversial. Culture can facilitate the learning of another language because the process of learning another language is affected by the cultural schemas of the native language as indicated by Alptekin (1993), who claimed that familiar first-language cultural elements can facilitate reading comprehension and thus the acquisition of language. So unfamiliar cultural schemas would have the opposite effect.

Based on the discussion above, language and culture are both complex phenomena to describe and are related in a complex way. The exclusion of one from understanding the other is not valid (Jiang, 2001).

### **2.1.2. Cultural elements**

Culture has been neglected in language teaching contexts in much of the twentieth century, and when it is introduced, it takes the form of a general presentation of the forms of life of native speakers, especially in the United Kingdom or United States (Gray, 2010a). In the domain of teaching English as a foreign language, culture is typically represented by different kinds of information, such as geographical, historical, scientific, social information, and cultural products such as literary works and works of arts (Ekawati & Hamdani, 2012). In fact, English language teaching "has produced little in the way of a clearly articulated approach to the role of culture in language teaching" (Gray, 2010a, p.34).

EFL education involves not only teaching language but also teaching culture, as emphasized by many researchers, such as Kramsch (1998) and Byram (1997), because culture is an integral part of a language class. On the top of this, every item in the textbook

could carry a cultural aspect, as stated by Gray (2000) and Adaskou et al. (1990). EFL textbooks “are highly wrought artefacts and carriers of complex cultural messages.” (Gray, 2006, p. 14). Dorottya (2008) defined cultural elements as shown in Table 2.1 (as cited in Swe, 2009, p. 33):

Table 2.1:

*Cultural Elements (Dorottya, 2008, cited in Swe, 2009, p.33)*

Culture		
Civilization	Behaviour and Speech	Text/Discourse Structure and Skills
History Geography Tradition Customs Institutions Economy Arts Science Literature Popular Culture Values Administrative and other practicalities Cultural connotations of vocabulary Socio-linguistic features, etc.	Patterns Greeting, leave taking Starting a conversation Inviting opinions Expressing opinions Agreeing, Disagreeing Interrupting Requesting, refusing Socializing Advice, suggestions Visiting, telephoning Complaining, criticizing Complimenting Pragmatic features Body language Cultural dimensions, etc.	Discourse features Developing arguments Supporting arguments Linking and connecting ideas Cohesion & Coherence Logic, relevance Figures of speech Mediation: translation Interpretation, summarizing Discourse process and skills Focusing on issues Researching a topic Relating to audiences Developing and structuring ideas Drafting, re-writing, etc.

Any topic can be discussed from a specific cultural point of view. Cunningsworth (2005) indicated, “If [coursebooks] have any subject content, coursebooks will directly or indirectly communicate sets of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up” (p. 90). Cunningsworth (2005) confirmed, “A curriculum (and teaching materials form part of this) cannot be neutral because it has to reflect a view of social order and express a value system, implicitly or explicitly” (p. 90). Robinson (1988) indicated that a topic like food could convey a cultural message. For example, some traditional holidays may feature particular foods being eaten, like eggs being connected to the holiday Easter in England.

In this way, when one studies geography in school, he or she perhaps learn that the weather in England is rainy, which British people may not like (culturally). However, because of drought in Saudi Arabia, Saudis possibly may believe it would be perfect to live in England. In physics, one learns that a volt is a measurement unit, but it is named after a scientist named Alessandro Volta from an Italian culture.

Regarding the topic of work, children possibly may work in some cultures, while others may go to school and work at the same time. Perhaps, some types of jobs are looked down upon in some cultures. For example, Saudi men may not accept jobs as house cleaners. It is also possible that some cultures have jobs that are not available in other cultures. Regarding the topic of ailments, a disease is not cultural, but it could be people's attitudes to it and how they treat it that is cultural. For example, mental health related disorders are dealt with much transparency in UK but in my culture, one may feel shame to talk or to seek professional help. Some diseases may be believed to be caused by an evil eye in most Muslim culture, but this belief is invalid in Western culture.

Studying abroad as a topic carries cultural information about a specific culture and provides a conversational communication context for contact between native and non-native speakers in EFL textbooks. Adaskou et al. (1990) speaks about how teaching materials can convey cultural content through several “Strategies for warranting the use of the foreign language—English, say—by nationals of the learners' country include: —an English-speaking schoolboy and/or schoolgirl on a visit to the country in question, possibly staying with a family who can speak English” (p. 5).

In discourse, a Saudi speaker using the phrase ‘God willing’ instead of ‘hopefully’ is a feature of Saudi spoken English. Debates are part of the writing style and are related to issues of formality and informality. Debating in English is different from doing so in Arabic.

For example, the norm in Arabic is to find a Quranic verse or *hadith* (the Prophet's sayings and acts). In English, most debates do not require the use of religion.

Drinking alcohol in the target culture is allowed, but alcohol is prohibited in the students' own culture due to Islamic beliefs. People from different cultures disagree about what is controversial and sensitive. Many issues prove to be different, at least in the KSA, such as regarding music, women driving cars, swear words, consuming pork and alcohol, nightclubs, relations before marriage, and living separately from one's parents. For Saudis, taboo language like 'f\*\*\*' is a sensitive issue and avoided in communication because it indicates low morals and is against religious beliefs. According to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), 'God hates filthy deeds and filthy speech'. Since long ago, Arabs have avoided some taboo language because a curse like 'son of a b\*\*\*\*' might lead to killing because it is an invitation to fight. It is also illegal in many Arab countries (see Stewart, Feb. 2021<sup>2</sup>). Oppositely, English native speakers may consider the use of swear words as part of emotional language, rather than as an insult.

According to Adaskou et al. (1990), culture can be defined in relation to language teaching using the four senses:

*The aesthetic sense:* Culture with a capital C: the media, the cinema, music (whether serious or popular) and, above all, literature.

*The sociological sense:* Culture with a small c: the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions.

*The semantic sense:* The conceptual system embodied in the language and, according to the [Sapir-Whorf] Hypothesis, conditioning all our perceptions and our thought processes . . . Many semantic areas (e.g., food, clothes, institutions) are culturally distinctive because they relate to a particular way of life—that is, to our sociological sense of culture. For instance, you cannot learn to use the names of meals without learning the main meal times. . . On the other hand, some more general conceptual areas

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<sup>2</sup> This article narrates a current case of a British woman held in Dubai after 'swearing in a WhatsApp message'.

may be the same in different societies using the same language: time and space relations, emotional states, colours, lexical hyponymy.

*The pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) sense:* The background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication:

—the ability to use appropriate exponents of the various communicative functions;

—the ability to use appropriate intonation patterns;

—the ability to conform to norms of politeness, where different from the learners' culture, including taboo avoidance;

—awareness of conventions governing interpersonal relations—questions of status, obligation, licence, where different from the learners' culture;

—finally and above all, familiarity with the main rhetorical conventions in different written genres e.g., different types of letters and messages, form-filling, advertisements. (p. 3–4)

The above quote provides specific definitions of the elements of culture that can be grouped under each of its dimensions. Moreover, Adaskou et al. (1990) used these categories of culture and provided examples from each category in their project: designing a national English course book in Morocco. Nevertheless, they indicated that the elements of each category of culture represent the English native speakers' cultures and the categories may not be of equal importance. For example, Adaskou et al. (1990) stressed the importance of the semantic and pragmatic senses of culture in language teaching because of their role in communication, particularly the pragmatic sense. Pragmatic competence is responsible for the speaker appropriately accomplishing communicative tasks within a certain social and cultural context (Nguyen, 2011). This implies that pragmatic knowledge can differ between a native English speaker and EFL student. Accordingly, the mismatch between students' pragmatic cultural knowledge is predicted to be a barrier to effective communication in the target language. Many other studies have indicated the importance of developing English

learners' pragmatic competence for many reasons. For example, inappropriate second language pragmatics seem to be less tolerated by native speakers than grammatical errors and might be considered impolite (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). This is due to the fact that native speakers might be unable to recognize these pragmatic failures as grammatical errors because the non-native speakers appear to have adequate fluency in writing and speaking (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2015). For example, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015) indicated that pragmatic failures might usually be the result of the students' pragmatic transfer from their first language and culture or their use of English as a lingua franca (i.e., non-native English speakers interacting with each other in English). These pragmatic choices can cause pragmatic failure in native speaker versus non-native speaker interaction. For example, the use of the expression "thank you in advance" in an email to a lecturer who is a native speaker might have a negative connotation to a native speaker because it implies that the request is guaranteed to be fulfilled. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2015) commented that "it can be argued that such a presupposition in hierarchical relationships can be seen as quite inappropriate, even when the request falls within the students' rights and the faculty's obligations" (p. 421). In addition, English learners have limited L2 pragmatic comprehension and production compared to their English accuracy (Kasper, 1997; Taguchi, 2005, 2008a, 2008b). Studies on L2 pragmatics have maintained that L2 learners' pragmatic competence can be enhanced via instruction (See for example Bouton, 1988; Bouton, 1992, 1994a; Bouton, 1994b; Kasper, 1997). Thus, adequate pragmatic input has to be included in English instructional materials in order to provide English learners with the opportunity to choose between their pragmatic knowledge of first language and target language under the condition that their choice does not cause a communicative breakdown and suit the learners' own culture (Nguyen, 2011).

As indicated in the above quotation of Adaskou et al. (1990) definition of culture, the semantic category of culture cannot be separated from the sociological sense of culture. In

contrast, Adaskou et al. (1990) declared that the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture are important for some reasons. Among these reasons is that elements of these senses of culture help students espouse an international understanding and eliminate negative stereotypes and biases (Seelye, 1974), gain more understanding and respect of their own culture when they compare it to the target culture (Byram, 1986), facilitate visits or communication with native speakers of the target culture, have a language course that is based on topics from different disciplines, and become motivated to learn the language (as cited in Adaskou et al., 1990).

For this study, the way that Adaskou et al. (1990) define culture is important for the purpose of the study because it integrates general categories that can include many examples of cultural elements that could be included in EFL textbooks. According to Ahmad and Shah (2014), Adaskou et al. (1990)'s categories of culture include the usual topics of EFL textbooks such as food. According to Gray (2010a), this framework has received positive comments in literature. Nevertheless, McKay (2002) indicated that this framework is difficult to include because, for example, it is not clear what particular ways of life are going to be included, and that the English native speakers' norms should not be the only valid way of learning English because such assumption ignored the students' other learning goals.

Some suggestions might support the effective application of this framework in EFL textbooks. For example, Tomalin (2008) indicated that it is necessary to teach elements of different cultures, not only those of British or U.S. culture, perhaps also local cultures (including languages) within the U.K., in which there are 4 major local cultures, as well as minor local cultures. The local culture of students and the culture of the target language are important to include in EFL textbooks, too (Mishan, 2005). An appropriate selection of these elements is needed to match the requirements of the context of learning indicated by Holliday (1994) because some cultural elements might be inappropriate to the students' culture but

necessary to learn UK culture, as indicated by Graves (2000) and Gray (2000). Nevertheless, there is always a room for adaptation when cultural elements are not appropriate for EFL textbooks (Gray, 2000, 2010a). However, the researcher believed that the choice of the cultural elements might be a problem in some cultures, but the way it is presented in the EFL textbook and the methodology adopted for teaching strange or alien elements to students is a key factor of effectively teaching cultural elements. For example, a conversation between two people about drinking alcohol is not appropriate in Muslim culture and is thus not appropriate for inclusion in EFL textbooks in a country like Saudi Arabia. However, it can be included as a prohibited act for children under 18 years old in the United Kingdom or as a conversation wherein a Muslim customer in a restaurant asks the waiter whether the dish contains alcohol. It can be also included for a pedagogical purpose, thereby raising the students' intercultural understanding. For example, in many situations in this country (i.e., the United Kingdom), the waiters and sellers tell their customers about the suitability of food to their religious beliefs, such as this meat is Halal in the case of Muslims, or this sweet is suitable for vegetarians and does not contain alcohol, etc. Gender depiction and relations may be another area, too.

As such, I modified Adaskou et al. (1990) framework to elicit some information about the students' interests regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks. For example, I added two sections related to the cultures whose cultural items the students were interested in learning about and the way to teach the items the students needed in their English classes.

## **2.2. Challenges in teaching and learning culture in an English language teaching classroom**

There are challenges in teaching and learning English language with reference to culture come in different forms. They are related either to the students or the teachers.



### 2.2.1. Challenges related to the students

Students' motivation is one of the challenges for not teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks. For example, the attitudes of learners toward the target culture can affect the process of language learning because when these attitudes are negative, the students will be demotivated to learn language (Ahmad & Shah, 2014). For example, in their study, Ahmad and Shah (2014) investigated Saudi university students' attitudes toward the cultural content of their English textbooks and toward learning English with references to the target culture of the English language. The results indicated that the students had negative attitudes toward English language learning and the target culture of English language even though they understood the importance of learning English. Ahmad and Shah (2014) explained this paradox by the fact that Saudis did not generally have positive attitudes toward studying, and they considered English to be an obstacle to getting a certificate, which was their ultimate goal in order to get a job. The rate of dropping out of college is high in the preparatory year because English is included as a compulsory course. In addition, the neutralization of the cultural content of their English textbooks is the reason behind the students' consideration of the appropriateness of the cultural content of their English textbooks, as they were using a Saudi special edition of a global English textbook which does not emphasize a particular English culture, such as American or British. This very finding is the reason behind the teachers' indication that the cultural content of the students' textbooks did not result in changes in the students' attitudes toward the target culture of the English language.

Other factors can contribute to the negative attitudes of the students toward the target culture of the English language. For example, parents' attitudes toward the culture of the target language can affect the students' attitudes toward the culture. Ahmad and Shah (2014) indicated that complaints from parents in Saudi Arabia and Middle Eastern countries about the inappropriate cultural content of English textbooks resulted in the neutralizing of the

cultural content of English textbooks, as parents had unwelcome attitudes toward Western values (Alfahadi, 2012).

The other factor might be related to the way of teaching English. For example, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and its related practices including group work might cause the students' negative attitudes toward learning English, thus influencing their motivation. Unfavorable resistance might be faced from the students due to the cultural context of their teaching. Teaching English requires being sensitive to the cultural context of learners (Gray, 2000; Liu, 1998). Thus, EFL material designers should recognize the importance of the culture of teaching when they attempt to select the appropriate methodology for EFL materials (McKay, 2003a; Melliti, 2013; Stapleton, 2000). For example, according to Liu (1998), what is considered an effective teaching method in the West for English as a second language (ESL) teachers might not be considered practical or effective for EFL students. Some of the methods used in the target culture, such as having a learner-centered English class, are faced with resistance in cultures that are used to having classes that are teacher centered. For example, Chowdhury (2003) investigated using CLT in Bangladesh. The teachers considered a curriculum that adopted a learner-centered approach to contradict their students' cultural educational practices. Furthermore, Ellis (1996) suggested that the teaching method has to be in agreement with the students' own cultures. Edge (1987) stated that some activities, such as task-based and problem-solving ones, can be considered alien in some educational cultural contexts. For Flowerdew (1998), English language teachers need to foster collaborative learning strategies and create a non-stressful learning environment for students. Thus, she found that group work might be more suitable for such cultural groups to avoid a stressful environment.

Young (2000) indicated that popular practices today might lose their popularity tomorrow and the fact that "the cyclical nature of things, and the habit of past practices for

coming back into fashion” (p.73) necessitate the no total avoidance of traditional methods, as students may prefer traditional methods over innovative ones. Thus, teachers should respect their students’ cultural needs. Similarly, Brown (2000) indicated that any new practice and or quick change in the foreign language teaching context of English to achieve the communicative approach of English teaching which is one of several, including task based, lexical approach, which come under the communicative umbrella, might be faced with resistance from students, teachers’ peers, and administrators. He stressed the importance of adopting a gradual change, or what Holliday (1997) called ensuring cultural continuity, which can be achieved by the no total avoidance of currently used practices. In other words, it is important to do culturally traditional and familiar ways of teaching and learning in a different way to use the new and communicative way of teaching and learning English. For example, teachers may use pair work as a solution for large classes instead of using the group work technique for an activity. Another suggested solution is doing traditional language exercises in a more creative, interesting, and communicative way. Nevertheless, Brown (2000) indicated that these suggested strategies for teachers’ training are not going to solve all of the problems and ensure the application of the principle of cultural continuity, as some teachers in his study were not convinced about adapting their English textbooks in the abovementioned way.

Ultimately, Littlewood (2000) confirmed that it is necessary to re-evaluate teachers’ perceptions of the common stereotypes of the preferred learning styles of the students because Asian students have positive attitudes toward the practices that accompany the communicative approach of teaching, such as learning independently and being active in class. Interestingly, there was no significant difference between the Asian students in the same country and those in Europe. Nevertheless, Littlewood (2000) stressed the importance of not neglecting the impact of culture on behavior and learning styles. Needless to say,

Holliday (1994) stressed the importance of considering the impact of the English teaching cultural context.

Last but not least, one of the challenges that can influence students' learning of language with culture is the learners' proficiency, as students may have limited lexicons for handling their communicative contexts in English and thus learning language with their cultures (Driscoll, Earl, & Cable, 2013). This is important in deciding the type of cultural content for the students. For example, Ahmad and Shah (2014) claimed that students with high proficiency can understand cultural elements more than ones with lower proficiency can. Yuet and Chan (2010) investigated the effect of second-language proficiency and background knowledge on the reading comprehension of Chinese students. The ones with low proficiency benefited more from background knowledge on the reading comprehension than did the group of participants with high proficiency because high proficiency may imply greater background knowledge. Their performance was assessed on both a reading test with familiar cultural content, and a reading proficiency with no references to the students' cultures.

### **2.2.2. Challenges related to teachers**

Teachers might be affected by the many challenges associated with teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks. Lavrenteva and Orland-Barak (2015) stated that teachers' attitudes toward the importance of teaching language in addition to culture are an important educational concern in recent research. Holliday (1994) believed that parents and the community in general are major factors in constructing teachers' attitudes toward teaching language along with culture. According to Ahmad and Shah (2014), parents might affect teachers' attitudes toward exposing students to the target culture of English. As a matter of fact, teachers might have negative attitudes toward the target culture of English. For example, Alfahadi (2012) indicated that Saudi English teachers might have negative attitudes toward the target culture of English due to the negative stereotypes of Muslims in Hollywood movies

and/or the restriction of terrorism to Saudis and Muslims in the Western media due to the accusation that Saudi and Muslim passengers caused the distress of 9/11 in the American society. In the researchers' point of view, media in the Arabic and Muslim countries might perform the same role in enhancing negative stereotypes of Western culture. Eventually, this would affect the attitudes of the students, English language teachers, and parents toward the culture of the target language.

Teachers' negative attitudes toward the target culture of English might result from the fact that it may have contradicting values to local cultures so that they preferred to teach culture-free materials. For example, Alfahadi (2012) claimed that people in Saudi Arabia generally may have negative attitudes toward English culture due to the fact that they believe in the necessity of preserving their own cultural values, as Western values might contradict with their own. Indeed, the neutralization of the cultural content of EFL textbooks might not be a solution for changing the students' attitudes toward learning English along with its target culture as indicated in Ahmad and Shah (2014)'s study. Instead, it may be necessary to adopt cultural elements from the state of English as a global language in addition to elements from the students' own cultures. In addition, it might be necessary to present the cultural elements in EFL materials in a way that develops the students' intercultural communicative competence (Alptekin, 2002; Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2000, 2003a). This might be a better solution because adopting cultural elements only from the students' own cultures might be inadequate for teaching a language such as English because it is used basically cross-culturally (McKay, 2003a). Also, adopting only cultural elements from the target culture might include unfamiliar cultural elements that can demotivate the students (Alptekin, 1993).

Moreover, teachers might be less motivated to adapt EFL textbooks according to this suggested solution or to try to teach English along with culture. For example, Forman (2014) indicated that the interviewed Thai teachers in his study did not prefer to adapt the cultural

content of their English textbooks because they did not think they had enough mastery of the language; they thought that these materials had a prestigious status because they were composed by native speakers and were presented in an attractive way. Other reasons for non-involvement in adapting the cultural content of their English textbooks is time pressure, large class size, marking exams, teaching loads, low salary, and having another job.

Another challenge for teaching culture along with language—a challenge related to the teachers' motivation in teaching language—is the use of taboo language. For example, Liyanage, Walker, Bartlett, and Guo (2015) indicated that neglecting taboo language, such as swearing, in the formal teaching of language is a barrier to successful communication and to the development of the students' communicative competence. They suggested preparing students in a language classroom as a solution. Nevertheless, they indicated that teaching taboo language in the classroom is a challenge because it is an under-researched area in literature. Another reason is that English language teachers might face difficulties with teaching this cultural aspect of English because it is not included in the students' EFL textbooks and because of the teachers' hesitation to teach them this, as they think it is inappropriate in formal institutions. In their study, they interviewed English language teachers to explore their views about introducing these cultural elements in class. In this study, only the appropriateness of the lexical item “bloody,” which is not appropriate in Australian culture and one of the mildest of “swearing” words, has been examined. Some teachers indicated that raising students' attention to this issue must be a pedagogical goal in class. Furthermore, they stated that introducing these cultural elements to the students could help them to avoiding misunderstanding their usage, as the students are likely to encounter these cultural elements in their daily lives, as in movies and popular music, and taboo language represents a part of human culture, as it is an emotional feature of language. Thus, the teachers introduced them informally in class according to their students' needs and

interests but not as part of the formal pedagogy. Nevertheless, others neglected their learners' needs and became inactive regarding this issue because it was not a part of their curricula.

Another factor that can affect teaching English along with culture is the learning environment. According to Forman (2014), the learning environment, whether it is a second-language or a foreign-language teaching environment, can affect teaching English along with culture. For example, in most EFL, classes have large numbers of students, English is not the medium of instruction, and a non-native speaker teaches the English language, etc. In the case of having a native-English-speaker teacher in an EFL teaching environment, this teacher might face an uncomfortable situation with his or her students, or what Carol Archer (1986) called "culture bumps." (as cited in Jiang, 2001). Also, the teacher might expect something different from his or her students' expectations because he or she has a different culture from his or her students' cultures, or what Thorp (1991) called "confused encounters" (as cited in Jiang, 2001). Jiang (2001) provided examples of these situations in class. For example, she indicated that because people perceive politeness in a different way, a cultural bump can happen in this case by accepting compliments, as most English native speakers do, by saying "Thank you" to show modesty. This is opposite what a Chinese speaker would do; he or she would not accept the compliment for the same reason, to show modesty. Jiang (2001) suggested some tips for dealing with these situations in the classroom. For example, teachers should adopt unbiased attitudes to understand such a situation. They must be tolerant because people have different ways of looking at one thing. Another tip is that teachers should give their students the opportunity to explain their behaviors. Teachers should find cultural excuses for their students' unexpected behaviors before reacting. They should depersonalize these uncomfortable situations and use them to teach the target culture along with the language.

Finally, one of the challenges of teaching language along with culture is determining

the most effective way of doing this. For example, Luk (2012) stressed the importance of developing English EFL students' intercultural communicative competence, as English is used as a lingua franca with people from different cultures. In his study, he stated that the cultural aspect of language is of secondary importance to teachers, as teachers focus on developing the linguistic part of language and using a superficial method to integrate culture with language in actual practice, although they realize that language and culture are inseparable. In fact, according to Jiang (2010), "few have ever mentioned how ICC [Intercultural communicative competence] can be integrated in textbooks" (p.85) in previous literature. Nevertheless, there are dedicated books suggesting ways of teaching culture in language classrooms (see Johnson & Rinvolutri, 2011; Moran, 2001). Besides, many studies suggested techniques for teaching culture in EFL classrooms (see Cullen & Sato, 2000). Some other researchers suggested a model for teaching language and culture (see Byram, 1991) and a model for teaching and assessing ICC (see Byram, 1997). Nevertheless, Jiang (2010) indicated that textbook's activities can be developed to focus not only on the linguistic competence but also on ICC and "the extent to which the activities encourage ICC not only relies on textbooks; teachers and learners also play an important role" (Jiang, 2010, p. 85).

Others such as Luk (2012) and Kramersch (1995) required that culture teaching and learning has to be done in an a dialogic, interlingual, and intercultural way. Ryan (1998) indicated that integrating language with culture is not a matter of transmitting a number of cultural facts but rather enabling students to interpret, relate, and search for meanings in a dialogic approach to explore culture with their teacher and/or writers' points of view as indicated by Ekawati and Hamdani (2012). This way is challenged by the obstacle of students' low English proficiency when they engage in the approach of teaching language along with culture to develop the students' intercultural communication in a dialogic approach (Luk, 2012; Tomlinson et al., 2001). This is because students might become silent



or express themselves in a very superficial way because they use simple words (Luk, 2012). Tomlinson et al. (2001) suggested that teachers should provide their students with the opportunity to prepare themselves with the help of their first languages, as students might need more time to construct their responses via their first languages instead of being forced to provide immediate responses. This approach might be challenged by the degree of the familiarity of the cultural content to the students (Alptekin, 1993). Luk (2012) stressed the importance of introducing cultural elements to the students that are different from the students' own cultures and that are not necessarily a part of what they are used to encountering in order to develop their intercultural and interlingual competence. Similarly, Alptekin (1993) explained that familiar cultural schemas have to be connected, in a way, to unfamiliar schema. For example, this may involve using comparisons to show similarities and differences, and or adopting common shared experiences between human beings in EFL materials. Other examples might include situations from the students' daily lives, situations involving the status of English as an international context, and appropriate dialogues between native and non-native English speakers (Alptekin, 2002; Shin et al., 2011).

With regard to the part related to exploring and searching culture, as in some foreign English language teaching contexts, students used to be passive in their classrooms and receptive of knowledge, while the teacher was the source of knowledge (Luk, 2012). Luk (2012) indicated that students might be better than their teachers in popular culture, and thus, teachers have to encourage their students to search and enlarge their cultural knowledge about different cultures as indicated by Atkinson (1999). Another challenge associated with applying this approach as indicated by Luk (2012) is the teachers' lack of knowledge about different cultures and/or the target culture of English, as in the case of non-native-English-speaker teachers, and their lack of knowledge about the local culture, as in the case of native-English-speaker teachers. He suggested that non-native and native teachers of English should

be engaged in collaborative dialogues with each other and complement each other's lack of knowledge. In addition, they should work on developing their cultural awareness (Shin et al., 2011).

In my point of view, teaching language along with culture seems to be an ideal approach, but it might be difficult to apply as discussed above, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabia. As an English teacher in Saudi Arabia, I can claim that this model is not a part of teacher education and training in Saudi Arabia, nor are the Saudi students familiar with such a way of teaching in general, as it requires students to reflect, discuss, and evaluate matters in an unbiased way. In this way, teachers' education is key in informing the teachers about the hidden messages of the cultural content because "a methodology is only effective to the extent that teachers and students are willing to accept and implement it with good faith" (Hu, 2002, p. 102). Nevertheless, gradual change and connecting the traditional to the new methodology is recommended in this case as suggested by Brown (2000).

### **2.3. EFL materials**

The concept of language learning materials in an English as a foreign or second language teaching context has a loose meaning because it includes any tangible, visual, and audible objects that can be used in a language learning situation, such as stories, students' own experiences, newspapers, realia, fieldwork, interviews, guest speakers, anecdotes, souvenirs, photographs, surveys, illustrations, and literature (Cullen and Sato, 2000); or what McGrath (2002) calls text materials that are designed carefully as textbooks or selected purposefully for specific teaching goals as authentic materials; for example, audio recordings (McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2012b). Examples are countless, as indicated by Tomlinson (2012b), who stated that materials could be anything used to teach language learners. Gilmore (2007) indicated that authenticity is a loose concept because "it can be situated in either the text itself, in the participants, in the social or cultural situation and purposes of the communicative

act, or some combination of these” (p. 98). Thus, he stated, “An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (Morrow 1977, p.13 as cited in Gilmore, 2007, p. 98).

Nevertheless, regarding the term materials, this study focuses on the course books (i.e., textbooks that are designed for a specific course) because the basis of many teaching contexts is the use of a single textbook (McGrath, 2002). The most commonly used books are commercial English textbooks (Richards, Tung, & Ng, 1992), or what is called global books (Gray, 2010a) or locally produced materials for a specific teaching context (Dat, 2008). Another trend is the localizing of global textbooks (Gray, 2010a), which is the current situation in Saudi Arabia. According to Forman (2014) and Waters (2009), locally produced textbooks are used by the state schools, while most private institutions and universities are able to choose among textbooks in the market and prefer global textbooks for their prestigious status, as they are produced in the United Kingdom or the United States to represent the target language of most learners, which control the market and have appealing presentations. Such textbooks may be too expensive for their buyers as learners or like in Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education (MOE), the authority to decide which series should be taught in state schools, was trapped by the fact that it has to deal with contracts that forced it to dedicate a share for each publishing house (Aljombaz, November 09, 2018).

### **2.3.1. EFL textbooks VS authentic materials**

Textbooks plays a central role in the process of language learning and teaching and might be the major source of linguistic and cultural input in a teaching context (Azizifar, Koosha, & Lotfi, 2010). According to Riazi (2003), the EFL textbook is regarded as the second most important parameter after the teacher in a teaching context. Indeed, the EFL textbook has many consumers, including teachers, students, and administrators, and is a basic component in the teaching context (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Sheldon, 1988). According to

Sheldon (1988), textbooks have pedagogical importance, while Cortazzi and Jin (1999) claimed that textbooks can perform various functions in the teaching context. A textbook can be a teacher, because it informs the students about the target culture. It can also be a map because it can direct its users in the program about the linguistic and cultural input that need to be covered and also the order of that coverage, and its user can revise previous lessons. It is a resource that contains various activities and information. A textbook can also function as a trainer for especially new teachers, particularly when it is complemented by teacher guides, a point asserted by Ur (1996). It can be an authority because it is written by experts in the field. However, it can also be a de-skinner if it restricts the teachers' autonomy. Last but not least, it can be an ideology when it contributes to forming the students and teachers view about culture. It may also inform their view of methods of learning a language.

Sheldon (1988) suggested some advantages of using textbooks, including saving time for teachers in the preparation for their lessons and the designing of materials for their students. They also reduce external pressure that can constrain the process of designing their own materials. Graves (2000) and Guerrettaz and Johnston (2013) added that textbooks reassure students because they set the course's direction, content, and structure for students, are considered the base of assessment for teachers, and can include a package of supporting materials, including the teachers' guide, key answers, cassettes, and videos. In addition, they can ensure uniformity among the teachers who use the same book for the same level within the program or among consequent levels of a certain program that use one series of books. Similarly, McGrath (2002) and Tomlinson (2003) indicated that learners mostly relied on their EFL textbooks, for example revising what they learned in class so that it supports them outside their class (McGrath, 2002). Thus, it can provide security for students and less experienced teachers (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; McGrath, 2002; Ur, 1996). For Ur (1996) textbooks are economical, being less expensive than other materials such as computer

software, are convenient to carry, and enable students to develop their skills independently.

On the other hand, Graves (2000) and Ur (1996) commented that textbooks have some shortcomings. For example, the content might be irrelevant or inappropriate, including being culturally inappropriate, to the learners or does not match the students' level of knowledge. They might include outdated material, unsuitable to the period of a given course, or that the sequence of their content is difficult to follow. In addition, it may not cover all the skills or subskills planned to be achieved by the end of a course, varied activities, what a user prefers to have and is interested in according to their culture, gender, age, learning style, etc., plus when the use of textbooks is enforced by unifying the syllabus and methodology but ignoring the teachers' creativity and autonomy. Thus, many researchers such as Sheldon (1988) and Tomlinson (2003) advised not to use textbooks as the sole source for learning language in a language teaching context. EFL textbooks are limited (Tomlinson, 2013a) and need to be supplemented; however, supplementary materials should be used in an elective way. According to Hutchinson and Torres (1994), lessons are dynamic interactions that the learners and teachers need to manage via the textbook. In this way, textbooks should not control the lesson's content or sequencing. However, the book series should ensure teachers' and students' autonomy.

Regarding the use of other sources for input in an EFL class, according to Cooker (2010), authentic materials such as TV programs, films, and music are fun and motivating, and they apparently reduce the seriousness of language class activities. Mukundan (2010) stated that they can balance the mismatch resulting from the different preferences in learning styles and teaching methods because multimedia resources are “‘experiential’ rather than ‘studial’ in their orientations, it is believed that multimedia use will help them adjust accordingly by allowing them to experience language use in many more ways than the textbook is capable of providing”. (p. 109).

Cooker (2010) also indicated that the difficulty of using authentic materials can be reduced when they are used in an innovative way. Being innovative with the use of authentic materials can be enacted in many ways. Among the methods provided by Cooker (2010) was reading authentic text in the first language in order to write an article in the target language on the same topic, and “films in DVD format offer valuable support as the closed captions can be switched on and read whilst watching the film” (p. 111).

Using multimedia for teaching/learning purposes illustrates the language and culture integration. Kramersch and Andersen (1999) indicated that using multimedia in EFL classes would help in not restricting culture to factual information about the target culture but on showing how language is used in a real-life situation from a specific culture on screen.

However, my concern is that the focus on adopting audiovisual authentic materials as the most attractive way to engage the students could be a trap. This is because both authentic and inauthentic materials can be used for the same purpose (informing the curriculum), as stated by Carter (1998). According to Harwood (2010), many researchers agree with this claim although they understand the advantages and weaknesses of each type of material because “authenticity doesn’t necessarily mean ‘good’, just as contrivance doesn’t necessarily mean ‘bad.’” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 98). For example, Liyanage et al. (2015) emphasized that the issue of taboo language is evident in authentic materials. These authentic materials could be too difficult for learners and need to be adjusted to meet the students’ needs (Carter, 1998).

Mukundan (2010) warned against the temptation to use multimedia resources because the overuse of these resources can mislead educators in driving “pedagogically sound methodology” (p. 109). He exemplified how multimedia resources could do this by describing the experience of the Malaysia teaching courseware that commanded teaching in a strict way, while “the teacher should direct the learners with the use of the script into the

expected as well as unexpected in joint exploration of language experience” (p. 109).

According to Tomlinson (2013b), the use of technology in education is directed by prospects of technology rather than pedagogical principles. Technology could reduce the interaction in class and “dehumanize language learning” (Tomlinson, 2013b, p. 351). This may depend on how technology is used. Additionally, it is expensive and replicates textbook activities in a less efficient way.

Grimm (2013) wondered whether digital media could be a threat to education because of its limitless forms and fast speed of change, which would make the task of integration into classes more difficult, especially when the classes are not equipped. With regard to learners, she argued that even though members of the current generation are commonly considered “digital natives” (p. 229), in reality, they are often digitally illiterate when it comes to making sensible use of the many tools offered to them through the Internet.

The golden rule for the choice of materials in EFL classes, as suggested by Harwood (2010), is to understand the purposes of using these materials and their priorities in class and “balancing the authentic against the inauthentic” (p. 6). The use of technology in EFL classes “requires resources, time, effort, and patience” (Harwood, 2010, p. 229), and the value of these tools needs to be examined carefully and employed in a selective and strategic way (Grimm, 2013).

Needless to say, the most common choice for materials is a course book, as indicated by Ahn (2013), and it is the curriculum in many teaching contexts, as explained by Garinger (2002), but he indicated elsewhere (Garinger, 2001) that a textbook alone is not enough to meet all the students’ interests, so adapting the cultural content is a possible method, as emphasized by Swe (2016). For example, Hui (2010) indicated that textbooks are the main means for learning language and culture in Chinese secondary schools so that teachers may need to adapt it with appropriate authentic materials.

### 2.3.2. Usage of EFL textbooks Vs adaptation

According to some researchers like Hutchinson and Torres (1994), Grammatosi and Harwood (2013), Gray (2000), and Mohammadi and Abdi (2014), there are few studies that describe the teachers' usage of textbooks and their beliefs or attitudes toward them. McGrath (2006)'s study showed that teachers have their own perception of the use of books that might contradict or describe their usage of the books and that learners reflect either positive or negative attitudes toward textbooks in terms of either their suitability or the ways in which their teachers use them. The usefulness of textbooks can be affected by the performance of the teachers (which may be related to their teaching qualifications and experience) in the class, their own preference or perception, and beliefs of their students' needs and interests (Grammatosi & Harwood, 2013). The percentage of using the book might vary from one context to another. For example, in Lee and Bathmaker's (2007) study, the teachers in Singapore have always used the textbook with additional supporting materials either of their own design or commercially made materials. On the other hand, Alfahadi (2012) indicated that teachers in Saudi Arabia rarely design additional materials and relied mostly on the textbook. However, other studies claimed that textbooks are the sole source of materials for teachers in their context (Aliakbari, 2004; Chu & Young, 2007; Lee, 2005). Textbooks can be used simply as the curriculum (Forman, 2014). Harwood (2005) described this way of using EFL textbooks as the "slavish manner" (p. 152). Swe (2016) and Albedaiwi (2014) claimed that many Asian teaching contexts follow this type of textbook usage in a teaching context. This is actually a widespread phenomenon in many contexts around the world (Chu & Young, 2007). Nevertheless, As Islam (2003) stated that financial reasons or lack of teachers' time or experience might hinder them from designing their own materials particularly when school policy insist that teachers use only the textbook and teachers guide and use nothing outside of that material. In fact, some teaching contexts are less privileged and do not have



the opportunity to obtain language materials outside the classroom, so they rely heavily on EFL textbooks. Swe (2016) described the situation in the far district in the north western part of Myanmar as having some difficulties in accessing local libraries or the Internet. In the case of Saudi Arabia, teachers are restricted by the use of textbooks (Albedaiwi, 2014; Alshumaimeri, 1999). They are supposed to follow the series prescribed from the MOE according to the timeframe and the provided course plan. Thus, this might cause the difficulty beyond adapting the textbooks (Al-Sadan, 2000). Regardless, of the teaching context restrictions on adapting EFL textbooks, there are always other methods used for adapting EFL textbooks and familiarizing the students were listed by McGrath (2013) as the “principles” (p.66) that justify adapting EFL materials and considered by Swe (2016) with little modification to be processes of adapting EFL textbooks:

1. localization (materials need to be perceived as relevant by learners),
2. modernization (be up to date),
3. individualization (cater to differences in learning styles),
4. personalization (encourage learners to speak/write about themselves and their own experiences),
5. humanizing (engage the whole person),
6. simplification/complexification/differentiation (be appropriate to learners’ level/offer an appropriate level of challenge), and
7. variety (i.e., to be varied), with different types of attractive materials. (p. 87)

Needless to say, teachers’ autonomy is an important part of the teaching profession (Albedaiwi, 2014; Huang, 2005). According to Alfahadi (2012), it is important to see how teachers can handle the challenges they face in striking a balance between the global or local demands of students and the administration. Thus, the educational system has to be flexible to such needs and capable of updating and progressing. In fact, there is a “need to see textbook

creation and teacher education as complementary and mutually beneficial aspects of professional development” (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p. 317).

#### **2.4. EFL materials evaluation**

Tomlinson (2003) defined materials evaluation as “a procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials. It involves making judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them” (p. 15). Thus, materials evaluation is an examination of the usefulness of learning materials in relation to a specific teaching context. Materials evaluation can help in refining, substituting, and proving specific types of materials that have not been used, in their usage, or after their usage (Farzaneh, Kohandani, & Nejadansari, 2014). Evaluation of EFL textbooks is beneficial for authors to review and amend their future editions. Littlejohn (2011) asserted that evaluating EFL materials helps in controlling the design and usage of them. It helps in the process of selecting the appropriate EFL textbook. Additionally, it helps administrators avoid wasting financial resources (Mukundan, 2007) because choosing an appropriate EFL textbook will last for a longer time. Thus, it has both financial and pedagogical importance (Sheldon, 1988). Sándorová (2014) thus called choosing the appropriate EFL textbook a tactical decision in education. Accordingly, EFL material evaluation is important in ensuring the principle of quality in the teaching or learning context (Kiely, 2009).

Nevertheless, the importance of conducting the process of evaluation is not well-known in many teaching contexts. For example, in my context, it is a task that has to be accomplished for administrative work and not for pedagogical purposes. It is not part of teachers’ training, and I have never thought of its importance except after studying the module of material design and evaluation at Essex University. Ansary and Babaii (2002) stated that teachers need to learn the essential skills for choosing the appropriate EFL textbook, and they should make a decision about the appropriateness of the materials

according to several circumstances, including time pressure (Ansary & Babaii, 2002). Moreover, materials evaluation can be considered a time-consuming task that requires a lot of effort (Nunan, 1995). Nevertheless, it is an important task due to its positive impact on the teaching and learning context and its direct impact on students and teachers (Cunningsworth, 2005; McGrath, 2002; Sheldon, 1988).

#### **2.4.1. Types of EFL material analysis and evaluation**

The procedure of materials evaluation can be done either before, during, or after the use of EFL materials, which is referred to as predictive, in-use, and retrospective evaluation, respectively (McGrath, 2002). A predictive evaluation can help in finding the potential or future performance of a course book. In-use evaluation can help in strengthening the value of the currently used materials and reduce their weaknesses by adapting them. Retrospective evaluation can help in understanding the extent to which the already used materials have matched the learning goals. The most common one is the predictive evaluation, but the most effective is the retrospective evaluation, due to the actual examination of the degree of suitability of the materials to the learning or teaching goals (Tomlinson, 2012a). Although establishing a direct connection between materials and what the learners have gained is very difficult.

These types can thus vary in the time of their application, their purposes, their degree of formality, the purposes of application, and their effectiveness in making an informed decision about the suitability of the instructional materials, thus replacing or adapting them (Tomlinson, 2003).

McGrath (2002) argued for the importance of adopting a cyclical approach to materials evaluation, or what Rea- Dickins and Germaine (1992) called a dynamic process. In other words, the three types of materials evaluation were considered stages by McGrath, who described each stage in detail. Actually, he stated that the systematic approach to materials

evaluation involves two dimensions. First, a macro dimension that consists of sequential stages, and second, a micro dimension that examines the techniques used in each stage. Nevertheless, he suspected the feasibility of applying these sequential stages due to the different circumstances of the teaching contexts. There is the question of who actually carries out the evaluation, since most teachers have very little time beyond teaching.

It is worth mentioning that McGrath suggested a pre-evaluation stage that included a context analysis and learners needs analysis. This preliminary stage can include a process of textbook analysis that is an objective description of the content of the book and does not involve a subjective judgment as evaluation. It seems that this suggested framework by McGrath for materials analysis and evaluation is an ideal one because each stage can complement the other in order to make an informed decision about the appropriateness of materials.

Cunningsworth (2005) identified two major approaches for course book evaluation: an impressionistic overview approach that involved a quick look into the content of the course book in order to have a first impression about the number of books. According to Cunningsworth, this can be considered a preliminary stage before an in-depth evaluation approach, which would entail a detailed, thorough systematic procedure done by the use of a checklist or questionnaire, and which can diagnose the limitations and assets of a selected course book in order to examine its appropriateness for a learning or teaching context. McGrath maintained that the impressionistic overview, the in-depth evaluation, and the use of a checklist are the basic methods used in previous literature with regards to textbook evaluation.

Evaluating a course book can involve the teacher, an experienced evaluator, the student (Ellis, 1997), or publishers and administrators (Gray, 2010a; Sheldon, 1988). Tomlinson, Dat, Masuhara, and Rubdy (2001), and Gray (2010a), recommended the inclusion

of all of these parties in evaluating the value of materials.

For a variety of purposes, many researchers and studies have proposed different approaches, guidelines, criteria, and already made checklists for general or specific contexts that can be conducted in either a subjective or objective way. These criteria are dependent on the teaching theories and learning style in applied linguistics (Tomlinson, 2013a). This can serve as the preference of a teaching context and educational goals of a specific context (Sheldon, 1988). Accordingly, the set of already designed guidelines for evaluating EFL materials has to be modified to suit the teaching and learning context requirements (Cunningsworth, 2005; Khodabakhshi, 2014; Sándorová, 2014; Sheldon, 1988).

To conclude, Cunningsworth (2005) and Sheldon (1988) indicated that there is no preferred method or a best way for evaluating EFL materials, only a way that is appropriate to the context. Moreover, they indicated that the criteria used for evaluating EFL materials should be practical in number and usage. Otherwise, the evaluator will get lost in unnecessary details.

#### **2.4.2. Elements in EFL textbooks that can be evaluated**

There are many elements of EFL materials that can undergo the process of evaluation and determine the choice of one particular textbook over another (Cunningsworth, 2005; McGrath, 2002; Sheldon, 1988). For example, the cost of an EFL textbook is an element that can be evaluated and can affect its selection (Cunningsworth, 2005; McGrath, 2002; Sheldon, 1988). For example, one of the series administered in Saudi Arabia published in Oxford publication was excluded from the pilot phase due to its expensive price, even though this series was recommended highly by the teachers and their supervisors, as reported by a supervisor (personal communication, 2015). The availability of EFL textbook is another element that can be evaluated (Cunningsworth, 2005) although nowadays the Internet has improved this situation. For example, regarding availability one of the series in Saudi Arabia

called *Flying High* is currently taught in most secondary state schools in Saudi Arabia because it is published by Saudi publishing institution with an agreement with Macmillan Education, as reported by a supervisor (personal communication, 2015). Thus, it is distributed in all the non-central cities of Saudi Arabia. Another factor is whether the textbook has supporting materials or bought as a package. Another element is the design, layout, presentation, and organization of its items, or whether it includes recycling units, the attractiveness of the cover of the textbook, and the size of the textbook (Cunningsworth, 2005). According to Hooman (2014), these physical elements of the textbooks are important for the students' convenience and have to be considered in the process of EFL textbook selection.

Moreover, the language items in the textbook can be evaluated. For example, the inclusion of a variety of accents in the recordings (Cunningsworth, 2005). The methodology used in a certain textbook as the variability and suitability of activities for the students' needs and their teaching context can be evaluated, or the language teaching approach can be underlined in the design of the items of the book (Cunningsworth, 2005). For example, Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) claimed that half of the Iranian students who participated in their study prefer to work independently. They explained that this very finding might be due to the fact that their textbook focused thoroughly on pair and group work and ignored their need for working individually. The cultural elements in an EFL textbook undergo the process of evaluation, including, for example, the topics used in an EFL textbook. Topics of an EFL textbook have to be evaluated according to the students' age, interests, and needs because they can affect the learning process either positively or negatively (Hooman, 2014). It is worth mentioning that there might be a misunderstanding of the process of evaluating the cultural content of English textbooks among teachers or evaluators. For example, my understanding of evaluating the cultural content of English textbooks was evaluating whether

the textbook included sensitive topics or elements that might clash with the values of my own culture, such as religious topics, politics, etc. Kramersch (1998) indicated that cultural elements might be unrecognized by teachers.

To conclude, although there are many elements in EFL textbooks that can determine their selection discussed in literature as indicated above, the focus of this study is restricted to the evaluation of the cultural content of EFL textbooks used in state secondary schools in Saudi Arabia.

### **2.4.3. Evaluating cultural content of EFL textbooks**

Kubota (2003) asserted the need for evaluating the cultural content of EFL textbooks because of the assumption that they reflect a realistic depiction of English language and its culture. The fact that EFL textbooks are the typical or central way of learning about the target language and its culture in a teaching context especially in less advantaged teaching contexts necessitates the process of evaluating their cultural content (Swe, 2016). Holliday (1994) explained that learners are supposed to be exposed to a variety of cultural and linguistic input via their EFL textbook, thus learners in the process of their learning become familiar with the target culture that can enhance their proficiency and raise their cultural awareness, develop their intercultural competence, and form a positive cultural attitude toward the target culture. This indicates that evaluating the cultural content of EFL textbooks has both linguistic and pedagogical importance. Ndura (2004) confirmed that textbooks are a means for learning about the target culture as well as language explicitly and implicitly so that evaluating the cultural content can enhance the students' learning and minimize the negative impact of an inappropriate cultural content. Cunningsworth (2005) explained that the cultural elements can be included in an overt or covert way in an EFL textbook, which means that they cannot be neglected from the process of evaluation. According to Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990), every element can transfer a cultural element. Gray (2000) called English textbooks cultural

artefacts, which indicates that the elements of EFL textbooks can be linguistic and cultural at the same time. For example, when an evaluator evaluates a photo in a textbook in terms of its authenticity in a context like Saudi Arabia, he has to make sure that the pictures do not include adult females without scarfs or exposed parts of their bodies because it is not culturally acceptable in Saudi Arabia.

#### **2.4.3.1. Types of EFL textbooks according to their cultural content**

EFL textbooks vary in their types of the cultural content. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), three types of EFL textbooks are used around the world according to their cultural content: those derived from the students' native culture; those adopted from the cultures of English-speaking countries, and those that adopt cultural elements from different cultures around the world besides English-speaking countries. Accordingly, the authors called these materials "source culture materials," "target culture materials," and "international target culture materials," respectively. These three types of materials are constructed on three central views about how English should be taught with regard to culture. According to Alptekin and Alptekin (1984), the first view advocates believe that a language cannot be taught without consideration of its culture, and that including cultural elements from the students' native culture is useless. Thus, English instructional materials included cultural elements adopted from native English-speaking countries only in order to produce bilingual and bicultural English users. McKay (2003a) justified using the target culture as the only source for EFL materials by the fact that these materials are developed in Inner Circle countries (i.e., Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and the United States) indicated by Kachru (1977). Thus, using such cultural content is more economical for publishers to publish English textbooks using the social and cultural contexts of native speakers. It is compatible with Alptekin (1993)'s claim that the authors of textbooks reflect their own biases and views while designing EFL textbooks. Thus, it is difficult for native-speaker writers to



include other cultures than their own culture because there are also differences between American English, British English, Australian English etc. In addition, rapid profit and successful investment might be the goal of the authors and their publishers (Gray, 2010a; Sheldon, 1988) due to the fact that single target culture EFL textbooks is a consumer preference, as McKay (2000) indicated. Besides, this cultural content might be done as a kind of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) because having such content in EFL materials might affect English instruction by making it dependent on English native speakers (Alptekin, 1993; Gray, 2010a). Thus, such cultural content dominates most English textbooks (Gray, 2010a; Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011). Almost all EFL textbooks are single culture.

McKay (2000) stated that this type of EFL textbook might be of interest to the students due to the popular elements of target culture, such as movies and music. Other students might arrange for visiting English-speaking countries. Such purposes might motivate the students in their learning of English (Adaskou et al., 1990). Although many researchers, such as McKay (2003b) and Alptekin (2002), admitted that including cultural elements from the target culture in EFL materials can motivate students to learn English, they criticized reliance on this source as the only source of cultural elements. For example, Alptekin (2002) considered the native speaker model to be utopian. He said it is unrealistic because it does not reflect the status of English as an international language and is a linguistic myth because it represents a standardized model of a native speaker's language and culture. For others (Cook, 1999; Kramsch, 1998; McKay, 2003a), the concept of a native speaker is difficult to define. For example, "It is not clear whether one is a native speaker by birth, or by education, or by virtue of being recognized and accepted as a member of a like-minded cultural group" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 80). McKay (2003a) stressed the need for not adopting this view while designing EFL materials because she assumed that the needs of English learners might include communicating with non-native speakers in commerce or tourism rather than native

speakers; English has received an international status for a larger number of English speakers as a second or a foreign language than the number of its native speakers as indicated by Crystal (1997). Accordingly, English language learning objectives are not always relevant to the functions of English in the learners' community, or such content might be considered irrelevant and unhelpful for those learners in cross-cultural interaction with its various purposes.

Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) assumed that English learners might consider communicating successfully in English as a more realistic goal than having identical competence to a native speaker, though they believed that students with high proficiency are more receptive to richer cultural content. On the other hand, Irie (2003)'s results showed that students were interested in communicating with the native-speaker culture, and Cheung (2001) found that students were interested in the popular culture of English-speaking countries.

Ultimately, according to McKay (2003a), in English language teaching, the supremacy of native English models is a kind of "imperialism" but a linguistic one, as described by Phillipson (1992). Bisong (1995) challenged Phillipson's hypothesis when he claimed that in his country, Nigeria, Nigerian children studied at international schools to guarantee the quality of teaching rather than the perceived superiority of English. He believed that English learners considered English a key that opens gates to knowledge. They may also favour one type of international English, such as American or British, for practical or personal reasons.

However, the studies that discussed this issue indicated that including cultural elements of the target language does not necessarily imply the acceptance of that culture, while overusing these elements can do the opposite (McKay, 2000).

Another different view is that language can be taught separately from the native culture of its speakers, in order to create a bilingual language user, which indicates that having a bicultural language user is of less importance (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) believed that the proponents of the view of teaching language without its culture rely on the hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which they considered an unproven hypothesis. This hypothesis claimed that the learners of a language internalize the linguistic patterns and cultural values from the target language speakers. This new developing system might alter the learners' way of perceiving the world around them, resulting in a new identity (i.e., both a bilingual and a bicultural identity) different from the student's native identity (Brown, 1981, as cited in Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). Thus, the view of teaching a language along its culture threatens the identity of English learners. This belief imposes some restrictions on the educational policies of teaching English in some countries in order to protect the native culture of the individuals in these countries (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). For example, some countries produce their own English teaching materials with a heavy reliance on the students' local culture in order not to contradict the local culture of the learners. This has been done previously in the Arabian Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia (Alamri, 2008) and Kuwait (Hajjaj, 1981 as cited in Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984), where the cultural content of the English textbooks was almost imported from the native culture of the students. Thus, learners use a hollow new language system that is devoid of its native cultural content (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). Fortunately, in most of these countries, the policies of teaching English have been changed, and consequently so have the teaching materials. For example, Alfahadi (2012) documented that the series of books taught in Saudi Arabia schooling system was based completely on Saudi culture. For example, the conversational context in these textbooks is a Saudi one, including a conversation about making Arabian coffee or about going on a pilgrimage to Mecca (Al-Quraishi, Watson, Hafseth, & Hickman,

1999-1988). According to Alfahadi (2012), in 2003, a new series of English called *Say it in English* is considered by him to be a more modified cultural content than the previous one. He provides an example of this reform by the adoption of some Western values. For example, a Saudi child introducing his sister to another Saudi boy is absolutely not acceptable behaviour in Saudi culture. Such change is considered by him to be a positive response to the global and local demands of development by decision makers. He has observed the reactions of the teachers in his days of working as a teacher. The teachers' attitudes varied as some find it a positive reform, while others find it of less or no importance.

However, teaching language with reference to English learners' own culture has many advantages. According to Alptekin (1993), two kinds of knowledge are responsible for expressing and understanding a language. First, systematic knowledge is responsible for the formal characteristics of language (i.e., syntactic and semantic features of a language). The other type is schematic knowledge (i.e., the social functions of a language). These two types of knowledge are developed concurrently for a native language speaker, whereas in the case of learning another language, the learners base the new language on the schemas (i.e., cognitive structures) they have already constructed in order to develop the new language. In other words, the native language facilitates learning a new language. This very fact has to be exploited in teaching another language. Otherwise, these two types of knowledge might come into conflict when an individual starts to learn a new language. For example, to Widdowson (1990), a dog might be considered by a Western child to be a best friend, while an Arab child sees it as a dirty animal. According to Gray (2000), including alien elements in EFL materials might affect the students' engagement with learning. It might become an obstacle for learners when they express themselves in unfamiliar items of the target culture, or they may find the topic uninteresting. Whether the learners need such cultural exposure may depend on why they are learning English, if it is to live/work in the target situation, they may need such

exposure to the native language culture. Furthermore, if learners are rapidly exposed to the target cultural elements, “is likely to cause a split between experience and thought which is conducive to serious socio-psychological problems affecting the learner's mental equilibrium negatively” (Byram, 1989, as cited in Alpetkin, 1993, p. 139). Teachers might also have difficulties teaching their students these concepts. Forman (2014) indicated that some other teachers might find this cultural content as difficult to cope with. For example, teaching the concept of Halloween when it is not part of the learner’s own culture could hinder the task of acquiring the formal system of language (Alptekin, 1993). McKay (2000) asserted that some of the elements might be of less interest to some students for being irrelevant to their culture. She exemplified this situation with the case of a Korean teacher who used a target culture-based textbook with his Korean students, and this textbook contained an exercise about matching some pictures to their right periods from the history of the United States. She explained that the students and their teacher find the task too difficult because of the lack of helpful resources. McKay indicated that this type of material can trouble the teachers when the students asked them to clarify unfamiliar cultural elements in their textbooks, especially when such classes are teacher-centred in the students’ culture. Others such as Adaskou et al. (1990) considered the inclusion of Western values in the EFL textbooks as not useful to Moroccan students and can demotivate them. According to Adaskou et al. (1990) and McKay (2000), such material might provide the students with stressful learning experience. For example, the undesirable pattern of behaviour of English-speaking countries because they might conflict with the students’ own values (Adaskou et al., 1990). Garinger (2002) recommended that the cultural content in English textbooks should be convenient for the students and provide them with a valuable experience. Nevertheless, Wandel (2002) indicated that textbooks have to be presented in such a way as to elicit discussion on different opinions. McKay (2000) stated that this type of material might be of disadvantage to even a native

English-speaking teacher in a foreign or a second language teaching context where the teacher has to explain the unfamiliar cultural elements rather than enabling the students to reflect on these elements from their cultural view.

Teaching language with reference to learners' source cultures can help the learners describe their own culture (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). This has been asserted by many studies (Adaskou et al., 1990; Alptekin, 1993; Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; McKay, 2003a). Ekawati and Hamdani (2012) considered adopting cultural elements from students' own culture in English instructional materials to be helpful in understanding the students' own cultural identity when the students recognize the differences and similarities between their own culture and a different culture. Moreover, Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) claimed that learning a new language with reference to the students' own culture can motivate students to learn a new language. (Ekawati & Hamdani, 2012) explained that this can facilitate students' learning of the other language when they are engaged in familiar contexts in the target culture from the students' own culture because these contexts match the students' own experiences. McKay (2000) indicated that such materials might inform the students about new cultural information of their own culture so that they will learn more about their culture and eventually negotiate these meanings with others via English. For teachers from the same cultural background of the students, such material in these textbooks is easy to cope with due to the shared cultural background and available resources. Forman (2014) explained that this type of textbook can be a reference for a non-native English language teacher, even a highly proficient one. McKay (2000) indicated that even when the teacher is not sharing the same cultural background with the students, such cultural content can be of interest to him or her as a listener and to his or her students as an informer.

None of the researchers claimed that the student's own culture should be the only source of cultural elements or that it is the recommended type of material, but they stressed

the importance of including some elements from the students' own culture. Nevertheless, the disadvantage of the source culture EFL materials were not criticized heavily at least in my reviewed literature. For example, McKay (2000) indicated that the source culture type of textbooks might demotivate the students due to their familiarity with the topics. It might be of disadvantage to native English-speaking teacher who might be unable to cope with such cultural content.

The last view of teaching English with regard to the type of EFL textbooks is the ones that import cultural elements from the status of English as an international language (McKay, 2000, 2003a). Alptekin and Alptekin (1984), McKay (2003a), and Shin et al. (2011) suggested the inclusion of cultural elements in the learners' EFL materials from the learners' local context and the familiar international and native English-speaking cultures. This was emphasized in Robinson (1988), who stressed the importance of helping learners meet the demands of a multicultural world by designing EFL materials that propose a multilingual/multicultural model of English language teaching (some call it international English) rather than a bilingual/bicultural one, or it does not require an acceptance of the target culture norms or the appropriateness of the language functions according to the native speakers' norms. Alptekin (2002) and McKay (2003a, 2000) suggested that developing English learners' intercultural communicative competence can be done by adopting cultural elements from the situation of English as a global language. Thus, this view of English textbook's cultural content is important because intercultural knowledge in language learning is a necessary aspect of communicative competence (Kramsch, 1998; Sybing, 2011). Alptekin (2002) considered communicative competence to need a redefinition by recognizing the status of English as an international language in order to help the learners in cross-cultural communication. According to Hinkel (1999), the different aspects of communicative competence (i.e., grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences) are not

enough to develop the communicative competence of English learners. Thus, intercultural competence is also needed for successful communication (as cited in Ekawati & Hamdani, 2012). Ekawati and Hamdani (2012) defined intercultural communication as “an effective identity negotiation process in novel communication episodes, or demonstrated ability to negotiate mutual meanings, rules, and positive outcomes” (p. 56). According to Moran (2001), “culture is viewed in terms of intercultural communication [as] the capacity and ability to entre other cultures and communicate effectively and appropriately, establish and maintain relationships, and carry out tasks with people of these cultures” (p. 5). Intercultural communication competence is simply defined by Johnson and Rinvoluceri (2011) with “our ability to understand and function in other cultures” (p. 15). Cortazzi (2000) indicated that this type of textbook is more ideal because it is suitable for a variety of contexts around the world. Nevertheless, he pointed to the possibility of the use of the other types of books mentioned earlier when the teacher complements these books with what they lack with regards to the cultural elements. McKay (2000) indicated that the effectiveness of this type of cultural content is dependent on the way of its presentation and type of elements, such as when this type of EFL textbook lacks elements from the same cultural background of the students or their teachers. Difficulties might be similar to the use of target culture type of EFL materials, such as the lack of resources for teachers and the student unfamiliarity with these elements.

In fact, many EFL textbooks focus on accuracy rather than developing the students’ intercultural competence. For example, Tomlinson (2010a) criticized global ELT course books for focusing on the linguistic input rather than the other pedagogical or language development goals. In addition, Alshumaimeri (1999) and Al-Hajailan (1999) claimed that EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia at their time focus on accuracy in grammar rather than developing the students’ communicative competence. However, it is difficult to exclude all



the cultural elements from EFL textbooks, though the cultural content can be neutralized according to the educational policy of a country (Hall, 2012) or the requirements of the global market (Gray, 2010a). Culture-free materials might weaken the one-size-fits-all approach of some EFL textbooks entertained by commercial EFL textbooks provided for global market (Gray, 2010b, 2002). These ready-made published materials can threaten innovation in teaching (Bax, 1997). Teachers using these books have become “technicians” rather than “educationists”, similar to attitudes in many EFL teaching contexts around the world, such as the EFL teachers in Spain in Gray (2000) study, who preferred the focus to be on the language skills and for the material to be free of values. According to Gray (2010b), global publishing industries present English as a brand that embraces capitalist standards. In fact, it is a competitive industry that goes beyond the world of ELT (Gray, 2002). However, there are two available options for requesting more customized EFL textbooks for students’ needs (Gray, 2002). First is for publishers to provide the option of designing an EFL textbook especially written for a specific teaching context that is suitable to the teaching context, including time, methodology, and content. The other option is to provide a core text that is sold to different countries with supplemented materials created by locals, which is closer to current Saudi Arabian practices, an edited version of a global EFL textbook series.

Nevertheless, the temptation of inner-circle-produced materials distributed for a global market, as revealed by Albadri and Alshayie (2012) when they considered choosing EFL textbooks from the global market as a great reform. This is similar to many other teaching contexts as these commercially successful EFL textbooks are appealing, with their cheerful colours, but not necessarily effective from a pedagogical point of view (Gray, 2010b).

## 2.5. Issues related to the evaluation and designation of cultural content in EFL materials

McKay (2003a) indicated that culture plays an important role in EFL textbooks for two reasons. First, cultural data are the main source of the content and topics used in language materials and classroom discussions. Second, pragmatic functions of language are based on specific cultural norms. McKay (2003b) stated that the type of cultural content is of significant importance to these two points with regard to teaching English as an international language. In fact, one of the issues related to designing and evaluating the cultural content of EFL textbooks is that there are some concerns about how to design EFL textbooks that can reflect the status of English as a lingua franca in a world connected via English, such as how to determine the appropriate kinds of language and cultural models to achieve this goal (Baker, 2009; Jenkins, 2003).

Murray (2012) indicated that research on EFL interaction is still in its early stages, but it has started to direct teachers' attention to areas more beneficial to developing an effective pragmatics pedagogy. He suggested some strategies for developing EFL students' own pragmatic competence (see Murray, 2012 for further discussion) because developing an effective pragmatics pedagogy is not well motivated in EFL textbooks. The basic idea beyond his discussion of this issue is that, in developing EFL pragmatic competence:

we need not and perhaps should not teach any particular pragmatics. Instead, we should focus on giving learners a pragmatic "toolkit" of strategies that provides them with the wherewithal to construct, "on the fly," a bespoke social grammar for each interaction according to the particular characteristics of their interlocutor and of the broader context in which that interaction takes place. (Murray, 2012, p. 324-325).

A problem related to the issue of developing an effective pragmatics pedagogy is that EFL textbooks often present language out of its natural context. Nguyen (2011) claimed that language functions (i.e., speech acts) are presented in unrealistic ways usually too formal, not like natural speech or might not be presented at all. Bouton (1996) stated that some speech

acts in the materials he evaluated, such as invitations, did not recur in the corpora of English native speakers (as cited in Nguyen, 2011). Moreover, Han (1992) claimed that EFL materials might restrict a specific language function to only one expression, such as by restricting the compliment response to the formulaic expression “thank you” (as cited in Nguyen, 2011). Another problem with the presentation of language functions is the fact that they can be different from one language to another or even within a language due to social context, which might not be indicated in EFL materials. McKay (2002) stressed the importance of this fact in English instructional materials by pointing to the fact that some English learners’ cultures, such as Asian cultures, tend to deflect compliments as a sign of humility, unlike native English speakers’ cultures who are fine with accepting compliments. Furthermore, McKay (2002) pointed out that part of this problem is introducing lexical items without providing helpful cultural information about them. For example, *yellow journalism* is a distinctive semantic concept in the United States. However, McKay declared that this addition is dependent on the learning goals of the students.

Cultural elements are part of any educational system and can be explicitly or implicitly included; therefore, they cannot be neglected (Cunningsworth, 2005). Kramsch (1998) believed that culture cannot be easily neglected because it is always in the background. However, designers and evaluators of EFL textbooks might face some difficulties. Among these difficulties is that the task of describing culture is difficult one because it is characterized by being in a state of change. As such, language textbooks are always slightly out of date. Culture develops concurrently with society (Johnson & Rinvolutri, 2011; Kramsch, 1998). Such inherent changes to the status of culture and society are unpredictable. A problem here may be that cultural change may have speeded up, so that by the time a textbook is written, produced and published, some cultural elements may have changed. Nevertheless, culture used to be presented in a monolithic and superficial way by

EFL textbooks (Stapleton, 2000). Besides, the cultural content in EFL materials can be neutralized (Duff & Uchida, 1997). For example, Melliti (2013) indicated that global EFL textbooks neglect the learners' local culture because they are committed to the idea of "globality". Gray (2000, 2006) doubted the suitability of generalized cultural content for all learners of English as publishers neutralized the cultural content of their global EFL textbooks to increase their profits and suit consumers' preferences. Besides, Gray (2002) indicated that "glocalised" EFL textbooks are going to replace "globalised" EFL textbooks in order to satisfy the students' local needs and prevent them from losing their link to globalized world. Nevertheless, Nault (2006) claimed that "no well-designed ELT course books exist that explicitly focus on cross-cultural and multicultural themes from a global perspective" (p. 323).

Another issue related to the evaluation and designation of cultural content in EFL material is the shallow cultural content with the stereotypical representation of cultures. According to Littlewood (2001), presentations of cultural content might be seen as stereotypical representations of culture. He considered generalizations about other cultures to be illogical and unrealistic because they allow for no differences between the individuals in cultures that exist in the real world. Guest (2002) considered the cultural content of EFL materials to be ineffective when it misrepresents cultures by reinforcing common stereotypes and describing other cultures collectively. Teachers in the Stapleton (2000) study reported their dissatisfaction with stereotyping, bias toward some cultures, especially the American one, and shallow cultural content. They explained that when the authors of EFL textbooks "delve deeper they appear to be subject to charges of being "ethnocentric" and "stereotypical"" (Stapleton, 2000, p. 301).

Nevertheless, Dlaska (2000) noted that stereotypes are part of the reality people live in, as they may frequently encounter them through media, travelling, and so forth. Thus, they

cannot be neglected in language classrooms. He indicated that these stereotypes are reductive whether they are positive or negative and can hinder the learning process. He suggested that “stereotypes are best put into context and in relation to the learners’ own culture, possibly under the heading “don’t ignore them – explore them” (p. 260). He indicated that building cultural awareness is not simply achieved by replacing negative stereotypes with positive ones, as this strategy is not practical in reality, and excluding them from the language classroom is also not a good solution. He indicated that:

What is needed are strategies for exploring and understanding what is perceived as ‘other’, with the emphasis on diversity rather than difference, since cultural difference may engender curiosity in mature learners but may lead to indifference or a sense of distance in younger, insecure learners. (Dlaska, 2000, p. 260).

Thus, it is of importance to identify negative stereotypes while evaluating the cultural content in EFL textbooks (Cunningsworth, 2005). However, Alptekin (1993) considered the task of removing these stereotypes by searching for authentic materials to be difficult and dependent on the designer’s subjective judgment and is very time consuming.

Another issue related to the evaluation and designation of cultural content in EFL material is cultural biases. Forman (2014) indicated that “In the 1970s and 1980s, textbooks received a great deal of criticism in relation to their monocultural, classist, sexist, and racist features” (p. 73). For example, Alptekin (1993) and Sunderland (1992) stressed the importance of eliminating sexism from English language classes. Kim (2012) stated that “gender bias, racial discrimination, and biases based on ethnicity, nationality, social class and minority status” (p. 37) were predominant in the English instructional materials evaluated in his study. Banegas (2010) indicated that writers present a “romantic view” of countries, especially the United Kingdom and the United States, or restrict unpleasant topics such as poverty in Africa. Similarly, Tomlinson (2010a) indicated that EFL textbooks “continued ethnocentricity in relation to content, assumptions about “the best ways to learn,” and the

ways in which non-Western cultures are positioned “superficially and insensitively” remain problems” (p. 320). Nevertheless, although Magogwe (2009) stated that the lack of cultural diversity in the students’ EFL textbooks does not affect their attitudes toward learning English, he advised teachers to adapt their EFL textbooks to make them culturally inclusive.

Another issue related to the description and evaluation of EFL textbooks is the exclusion of some topics that Gray (2006) summarized with the acronym “PARSNIP,” which stands for “Politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms, and pork,” (p.184) which may consist of many of the topics popular in UK conversations. Publishers in his study indicated that they provide authors with these guidelines. According to Gray (2002), most EFL textbooks contain similar content with repeated types of topics. This is due to the fact that publishers provide the authors with guidelines that they are obliged to follow. *Inappropriacy*, or topics that need to be avoided, is one of the areas covered by these guidelines, which are affected by the consumers’ context. For Cook (personal communication, 2019), “coursebooks are all variations of one prototype course in the minds of publishers, varying only in layout and glossiness”. According to Gray (2002), this results in weak content, inspired by the “one fits all” slogan, and “safe topics”, such as travel, repeated over and over. It seems that simplifying the topics until they become trivial is also a feature of commercial EFL textbooks (Gehring, 2012). Furthermore, the process of neutralization predominates global EFL textbooks (Gray, 2002; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). Thus, the process of limiting discussions of certain topics by book series designers is a feature of EFL textbooks in the global market (Gray, 2006, 2010). Tomlinson (2010b) argued that these textbooks are a major reason for “the failure” of many language learners to

acquire the basic competence of English and to the failure of most of them to develop the ability to use it successfully. They do so by focusing on the teaching of linguistic items rather than on the provision of opportunities for acquisition and development. And they do this

because that's what teachers are expected and required to do by administrators, by parents, by publishers, and by learners too. (p. 3)

Nevertheless, although the writers of EFL textbooks choose topics that are non-provocative (Banegas, 2010), according to Kubota (2014), language classrooms might encounter the emergence of controversial issues in planned or spontaneous ways. She indicated that the literature about critical pedagogy has shown “a general agreement on presenting balanced views while exhibiting disagreements on teacher neutrality” (Kubota, 2014, p. 225). According to Akbari (2008), critical pedagogy is about “how the world of ideas in education relates to the world of reality in society” (p. 282). He recommended its inclusion in language classrooms even in local contexts. As he indicated local contexts here, the need exists for a decentralization of decisions regarding teaching, assessment and the content of EFL materials. According to him, an effective critical pedagogy that can be achieved “when education, and by extension ELT, develops the required attitude, starts at the local level, and acknowledges the significance of learners’ experiences as legitimate departure points in any meaningful learning enterprise” (Akbari, 2008, p.282). Nevertheless, the researcher believes that critical pedagogy that includes controversial topics might become counterproductive in language classrooms when teachers are not well prepared for dealing with this issue in their language classrooms. Also, it may depend on whether they are native or non-native speaker teachers.

To conclude, the issues related to the description and designation of cultural content are not restricted to the ones mentioned in this section. Others were discussed in other sections of this chapter.

## **2.6. Empirical studies on language and culture**

Various studies have dealt with culture in EFL teaching and learning. Among these studies, which I sought to include in sections of this thesis regarding the cultural content

of EFL textbooks, was Adaskou et al. (1990), who investigated the choices available for designing an appropriate cultural content for a national EFL course for Moroccan secondary schools. They investigated teachers' opinions via a questionnaire and concluded that the appropriate cultural content depends on the official aims for teaching EFL in Morocco and the estimation of the students' future goals. In addition, the researchers decided to include few items from the target culture.

Gray (2006) investigated the form and nature of cultural content in four popular British global ELT course books. The publishers' guidelines were considered, and their opinions were part of the descriptions of such content. Gray found that cultural content of these books was consumer-oriented, rather than constructed on an educational view of teaching. A group of ESL teachers in Barcelona were interviewed to state their opinions about their preferred cultural content and the role of culture in ELT. The teachers related their teaching practices to the purposes of teaching English as an international language. Gray concluded that the cultural content of EFL textbooks need to be decided according to the locals' perspectives of what would suit their needs, rather than by British ELT publishers.

Jiang (2010) investigated how culture is taught and what cultures are taught about in college-level English teaching in China. Jiang used content analysis to determine which cultures were taught through textbooks and analyse textbooks in terms of some themes—recency, realism, topics, task design, and extra information—to understand how the textbooks teach about culture. Jiang found that the books were not aimed at teaching about culture and that the local culture and world culture were minimally represented. These textbooks did not deal with stereotypes, the tasks were not oriented toward teach about culture, and ICC was ignored.

Meccawy (2010) investigated the perceptions of female Saudi EFL students with regard to three main concepts—language, culture, and identity—in their English-language



classrooms in higher education. The study focused on the students' views of EFL learning materials and the value they attached to their language learning. An exploratory qualitative approach was used to elicit the participants' opinions and to analyse their EFL textbooks. Meccawy concluded that female Saudi EFL students had relatively positive views towards the English language and learning it but were cautious of disproportionate exposure to its culture. However, the analysis that the textbooks were unsuitable for the learners' needs and goals. The textbooks considered few of the students' needs and ignored various other needs.

Alfahadi (2012) investigated Saudi EFL teachers' opinions on the appropriate cultural models for EFL textbooks in Saudi public schools, including which factors affected the teachers' views and their practices for applying these views in their teaching classes. A mixed-method design was used with qualitative (interviews and open-ended questions on a questionnaire) and quantitative (closed-ended questionnaire) collection methods. The results showed that the teachers were not satisfied about the cultural content of their EFL textbooks because the textbooks contained some values contradicting their own cultural values. The teachers recommended using a mixture of cultures as a cultural model for EFL textbooks. The teachers admitted that they could not apply their own beliefs about culture in their teaching practices due to control by their administrators.

Swe (2016) investigated the experiences of EFL teachers, both native and non-native English speakers, when teaching cultural items from EFL textbooks, including the extra materials they used and the activities selected to teach culture from EFL textbooks. Open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were adopted. The results showed that the teachers used Internet sources, YouTube, and websites via computers and smart boards, as well as other authentic materials such as newspapers or magazines. News channels such as BBC were used for listening tasks. Written materials were minimized in classrooms

because the teachers believed in the strong facilitative role of electronic media materials for capturing students' attention, motivating them, and helping them with quick understanding.

### **2.7. Gap in literature**

Deciding about the appropriateness of the cultural content in EFL materials is dependent on how effective this content is for the learners, as many researchers have indicated. For example, McKay (2000), Alptekin (2002), and Prodromou (1988) declared that it is helpful to explore English learners' purposes for learning English to develop instructional materials that meet the students' needs. For example, McKay (2000) indicated that some students have no purpose for studying English except that it is a subject they need to pass according to the students' educational systems. Some studies indicated that the non-investigation of students' needs with regard to the cultural content of EFL textbooks is not going to ensure the best decision about the appropriateness of an EFL textbook in a specific context although there may be too wide a range for one textbook to cope with. For example, Swe (2016), among others, criticized the exclusion of Moroccan students from the investigation that Adaskou et al. (1990) conducted, as their opinions are important in making insightful decisions about the cultural content of Moroccan EFL textbooks. As a matter of fact, few studies in the related literature discussed the importance of investigating students' needs with regard to the cultural content of their English textbooks. For example, Young (2000) discussed the issue of conducting a needs-analysis process for some new educational approaches connected to the communicative-language-teaching approach as a problem-solving activity, the learner-centred classroom, etc. He indicated that although understanding learners' needs in teaching English is important, it is difficult to apply this in actual practice. For example, conducting a needs-analysis process can provide a clear picture of students' needs in order to build a learner-centred course, but "whatever else their needs, learners of English language require communicative and interactive teaching and learning environments"

(Young, 2000, p.72). In addition, learners do not have similar needs. Thus, it is difficult to satisfy their needs because they are too many. Young (2000) added that it might be argued that students' needs have to be recognized by "education professionals," not by the students themselves. For example, students might prefer to be fluent in informal conversation, while their teachers find it to be of importance to develop the students' reading comprehension and writing skills in order for them to pass their examinations successfully. He claimed that the decision depends on the students' interest as determined by the institution, which might consider both of the perceptions in the previous example. Nevertheless, Young (2000) indicated that it is difficult to argue for making the dominant decision about the appropriate methodology by relying on the students' opinions, although he insisted on the importance of learning their opinions about their English language teaching and of respecting their cultural needs with regard to their learning, teachers needs/opinions may also be looked at. Some researchers such as Gray (2010a) have declared that it is important to investigate students' opinions about the cultural content of their EFL textbooks, because "the meanings constructed by teachers and students can be very different" (p. 19) with regards to the cultural content of EFL textbooks. Nevertheless, he excluded them from his study. He justified his decision by the fact that students are not the primary consumers of EFL textbooks "in the sense that although they may pay for them, but [*sic*] they do not select them" (p. 19). Teachers' opinions might be of more importance even in contexts where the ministry of higher education selects EFL textbooks (Gray, 2010a). Gray (2010a) suggested that the type of cultural content "is best decided by locals for whom English may have a range of meanings other than those determined for them by British ELT publishers" (p. 251).

As a matter of fact, regarding EFL textbooks in some contexts, such as in Saudi Arabia, students and their teachers do not decide the cultural content of their EFL textbooks, as the curriculum development unit in the MOE prescribes the content (Albedaiwi, 2014).

This is true in a number of countries although it may differ between private schools and state schools. Thus, it is important to investigate both the students' and their teachers' opinions in this study to learn their opinions about the cultural content of their English textbooks. Even if students' needs are not deemed important during the process of designing EFL textbooks, teachers might still consider it important to accommodate their students' needs (Stapleton, 2000; Swe, 2016).

In the English language teaching context in Saudi Arabia, Khafaji (2004) claimed that Saudi EFL textbooks include uninteresting items and items with no educational purpose. Thus, he recommended a re-evaluation of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia in state schools as well as the development of materials that are suitable for the context of students' learning and that meet students' and teachers' needs, and perhaps also target needs. Albedaiwi (2014) stressed the importance of teachers' autonomy in teaching English in Saudi Arabia to meet their students' needs, as teachers of English in Saudi Arabia have few choices. Thus, how teachers teach the cultural content of EFL textbooks is of importance to understand the extent to which students' needs are satisfied with regard to the cultural content of their English textbooks. Al-Sadan (2000) declared that students depend on their teachers as sources of information, while teachers depend on English textbooks. Alshumaimeri (1999) indicated that the students who participated in his study considered their English textbooks to be important references for their learning of English. This implies there is a need to improve English textbooks in order to fulfil students' needs.

Ahmad and Shah (2014) indicated that there is a lack of research investigating Saudi EFL students' and teachers' attitudes toward the cultural content of their English textbooks. As a matter of fact, studies conducted in Saudi Arabia with regard to EFL material evaluation in general have been small in scale and have evaluated small elements of the content of English textbooks. With regard to evaluating the cultural content in EFL textbooks taught in

Saudi Arabia, Alamri (2008) evaluated only one English textbook with one section of only four items in a checklist to evaluate the cultural content in the book. Alfahadi (2012) explored Saudi EFL teachers' satisfaction with the cultural content of a previous series of English textbooks taught in Saudi Arabia that were completely different from the ones currently being taught in Saudi Arabia. Likewise, no studies have been conducted to explore students' needs and interests with regard to the cultural content of their English textbooks or to evaluate the cultural content with regard to the students' needs and interests.

This project of improving English launched in 2008 raises some questions. For example, Faruk (2015) wondered why this plan was "brought about so suddenly" (p. 537). In addition, (Alharbi, 2015) asked whether consumers were satisfied with these new textbooks and whether the books achieved the project's stated pedagogical goals. Mahboob and Elyas (2014) considered whether these textbooks matched the country's local norms as well as previous books did. Finally, Almujaivel (2018) considered what cultural elements the textbook series included.

Traveller series is a famous series written in the West by British publishers and designed for the global market. The Saudi MOE imposes it with little effort to customize the content for the Saudi market. I am sceptical that these books can include optimal cultural content for Saudi students and teachers because their opinions were neglected in the process of customizing these books. As stated in previous sections, it is impossible to find a cultural content that suits all students' interests, as confirmed by many researchers (Allwright, 1981; Tomlinson, 2003; Williams, 1983). Nonetheless, investigating students' interests would definitely provide a clearer picture of what might assist their learning. This study's research questions relate to the norm in which the MOE, particularly its English Curriculum-Development Unit, prescribes the country's official EFL textbooks (Albedaiwi, 2014). I considered whether a prior wants-analysis phase that focuses on the students' and teachers'

opinions would result in more effective cultural content that is specifically designed for the Saudi context. I also recognized the need for a concise evaluation of the textbook series' cultural content. These thoughts motivated me to start this PhD project.

### **2. 8. Research questions:**

RQ1: What do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia think should be present in their optimal cultural content of their EFL textbook and associated teaching?

RQ2: What reasons do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their preferences of the cultural content of textbooks and ways of teaching culture?

RQ3: Does the actual textbook used (imposed by the MOE), and the associated teaching, involve what the students and teachers want regarding the cultural content of EFL textbooks and associated teaching?

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

There are three main sections in this chapter, First, I describe the design of my study and the rationale for selecting a specific data collection method, and sampling. Second, I also tackle the rationale that underlies the construction of the study's instruments in detail and I describe the procedures used for sampling, piloting, and administering the instruments of the study. In addition to this, I mention the challenges accompanying these processes. Fourth, I present the techniques used to analyse the results of this study. It should be noted that the study took place in three stages: my MRes study which can be considered a first pilot, a second pilot, and the main study. Since I later report and discuss findings from all three of those stages they are all included in the account below.

### **Section 1: Rationale for study design, instruments, piloting and sampling**

#### **3.1. Study general approach**

I use a mixed methods research approach that merges elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches for the purpose of getting a comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomena (Creswell, 2014, 2009; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2000). It is also an eclectic flexible mixture of the most appropriate methods to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2000).

##### **3.1.1 Rationale for opting for a mixed-methods design**

To reach an understanding of the appropriate cultural content for EFL textbooks in a specific teaching context, I used different methodological approaches to achieve a thorough understanding of this intricate phenomenon. It requires an investigation of opinions and attitudes, followed by detailed description and evaluation. Accordingly, there is a need to gain data from many participants to generalize the results about the target population. This can be achieved via a quantitative methodological approach (O' Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

However, there is a need to avoid the weakness corresponding to the quantitative approach, and the way to do this is to provide a detailed description of a social phenomenon, which could be made possible using a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2008). Furthermore, the study used multi- methods for data collection from different research approaches to answer a specific research question. In this way, according to Dornyei (2007) results obtained from different instruments to answer a research question would provide convergent or divergent results. Doing this is assumed to increase the validity of the study's results. Needless to say, mixed- methods approach helps in sharing the results with a larger audience (both qualitative and quantitative research approaches advocates) compared to studies that adopt only one methodological approach, as indicated by Dornyei (2007).

### **3.1. 2. Rationale for opting for sequential explanatory mixed-methods design**

The design of this study is a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixing methods in this study has been done sequentially. Besides this, the design involves collecting data with quantitative methods followed by data collected via qualitative methods to explain, clarify, and understand the previous quantitative set of data.

The rationale for choosing a sequential explanatory design is that the quantitative data and results provide a broader understanding of the research phenomenon via a survey design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), deeper analysis through the qualitative data collection will be necessary to enhance, elaborate on, complement, or clarify in detail the research phenomenon. The quantitative phase of the research would make it possible to directly select the participants for a follow up qualitative sample (Kelle, 2006). Besides this, the qualitative data collection processes and analysis would explain types of research questions that differ from the quantitative ones, and I could build on the results obtained from initial data base to explore further in a consequent data base (Creswell, 2014). Besides that, I used a qualitative design to investigate the research problem, by combining multiple



qualitative data collection methods in a triangulation methodological technique, and a survey design in the quantitative approach. According to Maxwell (2005), collecting data through different methods is an aspect of triangulation. It helps to reduce the limitations of using one method only, broadens the researcher's understanding of an issue, and validates the results of the study. Triangulation of sources and methods is effective because it results in data from different viewpoints and from different sources via different methods (Huhta, Vogt, Johnson, & Tulkki, 2013).

In this way, the processes in the study are conducted via different methods, and the results obtained from each method are used to inform the other set of data.

### **3.2. Rationale for conducting two pilot studies**

I used two pilot studies because the first pilot (Pilot 1) study was a prerequisite for entering the PHD research program. According to the nature of my PhD program, which is an integrated program which require an accomplishment of a Master of Research program (MRes)<sup>3</sup> (Pilot 1) while together Pilot 1 and second pilot study (Pilot 2) was held to develop the content of the study's instruments. The instruments were constructed within two phases of a pilot scheme. The two pilots were also conducted to improve my ability in conducting the study, to see whether the instruments were clear enough for the targeted audience, to receive feedback that would improve the quality of the study's instruments, and to ensure the effectiveness of the research procedures.

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<sup>3</sup> An MRes is a program in which a candidate is obliged to study six modules and achieve a minimum overall score of 65. The candidate is then obliged to write a dissertation of 22,000 words with a minimum score of 65 (*Your Studies: Students handbook Department of language and linguistics postgraduate research handbook*, 2014). within a year. At the end of the MRes, I must decide whether to accept an MRes certificate and not to directly quote this work in my PhD thesis or include the work in my thesis and not receive an MRes certificate. I opted to include the work in my thesis for my MRes dissertation and to consider the work a pilot scheme for my main study.

### 3.3. Rationale for the selection of the instruments

In this study, I used five data-collection instruments: (a) a background questionnaire (BQ) (see Appendix: 1, p.1); (b) a questionnaire on the interests of EFL secondary school students in Saudi Arabia with regard to the cultural content of their EFL textbooks, with an identical questionnaire<sup>4</sup> used to ask for their teachers' opinions on the same matters; and (questionnaire) (see Appendix: 2, p.2) (c) follow- up interviews (see Appendix: 3, p.9). The other instruments used were (d) a nonparticipant observation, and (e) a checklist (evaluative framework) to evaluate and analyse secondary school Saudi EFL textbooks (see Appendix: 4). Needless to say, data obtained from the open-ended questions, interviews, and observation helped in constructing the checklist to evaluate the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks.

#### 3.3.1. Rationale for the use of questionnaires

In the initial collection of data with a quantitative data collection method, I adopt a nonexperimental research design with the use of a questionnaire. In the two pilots of the study and main study, I used questionnaires to gain background information about the participants and to understand EFL students' and their teachers' opinions and attitudes on the appropriate cultural elements and the way of teaching these items from their EFL textbooks in their EFL classes. These questionnaires include closed and open-ended items. Thus, the questionnaires are semi-structured questionnaires. Questionnaires can elicit data from a large number of participants, allowing for a generalizing of the results, in a cost- effective and a relative quick and easy turn-in procedure (Creswell, 2014). Questionnaires reduce the interference of the researcher, researcher bias, especially when anonymity is ensured (Cohen,

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<sup>4</sup> The questionnaires distributed to both groups of the study were identical in the format and in the content. The only difference was the words used to address the respondent and few questions on the BQ such as years of experience and qualification for the teachers whereas the students were asked about their purpose of learning EFL. In the students' questionnaire, an instruction directly requesting their opinion about their preference with regards to the cultural items to be included in their EFL textbooks, for instance, whereas in the teachers' questionnaire, an instruction direct them to state their opinion about what their students prefer to be included in their EFL textbooks with regards to the cultural items.

Manion, & Morrison, 2000). However, according to Dornyei (2007), questionnaires that contain closed-ended items restrict the respondents' answers. The open-ended items can provide the participants with the opportunity to answer based on their experiences in their social or cultural contexts and not based on the researcher's experiences (Neuman, 2000, as cited in Creswell, 2008). They can provide insubstantial data and relatively brief engagement with the topic on the part of the participant. In fact, the study design consists of multiple qualitative data collection instruments to preclude the drawbacks of questionnaires. Also, semi-structured questionnaire would provide richer data and more freedom of expression than closed-ended items.

### **3.3.2. Rationale for the use of Follow- up Interviews**

In the two pilot studies and the main study, I used follow-up interviews to allow the participants of the study to elaborate on their answers on the questionnaires by reflecting on and justifying their choices on the questionnaire and avoiding the weakness of closed- and open-ended questions; the latter lack the efficiency of interviews in providing a thorough understanding of the phenomenon (Dornyei, 2007).

Data received from the interviews was used to qualitatively triangulate between the answers of the participants on these interviews and what the teachers did in their classes via the observation task. Maxwell (2005) stated that interviews can be used to inspect previous events and what has been missed in observation and to check the accuracy of the observation task. Comparison between the data of these two instruments would provide a clearer picture about the problem of the study and validate the results, as indicated by (Creswell, 2014).

The interviews in this study have a semi-structured design. They allow the interviewees to respond in lengthy detail with little control from the researcher with the use of main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

### 3.3.3. Rationale for nonparticipant observation

Non-participants observation was applied only in Pilot 2 and the main study<sup>5</sup> because observation is the best method for collecting a direct and detailed description of the setting and participants' interactions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For example, with these observations I was able to understand how the teachers teach the cultural content of their EFL textbook (whether they ignore the cultural items or issues, adapt the cultural content by providing extra information about a cultural item, reflecting, discussing, use extra materials, etc., I understand whether the teachers were aware about the existence of cultural items or not).

I used both follow-up interviews and observations to compare the results of the interviews with the data obtained from the observation. Thus, I used two data collection methods in a sequential manner as an aspect of triangulation. This was because according to Dornyei (2007), observation is different from interviews and questionnaires because it is “direct information rather than self-report accounts” (p. 178). Observation supports questionnaires and interviews by allowing for the gathering of valuable data about the participants' external behavior, whereas questions about their internal perspectives can be gathered via questionnaire or interviews (Heigham & Croker, 2009). Observation provides a detailed description of the setting of the investigated phenomenon, and it is more useful for working with respondents who are less informative due to their limited verbal skills. Nevertheless, according to Dornyei (2007), observations are limited because they do not investigate the internal processes of the observed participants, such as their opinions. In addition, observation does not provide a sufficient answer to the why questions as interviews.

I used a nonparticipant form of observation because it can be more convenient for the

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<sup>5</sup> Non- participant observation was not used in pilot 1 because secondary school EFL teachers did not take part of my study. Then, I developed the scope of the study to include teachers' opinions about their students' preferences with regard to the cultural content of their EFL textbooks

gatekeepers and the subjects (Dornyei, 2007), as the observer is considered an outsider (i.e., the observer does not participate in the activities done in the observed class) (Creswell, 2008). I used unstructured narrative field notes “the data recorded during an observation”; they are “text(words) recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study” (Creswell, 2008, p. 224). I used unstructured narrative field notes particularly to avoid reducing the issue to some categories that might lead to the ignoring of other important categories (Dornyei, 2007) by using a blank page with points from the lesson I planned to focus on. For example, extra materials, affordable technology, internet and so on the teacher's use in class, and how does the teacher deals with the cultural items or issues in the lesson (ignore, clarify, discuss, assigning after class activity, etc.).

#### **3.3.4. Rationale for textbooks analysis and evaluation**

In the main study, I evaluate all the official EFL textbooks taught in state secondary schools in Saudi Arabia because these books are part of textbook series taught in state secondary schools (The students’ learning educational level). In Pilot 1, I used four books from two EFL textbook series taught at the time of conducting Pilot 1. No EFL textbook evaluation and analysis were done in Pilot 2 because the participants studied from different EFL textbooks in their institutions.

The scope of the study is confined to the analysis of the cultural elements extracted from the written texts of the students’ EFL textbooks because the audio part of the book was mostly neglected in most of the schools in KSA due to lack of distribution of the accompanied CD. This study is restricted to the evaluation of students’ pupil book because it is the main used book in Saudi EFL classes. Pilot 1 was restricted to the evaluation of the reading texts while the main study includes the whole book to cover all the issues reported in the participants’ interviews about the effective way of learning and teaching the cultural content.

I attempted both an in- use evaluation and a post-use evaluation of the EFL textbooks. For the in- use evaluation, some questions of the interviews were asked to the participants about how they teach cultural items in the EFL textbook and the non- participant observation was mainly part of the in-use evaluation process. For the post use evaluation, I used a checklist to evaluate the books after a preceding stage of EFL textbooks analysis to supplement some parts of the process of in-depth evaluation. Textbook analysis involves a description of the books, whereas textbook evaluation requires making judgments (McGrath, 2002). Some questions in the follow- up interviews were asked to the participants about the usage of the cultural content in their EFL textbook as part of the post- use evaluation.

These types of evaluation are both types of close evaluation (McGrath, 2002), and using both methods (i.e., a checklist and an in-depth evaluation) would result in a more watertight evaluation (McGrath, 2002). According to McGrath (2002), these two methods of evaluation (i.e., in-use and post-use evaluation) are more reliable when they consider the opinions of the teachers and the students. As such, the opinions of the teachers and students are mostly the basis of the books' evaluation. These opinions include the students' preferences regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks, which were investigated in a previous stage.

### **3.4. Sampling rationale**

For distributing the questionnaires, I adopted a type of nonprobability sampling approach to recruit the informants because the participants volunteered to take part of the study. The sampling method is snowball sampling because I asked the participants to recruit others according to the purpose of my study. For the qualitative phase, I used purposive sampling, my priority was to have participants who could match the purposes of my study and who were willing to take part in this stage of the study. According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2013), purposeful sampling is the most common technique for sampling in

qualitative research. However, in qualitative research, it is suggested not to stop the process of sampling until the obtained data can no longer be developed further (Dornyei, 2007).

## **Section 2: Study developmental stages**

### **3.5. Ethical Approval**

For Pilot 1, ethical approval was sought and granted by university of Essex. For Pilot 2 and main study, I needed to seek ethical approval from university of Essex again and start seeking permission to conduct my study in state schools in Saudi Arabia in a formal way. The procedures were a long burden because the delay in granting the decision was due to Saudi bureaucracy that require requesting the permission for conducting my study from too many official administrative offices (the MOE administration office, Saudi cultural bureau in London, and my home institution although all of them are run under the command of MOE (see Appendix 5, p.32).

### **3.6. Pilot 1**

**Purpose.** I conducted Pilot 1 to pass the requisite of my PHD program and to test the clarity of the instruments' content and the suitability of the study procedures.

**Date.** In the middle of June 2015, I travelled back to Saudi Arabia to recruit subjects.

**Participants.** The participants were recent graduates of secondary school. Consequently, 24 participants (16 females and eight males) volunteered to take part in my study. Only eight female participants agreed to be interviewed. I distributed the questionnaires to the participants and maintained the process in nine pre-arranged face-to-face meetings held between me and the participants. For the male participants in the study, my presence was not an option due to the cultural restriction that limits contact between the two sexes to the minimum necessary situations (see Section 3.10, p. 130). Nevertheless, my brother *mahram* was the liaison between me and the participants via a Tango phone call.

I provided an oral explanation for the questionnaire (see Appendix: 1, p. 1). This was because the long definition of “culture” provided by Adaskou et al. (1990) was difficult for the students to understand the participants had repeated enquiries about some parts of this definition. However, only one participant agreed to the interview being recorded electronically. The others did not agree due to cultural restrictions against recording female voices and their own preferred choice of participation (see Section 3. 10, p. 130).

The textbook analysis and evaluation was administered on four Saudi secondary school English textbooks (i.e., *Flying High for Saudi Arabia* level 5 and level 6 written by Spencer (2014), and *KSA edition: Traveller* level 5 and 6 written by Mitchell- Marileni Malkogianni (2014) that were used in Saudi secondary state schools. These books were taught for term 5 and 6 (the final two academic terms in secondary schools). I used an evaluative checklist constructed on the same three purposes of the questionnaire: students’ preferences with regards to cultural items, their sources, and the way of teaching these elements from their EFL textbook. No observation task was administered at Pilot 1 because this study does not include the group of teachers.

**Data analysis.** Data were analysed quantitatively (i.e., the questionnaires) while the interviews and the analysis of the selected books were done either qualitatively or both qualitatively and quantitatively according to the checklist items.

**Results.** Results showed that the students’ reported wants with regard to the cultural content of their English textbooks were not fully fulfilled in their English textbooks. In other words, the books do not match the students' reported wants because they barely matched the students’ reported wants with regards to cultural items. Furthermore, the books seemed to fulfil students’ wants with regard to the sources from which cultural content was taken, though the distribution of cultural items from each country was unbalanced. With regards to



the suggested ways of teaching the cultural content, the cultural content of the books avoided the inclusion of culturally sensitive topics, negative stereotypes, and biases towards other cultures. Nevertheless, it has few comparisons between the students' own culture and the ENS cultures. It does not seem to help the students in their future visits to ENSs. The books could help the students' in their future visits and in their other courses.

**Decision.** Decision was made to enlarge the scope of the study to include the teachers' opinions and to observe those teachers in their classes to understand how they teach the cultural content of EFL textbooks. Besides, improving the instruments according to the results of this pilot study (see Section 3.8.1.2.1., p. 106), and the procedures was also improved, see the next sections.

### 3.7. Pilot 2

**Date.** I started Pilot 2 in July 2016 in Colchester, England. It was difficult to recruit respondents in Saudi Arabia due to long procedures for receiving permissions to conduct field work, and the potential participants were enjoying a long official vacation.

**Purpose.** The study purpose at this stage is to test the suitability of the improved version of the instruments and procedures of the study and to receive feedback from the participants on these improved version of instruments (see Section 3.8.1.2.1, p. 106). Conducting an interview in this pilot phase was important for practicing dealing with interruptions, asking adequate questions while it was also important to improve note-taking skills for both practice interviews and observation (Creswell, 2014; Dornyei, 2007). The skill of the observer might also affect the quality of data. As, Marshall and Rossman (2016) indicated that the researcher needs to use all his or her senses to provide an adequate description of the observed setting. So that I did observation and interviews in Piolt2 while

not practicing doing document analysis at this phase of study was because I practiced doing it in Pilot 1.

***Participants.*** The first group of participants, Saudi EFL/ESL students, were either recent graduates of secondary school who recently studied at two language institutions in the same city where I study. The other group of participants were Saudi EFL teachers who pursue their higher education at a UK university and teach at least one general English course at the preparatory year of a bachelor's degree in a university in Saudi Arabia. The participants from both groups are from different cities in Saudi Arabia. I observed an English native speaker teacher who worked in the international language institution at the University of Essex.

***Ways of questionnaires distribution.*** A web link to the questionnaire was distributed via a chatting group of a 'WhatsApp' application. The Saudi students were recruited via a male relative of mine (see Section 3.10, p. 130) who was studying in one of the language institutions in the UK. I used an electronic questionnaire in Pilot 2 because using an electronic questionnaire helped in not taking an expensive trip home. It was also relatively convenient for my own purposes due to an unsuccessful attempt to easily recruit male respondents for this study in Saudi Arabia (see Section 3.10, p. 130).

***Actual number of participants in each method of data collection.*** Nine females Saudi EFL teachers and eight Saudi EFL/ESL students (5 males and 3 females) returned the completed questionnaires. With regards to the interviews, one Female Saudi EFL/ESL student and one female EFL teacher were interviewed in a face-to-face mode of communication. I practiced observing and checking the efficiency of my designed field notes by contacting the language institution that belong to university of Essex. Fortunately, the permission to observe a class was granted. The observed teacher was a female native speaker of English who has recent experience teaching general English courses in a Saudi university.

The class included only three Saudi ESL students (two females and one male) and no other students from the other nationalities. The teacher was only provided with the information sheet about the study and the consent form. She did not answer the questionnaires nor take part in an interview.

The interviews were recorded via the recorder application on iPhone while the observation task was recorded by taking hand-written notes, but no audio or video recording was attempted with regards to the observation. (see Section 3.10, p. 130).

**Results.** No analysis of data was administered at this pilot study because the sample was underrepresented. Moreover, no textbook analysis and evaluation was administered at this study because the participants used many different EFL textbooks as indicated above. Nevertheless, the purpose of conducting the study has been achieved. This was because I received feedback from the participants, and I tested my instruments and the procedures of the study. Both groups indicated the questions were clear and needed no further clarification and that they spent about 20 to 30 minutes to answer the questionnaires' items. Regarding the interviews, they last about 30 minutes with the student and an hour with the teacher. The interviews were held face to face outside a café in the university of Essex. The observed class last for 1 hour and 40 minutes.

**Outcome.** Feedback received from the participants of the study indicated that the questionnaires need no further improvements. Moreover, the participants confirmed that oral instructions and face-to-face distribution are not needed because the questionnaires were comprehensible. It seems that the improvements made on this version of the questionnaire (e.g., adding examples to each item of the questionnaire and including the aims on each section) was effective (see Section 3.8.1.2.2, p. 111). I added the information about the

average duration needed to finish the questionnaires and the follow-up interviews to the participant information sheet.

I found that the answers provided on the interview questions need extra space other than the assigned space on the page. Thus, I decided to write the number of the questions only on a blank page followed by the answers of the interviewees in the main study to write their reflections on extra space.

With regards to the section of the field notes on the observation task, I found that I needed more open space on the observation protocol to write all the distinctive observed details on the class. Thus, I decided to write my notes on a blank space. After that I wrote detailed evaluation under the items of my previous field notes based on my already written notes on the observed class.

### **3. 8. Development of the study instruments**

#### **3.8.1. Questionnaire**

The questionnaires (see Appendix: 3&4, p. 10-12) pack starts with an information sheet and a consent form, includes an introductory paragraph in a page with no sensitive questions on the first page. This was done to make it easier for me to classify, arrange, and store the questionnaires in a convenient way.

The study questionnaire is introduced with an introductory paragraph that reminds the participants of the study's purpose and informs them briefly about the content of the questionnaires. It also gives a definition of culture regarding language teaching. This definition is important in overcoming the expected misunderstanding of the concept of culture in the EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia because it is confused with the concept of civilization as indicated by Alfahadi (2012). Nevertheless, it is a common misunderstanding as culture is difficult to be defined (see chapter 2, p. 30) and need a precise description for the

participants. The questionnaire contained in Pilot 2 and main study a shorter definition of *culture*, instead of the whole definition in Pilot 1 provided by Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990), it is the summarized version attempted by Gray (2006). Overall, the content of the study's questionnaires have undergone some stages of development.

The other general improvement to the questionnaires was adding the aims of each section of the questionnaire to Pilot 2 and the main study. These aims were to make each section's basic idea clear and make the instructions easy to follow with their inclusion as introductory statements. Besides, a gratitude remark was included at the bottom of this questionnaire along with a reminder to participate in the follow-up interviews.

#### **3.8.1.1. BQ**

*Students BQ.* A BQ was used to obtain the students' personal information: age, gender, residential city, and nationality. In this study, these items worked as a filter to exclude the participants who did not meet the criteria assigned for participation in the study.

The students' outcomes in their English courses were determined by their grades in their most recent English courses in their secondary schools. In addition, this item on the BQ was used to determine a specific characteristic of the participants of the study. It did not require the students to rate their proficiencies but to choose among attributes on a categorical scale, which is also called a nominal scale (Creswell, 2008), from an excellent grade to acceptable grade.

The aim of the last item of the BQ was to seek information about the students' purposes for studying English. This item of the questionnaire is important because it is supposed to enrich the data obtained to understand the students' interests regarding the cultural content in their EFL textbooks.

***Improvements in the main study.*** Other items, that I found to be more practical, were added only to the main study, such as asking the students about their first names when they agreed to participate in the follow-up interviews after providing their contact information, reading the information sheet of the study, and signing the consent form. This is due to the fact that interviews lack the possibility of ensuring anonymity (Dornyei, 2007), and I added these items to facilitate subsequent arrangements. The other personal items added were the students' school names and class sections as well as whether they are from the scientific or the arts department of the school. These items were added to help contact the participants in a more convenient way and pre-arrange meetings for the interview volunteers.

***Teachers' BQ<sup>6</sup>.*** Regarding the added new group, EFL teachers' group, in Pilot 2 and main study, teachers' personal information on BQ included the teachers' ages, towns, nationalities, teaching qualifications (degree and awarding institution), and years of experience in teaching English. Besides these attributes, job title of either teacher or supervisor, and sex of either male or female which were obtained through a categorical scale.

***Improvements of Teacher's BQ.*** The other items added to the main study when they agreed to take part in the follow-up interviews were the teachers' first names, contact information, and school names.

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<sup>6</sup> There was no BQ distributed to teachers in Pilot 1 because the study was confined to the students' group.

### 3.8.1.2. Questionnaire

#### 3.8.1.2.1 Design of questionnaire

*Pilot 1.* The students' opinions about their interests regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks were obtained from this questionnaire that consisted of 18 items. Each group of six items were placed into a separate section. In these sections, 5 items were closed items that the students responded to (i.e., statements 1–5, 7–11, and 13–17) using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important. For example, section 1 was about the students preferred cultural items on the basis of Adaskou et al. (1990) different senses of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantic: Distinctive and general sub- categories<sup>7</sup>, and pragmatic senses), section 2 was about the sources of these cultural items (UK and USA cultures, other English native speakers' cultures, speakers of English as a second language, the students' own culture, and world cultures), and section 3 includes the suggested ways of teaching cultural items from the students' EFL textbooks (in a way that avoid sensitive topics or sensitive cultural topics to the students' own culture, adopt the view of international understanding and avoid the inclusion of negative stereotypes and other biases towards the cultures different to the students' own culture, help to compare the students' own culture and the English culture, help the students in their possible future visits to an English speaking country or in their contacts with English native speakers, and help the students in their other courses). Statements 6, 12, and 18 were open-ended items in each section for the students to provide more elements that they considered important in their EFL textbooks. Providing examples on their preferred cultural

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<sup>7</sup> This is a modified version of the definition to facilitate the concept of the semantic category to the participants (see Section 3.8.1.2.2, p. 111).

items, sources of these items and suggested ways of teaching these items from their EFL textbooks, sequentially.

***For Pilot 2 and the main study.*** This questionnaire was improved as follows:

***Section A.*** The first section of the questionnaire remained the same as in Pilot 1 using the same a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important and was about the different cultural items grouped under the five categories of culture suggested by Adaskou et al. (1990) (Aesthetic, sociological, semantic: distinctive and general, pragmatic senses). The change was supporting the different categories with short description and examples to clarify these items with no need for oral clarifications. For example, the aesthetic sense was clarified with a short description (information about the arts regarding native speakers of English) and exemplified with literature, poetry, media, theatre, cinema, and music. The first open-ended item (providing examples on cultural items) on the questionnaire (Pilot 1) was merged with the second open-ended item (providing examples on the preferred sources of these cultural items) to form a separate section (Section C) (see Section C below).

***Section B.*** The second section of the questionnaire continued to include both old and newly added items and remained the same a 5-point Likert scale, but with 1 indicating no importance and 5 indicating the most important. This was because the students in Pilot 1 complained that there is no point in the scale indicate zero or no importance.

The change was that UK and the US were separated into two different items in the questionnaire to represent the typical sources of cultural items regarding English native speakers. This was because the participants considered in their interviews in Pilot 1 that the US as a source of cultural items is distinct from UK and that they preferred the US to UK.



Moreover, a new item (item No.11) was added to the items regarding the sources of culture section of the questionnaire. The new item concerns the students' preferences for importing cultural items from Islamic civilization as a source of culture because of the students' most recurred examples, in the results obtained from the open-ended question in this section in Pilot 1. The students in their interviews distinguished between their own Saudi culture and the Islamic culture. They suggest having them into two separate items as sub-categories of the local culture category in Pilot 1. Another added item required the students to provide examples about the world cultures they prefer to be added to their EFL textbooks. This was needed to understand the student's specific world cultures they are interested in.

**Section C.** A new section was added (Section C) to the questionnaire; it includes only an open-ended item that enquires about the preferred cultural items, and topics needed to be added to the students' EFL textbooks in their EFL teaching classes. The respondents were also asked to, if possible, determine which country these items were from to make their answers more specific.

Some examples were provided as models of answers to help the respondents perfectly understand this open-ended question. These examples were imported from the most recurring examples from the results of my Pilot 1. According to Dornyei (2007), open-ended questions can work in an effective way by eliciting a great range of responses when the questions are not completely open. Further, the question elicited data that help in designing the checklist.

**Section D.** Regarding the last section of the questionnaire, on a five-point Likert scale the students were asked to state an opinion on each statement of this section about the suggested ways of teaching the cultural content of the students' EFL textbook. New items were added to this section from arguments in previous literature and others were either added from students' recurring examples in the interviews and coincided with previous literature or

noticed in their answers on these interviews from their Pilot 1 (see Section 3.8.1.2.2, p. 111). For example, the added items were a suggested way of teaching the cultural content in a way that can motivate the students by the inclusion of updated, and familiar cultural items within relevant topics to their own interests was derived from previous literature, while dividing facilitating future visits, avoidance of sensitive topics, and comparing between the students own culture to the target culture in the books in to two new items was necessary because of the students' opinions that they prefer non- native speakers contact rather than contacting with ENSs, the students' differentiation between sensitive topics from local culture to topics from ENSs cultures, and the students' preference of comparing their culture to other non- native speakers' culture in Pilot 1. These items were also part of arguments in previous literature. The other items that were based on the students' recurring answers on their interviews was a suggested way of teaching the cultural content in a way that help the students in avoiding situations that could cause misunderstandings in their cross-cultural communication by developing their intercultural communication skills and supporting their cultural awareness, a suggested way of helping the students in creating a positive impression of the Islamic culture for others, and a suggested way of helping the students in achieving high scores on the international English proficiency tests.

The open-ended question that required the students to provide more examples about other suggested ways of teaching the cultural content remained the same, and it used the format of sentence completion, which is considered to be a good technique for enhancing the participant's ability to provide answers to open-ended questions, as indicated by Dornyei (2007).

The options on the scale of each item on the last section of the questionnaire were changed in Pilot 2 and main study from Pilot 1 in which the participants stated an opinion by weighing the importance (using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the least important and 5

being the most important) of the procedures that needed to be done to teach the cultural content effectively from EFL textbooks to an option stating the degree of agreement with each statement of this section in Pilot 2 and main studies (using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement). It was noticed in Pilot 1, that the students in their interviews reflect on their answers on this section by stating agreement on the statements rather than weighing the importance of these ways of teaching the cultural content.

***Teachers' questionnaires.*** The teachers' questions were the same but with a modification in the questions' wordings to suit the addressee (see Appendix: 4.2, p. 19). For example, the teachers were asked to think of the topics and cultural items that their students' might need to learn in their EFL textbooks or items that they thought that their students might be interested in.

***Questionnaires' length and layout.*** The questionnaire was of suitable length (The questionnaire at Pilot 1 contained three sections with 15 items in the format of five-point Likert scales with three open-ended items whereas the questionnaire in Pilot 2 and main study contained four sections with 24 items on the format of five point-Likert scales and three open-ended items) and was assumed to be practical in terms of time and encouragement for the participants to return it back completed, as indicated by Dornyei (2007). The researcher used a formal letter from Essex University and a MOE-stamped questionnaires pack with a suitable font, layout, and white spaces. This was important for gaining the trust of the participants and gatekeepers because it was assumed to encourage them to take part in the study and facilitate the mission of the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

***Use of bilingual questionnaires.*** According to Dornyei (2007), literacy is one of the challenges for the researchers who use questionnaires as a data-collection method. The

questionnaires were translated into Arabic in pilot 1 and were bilingual<sup>8</sup> in the subsequent studies. This was assumed to encourage the participants to take part in the study and understand the questionnaire's items and instructions. Translating the questionnaires into Arabic was needed, especially with the sample of EFL secondary school students, because answering a questionnaire in the students' first language would guarantee that the students understand the items of the questionnaire, especially when they have an inappropriate target-language competence. In Pilot 2, all the participants indicated that all of the items were clear and that they were grateful for having the questionnaires in Arabic.

#### **3.8.1.2.2. Rationale for the content of the sections of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is an attempt to find for an optimal cultural content in a specific EFL teaching context: EFL in Saudi state secondary schools. The questionnaire takes into consideration the students' interests and includes the opinions of their teachers about what they think that their students are interested in. The questionnaire suggested choosing cultural elements from the different categories of culture, determining the cultural sources of these items, and finding the appropriate ways to teach these items, according to the students' opinions and those of their teachers.

***First section.*** The cultural elements possibly found in the books were grouped under five items. These items are general aspects regarding culture (i.e., aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic) that Adaskou et al. (1990) considered important in teaching a language. This descriptive framework of *culture* was used for describing culture in EFL textbooks. For example, Gray (2006) asked the EFL teachers in their interviews to rearrange

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<sup>8</sup> The choice of keeping the questionnaires a bilingual one was because it was assumed that it is necessary to keep it a bilingual questionnaire to follow the accreditation administration processes. Besides, giving the participants the choice to read in either language they feel comfortable with. There was an expected rare obstacle of finding an EFL secondary school teacher who cannot read Arabic. However, it might be better if I make the questionnaires in Arabic only to save paper because the participants answers were mostly in Arabic and in weak English structure.

the categories of culture according to their importance. The framework was also used as an evaluative framework for the cultural content of EFL textbooks in many studies (e.g., Rashidi & Meihami, 2016; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). As an evaluative framework, researchers either expand or shorten the scope of each category according to the purposes of their studies (see Section 2., p.98).

The categories of this framework of culture necessitate adding a section that does not restrict English to the native speakers' norms or world views because Adaskou et al. (1990) description of culture in ELT reflects an essentialist viewpoint about culture (McKay's, 2003a) so that I created Section B of the questionnaire about the sources of cultural items to not restrict the scope of culture description to the norms of English speakers. I also provided examples to not only clarify each category of culture but also to expand the scope of the description of culture in ELT domain to the non-essentialist point of view of culture that is reflected in the non-restriction of cultural items to geographical space (Holliday, 1999, 2011; Rich, 2011). The semantic category has examples that reflect the small cultures in a specific geographical space and small cultures that could be shared with similar cultures around the world (See chapter 2, p. 30).

The examples I provided on each category of culture also would help in clarifying the scope of each category. In fact, Adaskou et al. (1990) indicated that these categories may intersect with each other. For example, teaching the word *sweet* could be effectively taught by demonstrating the use of this word in certain cultural contexts. Specifically, this word is used differently in Western cultures, where it is served after a main meal, in contrast to a Saudi Arabian context, where sweet things are served with coffee before a main meal.

The difficulty of explaining the semantic category was because it has a wide scope (almost any word in a language might have some cultural aspects of this sort) and the fact that much of what Adaskou et al. refer to under this category would be classed by most

linguists as pragmatic or encyclopaedic associations of words rather than their definitional (i.e., semantic) meaning. It is concerned about the conceptual system behind words, the non-dictionary meanings which could vary from culture to another and within each culture whether these cultures are small or big ones. For example, Big Ben might symbolise the nation for a British person but may only be an attraction for a tourist. Some cultures might perceive *fat* positively, and some African and Arabic cultures use their equivalents to this word in blessings, whereas this word might be perceived negatively in Western cultures. Many researchers provide their own interpretation of this category of culture according to what they think that could help in an effective teaching about culture to improve the learning of language. For example, Gray (2006) and Lessard-Clouston (1996) even considered the use of British and American lexicon as an example of the semantic category. When a person says “soccer,” they understand this person to be American and not British, who would say “football” instead. In this example, it is not suggested that the match itself differs or even is played differently etc. in the US and UK: the concept is the same, and the point is simply that a different word for the same thing is used, and so carries an overtone of the country of origin of the speaker, which is then regarded as part of the concept of the word. Hence, language itself is as an element of culture (see chapter 2, p. 30). McKay (2000) stated that

The semantic dimension of culture is relevant in the teaching of lexical items. Cultural information on this level is often embedded in common phrases that are introduced in texts with no historical, cultural, or sociological explanation provided... In teaching an international language, teachers are faced with the question of which terms to introduce. Should terms that are highly country specific, such as yellow journalism, be introduced, or are there terms that have developed from more general Western traditions, such as Pandora’s box, the Midas touch, or the good Samaritan, that are more applicable to the use of an international language? (p.9)

In my study, I divided the semantic category into two separate items: distinctive and general conceptual semantic subcategories. This division is important because I needed to

clarify this sense of culture to the purposes of my study (i.e. teaching the cultural content effectively to achieve the students' EFL learning goals) in a way that the students could easily understand.

Each subsection of this category of culture performs a special role in teaching the English language. For example, the distinctive semantic subcategory was related to items that manifest information (e.g., historical, social, or economic) specific to a culture (in the national or ethnic sense); often the words for these items are borrowed or literally translated into other languages when the concept needs to be mentioned, because other languages do not already possess any equivalent. For example, *kabsa* is a favourite and traditional Saudi dish, *sari* is a traditional Indian costume, Chanel is a high-end French brand, Oxford is a top-rank British university, and so on. Students from a different part of the world might already recognize these items, where they have entered into international use, and this could enable them to familiarize themselves with a specific culture.

The general semantic subcategory by contrast is used by small cultures. For example, a speaker of a language from a small culture uses words, phrases and terms that belong to a particular variety of the language so represent their own culture (e.g., the biologist uses *cell* in a particular sense, and terms like *nucleus*, *DNA* and *blood cell*). The concepts of such a culture (and often the words) may be used internationally (in this case by biologists all over the world) regardless of large cultures (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014). These words may be used by other small cultures with a different sense such as the use of *cell* by prisoners. It shows how culture is perceived by the nonessentialists, who believe that cultural items are sharable between groups of people in a specific cultural context and are not restricted to a geographical place, as discussed in the previous chapter (Holliday, 1999, 2011; Rich, 2011).

I assumed such a division so as to make this category of culture easier to understand. In Pilot 1, the students frequently requested clarification about this category, and required a lot of oral explanation.

**Second section.** The second section of the questionnaire aimed at obtaining information about the students' interests about the cultures that could be included in their EFL textbooks. Participants (students only in Pilot 1, and students and their teachers in Pilot 2 and the main study) need to determine their opinions about very specific cultural elements from some suggested cultures of English-speaking countries and other cultures that are socially connected to the students' culture or the status of English as a global language while the students learn this language. I was particularly interested in the students' opinions regarding the cultures of UK and the US as the only or typical cultures of English native speakers; the cultures of other English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and so forth; the cultures of the countries that speak English as a second language such as India or the Philippines; the students' own cultures (i.e., Saudi culture); and the world's different cultures. These items were designed based on some arguments from studies such as Alptekin (1993) and McKay (2003b) that discussed the issue of which cultural model should be adopted in EFL textbooks (i.e., the target culture model, the local culture model, and the multicultural model that reflects the status of English as a global language), an issue that has been tackled in detail in the previous chapter. The Islamic culture was added to Pilot 2 and main study because I realized from Pilot 1 that the students differentiated between the Saudi culture and the Islamic culture and insisted on having items from the Islamic culture in their interviews and open-ended questions of Pilot 1. In addition, they indicated that they prefer the U.S. culture more than the U.K. culture and this was the reason they considered in Pilot 1 results the item that include both the US and UK as a source of cultural items to be the most important to be included in their EFL textbooks. It seems that the distinction between



the Saudi culture and the Islamic culture and between the U.K. culture and the U.S. culture as being typical cultures of English native speakers is sensible, and thus I attempted these modifications, as indicated in the previous section (see Section: 3.8.1.2.1, p. 106).

The last section of the questionnaire aimed at collecting information from the students and their teachers<sup>9</sup> about the interests of the students with regard to the way they prefer to learn about cultural items and issues related to teaching these cultural items from the students EFL textbooks in their EFL classes in order to help the students achieve their learning goals. For example, teaching the cultural elements from EFL textbooks in a way that avoids sensitive topics in other cultures and sensitive topics in the students' own cultures. This item was constructed to reflect the fact that culture has "hidden patterns and beliefs" (Johnson and Rinvoluceri (2011) and that there is an underdeveloped discussion in literature about the questioning of the effectiveness of the inclusion of sensitive topics in EFL classes. Gray (2006) and Kubota (2014) discussed these topics as being important in critical pedagogy. This item was divided into two items in the subsequent studies (Pilot 2 and main study). One item refers to the avoidance of the possibility of the inclusion of sensitive topics that are rarely discussed in a Saudi teaching context, (i.e., from the students' own culture), though Cunningsworth (2005), among others, such as Banegas (2010), Gray (2006) argued that most of these topics are not included in EFL textbooks because book writers and editors prefer that EFL textbooks contain imaginary, perfected depictions of reality: for example, the avoidance of the inclusion of topics as disabilities. Another example, that is more connected to the students' culture is the current topic that is widely distributed in the media as terrorism. Also, the 2030 economic vision adopted by Prince Muhammad bin Salman that is assumed to be a transformative vision of the history of Saudi Arabia and, thus, the culture of Saudi people. The other item is the one that refers to the inclusion of sensitive topics from the target

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<sup>9</sup> Teachers group was in the case of the second and main studies only.

language culture that might contradict the students' Saudi culture. According to Tseng (2002), the inclusion of such items is important when looking at matters from a different viewpoint, which is helpful for developing the learners' cultural awareness and, thus, their intercultural competence, following the enculturation theory of second-language acquisition.

These two items (Item No. 14 and 15) of the questionnaire—among others such as item No.1: the music example, dance, cinema, and item No. 2: social relations—are considered debatable issues in Saudi Arabia, and their inclusion in the questionnaire might deter the participants from taking part in the study if the questionnaire items are not constructed in a tactful way. According to Creswell (2008), sensitive questions need to be included in the questionnaire in a strategic way; otherwise, the participants might not provide honest answers, leading to invalid results. One of his suggested strategies is to use closed-ended items because this strategy would enable the respondents to be more comfortable as they know the limits of their response possibilities. This was one of the strategies used to overcome the expected issues of such a sensitive question. Other strategies involved the inclusion of the aims of the study to show the importance of each section of the study. Another strategy was that none of the statements of this section contained negative construction such as *not* and *no*. Instead, I used the word *avoid*. According to Dornyei (2007), it is important to preclude negative constructions because they are deceptive and being forced to respond to these constructions might have some impact on the participants' answers.

A new item (No.13) that is relevant to topic priority being an important component of the cultural content of EFL textbooks was added to this section in subsequent studies (Cunningsworth, 2005). This was done to reflecting the idea of the inclusion of familiar and relevant topics to the students' lives. In addition, reflecting the idea of the importance of the inclusion of updated topics is based on the idea that culture is changing, and such an understanding of culture is reflected in the work of the nonessentialists regarding their views

of culture (Holliday, 1999, 2011; Rich, 2011). This item was also retrieved from the analysis of interviews in Pilot 1 as the students criticized the topics in their EFL textbooks for being outdated. Some studies considered these issues as part of the challenge of designing EFL textbooks. For example, among others, Alptekin (1993) indicated the importance of the inclusion of familiar and relevant cultural items to the students. In addition, Graves (2000) indicated that cultural items need to be updated in EFL textbooks that are supposed to motivate the students to learn the English language.

Other items of the questionnaire include some selected items from Adaskou et al.'s (1990) argument about how the aesthetic and sociological aspects of the meaning of culture can increase the English learners' intercultural communicative competence in cross-cultural communication. The items include, for example, the importance of the cultural content of EFL textbooks in facilitating future visits abroad and helping in other courses that the students are studying in addition to English—such as computer science, physics, or geography. In the subsequent studies, the item that included the importance of having cultural content that can help in possible visits to other English-speaking countries and the possibility of additional contact with native speakers was expanded in a separate item to include the possibility of visits to other countries that have English as a *lingua franca*<sup>10</sup> and the possibility of contact with people who do not speak the students' language but speak English as a foreign or second language (McKay, 2002). This was important to add because of the status of English as a global language and the high frequency of instrumental English learning goals provided by the students in Pilot 1.

Other items dealt with some arguments in the previous literature, which was reviewed in the previous chapter, about the importance of developing the intercultural

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<sup>10</sup> This concept was translated as English as an international language for communication

communication of the students because inadequate intercultural competence could result in a communicative breakdown, and these items reflect the importance of having successful communication because English is used as a global language and in cross-cultural communication. These studies, Byram (1997), and Adaskou et al. (1990), included some suggested ways for improving intercultural communication skills: for example, the necessity of dealing with the cultural content of EFL textbooks in a way that can allow students to adopt the view of cultural understanding and avoid the inclusion of negative stereotypes and other biases toward the other cultures. In addition, the importance of treating the cultural content in a way that allows the students to compare their own culture with English native speakers' culture as well as reflecting on, discussing, exploring, and searching for some English cultural items. This item (No.17) was partially adopted from Pilot 1 because this item was restricted to a comparison between the students' culture and the native speakers' cultures. These items were based in some suggestions from Byram (1997) about how to develop intercultural competence in an EFL context of teaching. In addition, the items followed the dialogic approach of teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks proposed by Kramersch (1998), among others. It was separated into two items: one (No.17) dealt with a comparison between the students' culture and the target culture; the other (No.18) dealt with a comparison between the students' culture and the other cultures around the world that can be of interest to the students.

The last three items (No.22-24) were adopted from the analysis of the interviews and open-ended items in Pilot 1. These items addressed, for example, the necessity of teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks in a way that can help the students avoid situations that could cause misunderstandings in their cross-cultural communication. A suggested way for successfully teaching this item is to develop the students' intercultural communication skills by building their cultural awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and so forth, as suggested by

Byram (1997). The other added item to this section on the questionnaire treats the cultural content of English textbooks in a way that can help the students create a positive impression of the Islamic culture for others and treats the cultural content in a way that can help the students achieve high scores on the international English proficiency tests.

With regard to the open-ended items, they are based on the same purposes of the sections of the questionnaire and enrich the data by covering specific cultural items or sources of cultural items from specific cultures as well as techniques for teaching these cultural items that could be of preference to the students and cannot be achieved with numerical data: for example, providing examples of world cultures in one item ( No.12) and providing examples about specific cultural items or topics from specific cultures in another question (in Section C). To clarify this question, some highly frequent examples were adopted from Pilot 1. The last item (No.25) provided more examples about the preferred ways for teaching the cultural content of their EFL textbooks.

### **3.8.1.3. Follow- up interviews design and protocol**

I used both a face-to-face mode and a telephone mode of interviewing in Pilot 1 and main study whereas Pilot 2 interviews was conducted only in a face to-face mode of interviewing. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), the face-to-face mode provide more information about the interviewees' visual cues or emotional cues that might inform the interviewer when to proceed to a particular point and when to stop whereas telephone interviewing allowed researchers to reach people who are far away (Creswell, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I have developed an interview protocol as a guide to the process of the semi-structured interviews. I started with an ice breaker by welcoming the participants<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>11</sup> The participants were only students in Pilot. They were students and teachers in Pilot 2 and main study. Both groups of participants were asked exactly the same questions on the interviews but with different paraphrasing

thanking them for taking part in this phase of the study. According to Dornyei (2007), these questions are important to “set the tone and create initial rapport” (p. 137). I then introduced myself and reminded the participants of the purpose of my study. I reassured them that the interviews would be anonymous, and that no personal information would be made public. Some of the students provided their parents’ mobile number, perhaps because they did not have a mobile number. Their parents were cooperative and encouraging when it came to arrange a suitable time for their daughters to do the interview.

In the follow-up interviews, the participants were asked to elaborate on their answers on the questionnaires by reflecting on and justifying their choices for each answer. According to Kormos (1998), follow-up interviews can enrich the data and strengthen the reliability of the results (as cited in Dornyei, 2007). I conducted these interviews after the completion of the questionnaires.

The participants were shown the answers they produced on the questionnaires. For example, all the interviewees were asked “why did you choose this number on the scale for this item?”; “why did you think that this item in this section of the questionnaire was more important than the others?”; and “why did you think that this item was less important than the others in this section of the questionnaire?” This process was repeated for all the items on the questionnaire.

Regarding the last section of the questionnaire in the main study, the students and teachers were asked to think about whether their EFL textbooks or EFL classes include the suggested ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content. For the open-ended questions on the questionnaires, the interviewees were asked to provide more examples than the ones

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of question to suit the addressee. For example, the teachers were asked about their opinions of what they think their students are interested in with regards to culture whereas the students were asked directly about their preferences. Another example was that the students were asked about their opinions with regards to the difficulties they face when learning about cultural items from different sources while the teachers were asked about the difficulties they were faced when teaching the cultural content.

they had written on their questionnaires. For example, they could provide more examples on the topics, cultural items, sources of cultural items from other cultures, supplemental materials, or other suggested ways of teaching the cultural items.

At the end of the interviews, the participants were asked via mobile phone or face to face mode of communication to add any other comments related to the points discussed or answered in the questionnaires or the interviews. Finally, I thanked the participants and rewarded some of them with a simple present or some chocolate when the interview was conducted in a face- to- face mode of communication.

#### **3.8.1.4. Non- participant observations task**

I used non- participant observations to explore the teachers' actual practices in delivering the cultural content of their EFL textbooks. For example, whether they use other sources other than their own EFL textbook for cultural items in their classes, and how they adapt the cultural content to meet their students' wants (see Section 3.11.3, p. 144). To record the events observed I used semi-structured field notes (using closed- ended categories to tick and open- ended categories to answer, (see Appendix 10.3, p. 44) in Pilot 2 but Pilot 2 semi-structured field notes protocol were not effective because there was no space to write the observed events. In this way, I used narrative unstructured field notes in the main study by accomplishing the observation task at an initial stage. I first recorded the observed events on a blank page that contain only the lesson items, and then I judged these events to answer the research questions. In an unstructured observation, the researcher accomplishes the observation task at an initial stage, records the observed data, and then judges the events to answer the research questions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

In these observations, I read the lessons in the books to familiarize myself with them and to adjust my expectations about what would be observed according to the lesson the teachers had assigned in advance. Although having a start list for coding is recommended by

Miles and Huberman (1994), Dornyei (2007) indicated that the advantage of doing structured observations is that they reduce the difficulty of the task, making the procedure more systematic and reliable, and thus, the results can be compared to other studies and analyzed later using statistical procedures. On the other hand, this type of observation has some disadvantages. For example, the observer might miss some important emergent categories by focusing on the predetermined list of categories, and thus the instrument will be considered insensitive to the observed context. However, this was the case in Pilot 2 because, I found that other categories emerged in the class that were not included in my observation protocol. As such, dividing the observation protocol into sections had a restricting impact, and thus I needed more space to take notes.

These field notes in the main study were mostly descriptive field notes (by mainly describing the events in class regarding how the teacher teach the cultural content), and on a few occasions, they were reflective notes (I commented on the event done by the teacher when teaching a point on the lesson or the student when interacting with the teacher).

The observed participants teach in settings that were familiar to me, and this facilitated my observation task, as I study in university of Essex where the observed ESL teach in Pilot 2 and I had visited the schools many times in the main study where the two observed female EFL secondary schools teach.

In these observations, the teachers understood the purpose of the observations as indicated briefly in Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix: 8, p. 32). Indicating the purpose of the study briefly was thought to be important to not affect the validity of the study's results. For example, Heigham and Croker (2009) indicated that teachers might act in a different way due to the presence of the researcher. Nevertheless, it appeared that the teachers were well prepared for my presence because the observed lessons were pre- decided in advance.



### 3.8.1.5. Checklist

The criteria or elements of the checklist could include both general and specific criteria, as indicated by Ur (1996). Cunningsworth (2005) indicated that different criteria in the checklist could be adopted in different situations. In my study, I used both general and specific criteria when designing the checklist. The former is adopted from the items of the questionnaire (cultural elements, sources of these elements (cultures), and the way of including these items in EFL textbooks and/or teaching them in classes) while the latter are adopted from the analysis of the data arising from the instruments of the study (the examples the participants provided when they were asked about their preferred cultural items, sources of these items, and way they like to learn or to teach them).

The checklist in Pilot 1 was different from the one used in the main study (see Appendix: 1, p. 5) because the main study was border in scope than Pilot 1<sup>12</sup>. I include the details about the process of constructing the checklist (see Section 3.11.4 & 3.11.5, p. 144-148) after analysing the results of the qualitative data of the study (i.e., open-ended questions and interviews). The checklist included both open and closed ended questions.

### 3.8.1.6. Materials

In Pilot 1, I selected four EFL textbooks to be evaluated, with two books each from two different series. The selected EFL textbooks included two books each from two different levels: Level 5 and Level 6, and from two different series of the official EFL textbooks series in state secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. The first series is the *Flying High for Saudi Arabia* series (Spencer, 2014), and the second series is the *KSA Edition: Traveller* series (Mitchell- Marileni Malkogianni, 2014).

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<sup>12</sup> No text analysis and evaluation was administered in Pilot 2.

Yet in the main study, I administered the evaluation on six books from one series because the Curriculum Development Department Unit ended its 5 years pilot scheme of EFL textbooks distribution by selecting the *KSA Edition: Traveller* series (Mitchell- Marileni Malkogianni, 2016) (see Chapter 1, p.18). I have both hard copies donated by a teacher and a supervisor and electronic copies downloaded from the iEN website<sup>13</sup>.

### **3.9. Main study**

In the main study, I distributed the questionnaires, conducted the interviews, then did the observation task. After that, I constructed the checklist after analyzing the previous sets of data because the checklist was basically constructed on these obtained results.

#### **3.9.1. Questionnaires sampling process**

In the sampling stage, I used both electronic and paper-based questionnaires in a cross-sectional way. Nevertheless, I could not use electronic- questionnaires as the main format of data collection for the main study because the gatekeepers and the MOE representative administrators explained that access to the Internet is not available in secondary schools.

I either provided the web link to the questionnaires or paper copies of the questionnaires to the principals of the schools or gatekeepers. In other occasions, I or my brother (*mahram*), (see Section: 3.10, p.130) were directed to some classes in the schools to distribute the questionnaires by ourselves without school intervention. The heads of schools explained that they cannot guarantee the availability of all the students or the teachers in their schools to take part in the study because teachers are very busy with their work duties requirements and the students do not have free slots in their timetables.

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<sup>13</sup> It is a free National Education Portal website that is assumed to provide supplementary learning for students and professional development for teachers. It covers all levels of general education.

Some challenges appeared at this point because a school might contain only two teachers for English because of this I visited 21 institutions<sup>14</sup> to recruit more teachers unlike the students' participants each school has over the required number for my study. Two of them were supervision units<sup>15</sup> for males and females. The other challenge was that, two state secondary schools one for males and the other was for females refused to take part in the study. The principal at the male school might be too conservative to accept a female researcher, or both principals do not prefer any intrusion from outsiders, which they see as a disturbance. Furthermore, one of the female principals refused to allow the study to be held in her institution (i.e., interviews and observation). Nevertheless, three institutions have allowed me to distribute the questionnaires in a face-to-face mode.

In fact, representatives of the two supervision units in general education (female and male) advised me to delete my mobile number because I might be unable to manage the participation requests for my study. I followed their advice and deleted my number, but I kept my e-mail address. Another point that they suggested was to distribute the web link of the questionnaires to only the teachers via their own direct connection with the schools. In fact, the participation rate was low via web links as compared to paper questionnaires.

Visual recording or audio recording for both interviews and observations is not an option in Saudi secondary schools, particularly the female section (see Section: 3.10, p. 130). In fact, my phone was with the security section and I was not allowed to keep my mobile phone in many schools; others required my mobile phone to be turned off and not to use it in the schools.

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<sup>14</sup> I visited 21 institutions to recruit participants for my study. I successfully collected data from 17 schools for recruiting teachers of which 15 schools to recruit students. Besides, I successfully collected data from two supervisory units to recruit supervisors. However, two extra schools I visited refused to take part in the study.

<sup>15</sup> A supervision unit is the office where English language teachers' supervisors work. Such office belongs to one of the administrative district offices run by the MOE to supervise English language teachers and monitor teaching practices.

***EFL Teachers.*** Sixty paper questionnaires were distributed, but only forty-five questionnaires were accepted to be complete in this study. Forty-three paper questionnaires and two online questionnaires were accepted to be complete from only 17 institutions, some of which are different from the students' institutions. Four questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete last two sections: one online questionnaire and three paper questionnaires. The rest of the distributed paper questionnaires were not returned.

The open-ended items of the questionnaire have received around a lower completion rate (see Appendix: 9- A: Table 1 & Table 2-B, p.34) compared to the closed- ended items as similar to the group of the students. Although some techniques were adopted to increase the response rate on the open-ended questions such as providing some examples and constructing them as sentence completion questions as suggested by Dornyei (2007).

Out of this group, 66.67% (30) were female Saudi EFL teachers, whereas 33.33% (15) were males. This group includes five supervisors (four females and one male). The rest were Saudi EFL teachers who teach in state secondary schools. Their average age is 36 years old. Their average years of experience is 11 years, though three participants did not provide an answer on this question. Two teachers were in their training programs as a requirement to get their bachelor's degrees, 34 teachers have bachelor's degrees to teach English from Saudi universities in different regions in Saudi Arabia, three teachers have master's degrees in English language from UK, US, or Saudi universities, and six participants did not provide an answer on this question.

***EFL students.*** Only 151 questionnaires have been considered as part of this study whereas 80 questionnaires were disregarded. Of respondents, 54.30 % (82) of the participants were females and 45.70% (69) of the participants were males. They were all from the final year of public secondary schools in a central city in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Those

participants were from different schools in different or similar neighbourhoods of this city and these neighbourhoods reflect different standards of living.

The participants were all 18 years old except two of the participants who wrote that they were 19 years old. The subjects were not all Saudi EFL students: 69.54% (105) were Saudi whereas 30.46% (46) were non-Saudi<sup>16</sup> (i.e., eight Jordanians, nine Yemenis, 20 Egyptians, three Palestinians, three Syrians, and three Lebanese EFL students). The students' proficiency levels according to their recent grades in their English courses are varied. None of the participants have received a fail grade, 5.30% (8) had received an acceptable grade, 13.25% (20) had received a good grade, 24.50% (37) have received a very good grade, and 56.95% (86) have received an excellent grade.

I visited 15 institutions to recruit EFL students. Three schools allowed me to distribute the questionnaires in a face-to-face distribution mode. Only one secondary school for males answered via the online questionnaire.

### **3.9.2. Interviews sampling process**

*EFL teachers.* I sent messages to all participants who provided their contact numbers requesting to schedule an appropriate time for them to conduct the interviews. Four female teachers were interviewed in a face-to-face mode: two were interviewed in their offices at the schools, and another two were interviewed outside a waiting class. Interruptions from the students were minimum. The other eight participants of this group were interviewed via phone mode. The actual interviewed teachers were 11 in number. 4 of them were females and

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<sup>16</sup> The non- Saudi students were included in this study because they constitute a huge part of the students' number in a school. In chapter 1, I indicated that non- Saudi expertise resides in the country long time ago and share in building the infrastructure of the country. They are still non- Saudi even if they were born in KSA because they did not receive Saudi nationality, so they keep their original nationality and they are allowed to learn for free in all the Saudi state general educational system.

seven of them were males<sup>17</sup>. Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours according to the flow of the interview and the fact that I had to manually take notes of the participants' answers.

***EFL students.*** Of the participants, 60.14% (89) provided their phone numbers to take part in the follow-up interviews. Of the same participants and others, 52.70% (78) provided their emails. I sent a request to the female participants only to arrange for suitable times to interview them to not violate any cultural restrictions (see Section: 3.10, p. 130), as principles do not cooperate in this part of the study by providing a more formal contact with the students.

Twelve students responded to the sent messages and arranged with me an appropriate slot for the follow-up interviews via mobile phone. Two other relative male students have requested to arrange for the interview due to their high interest in taking part of this study with the intervention of my brother, and my brother arranged interviews with them via mobile phone. Four students from two schools were interviewed in a face-to-face mode while either awaiting lessons outside their classes or were interviewed during a free activity hour. In total, I interviewed 18 students (15 are Saudi students and three are non-Saudi students; 16 are females and two are males).

### **3.9.3. Observation sampling process**

With regards to the observation part of this study, only two teachers from two different secondary schools were observed whereas two other teachers apologized for not

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<sup>17</sup> Interviewing male participants is a strong aspect of this study because this is not the normal way of Saudi EFL studies, as claimed by Moskovsky (2019). However, it might look strange that a female researcher was successfully being able to interview male participants, but I work within the available though not convenient limits. For example, I successfully get an approved procedure by the MOE and my brother (*mahram*) was part of this plan who was responsible for recruiting the male participants and the liaison between me and them. My brother was present when doing interviews. In KSA, from 2019 backwards the presence of a *mahram* for females is no longer a governmental and cultural requirement.

being observed due to their personal circumstances. The lessons observed in this study were from two different levels of secondary school (the first, and fifth levels of secondary school). Lessons were selected by the teachers. In fact, all the arrangements of my tasks of observation were done by the teachers themselves according to their convenience via previous phone call. Students were informed previously about my visit and it seems that the teachers prepared for my presence. Each observed class took 45 minutes, which is the normal time for classes at schools.

### **3.10. Challenges**

The number of the sample was small for both interviews and observations (Eight subjects, two participants, and 29 participants in Pilot 1, Pilot 2, and the main study, respectively, agreed to participate in the interviews and only one observed teacher in Pilot 2 and two observed teachers in the main study). According to Dornyei (2007), from a theoretical perspective, the representativeness of the study's sample does not affect qualitative research, as compared to quantitative research. Charmaz (2014) indicated that the researcher can stop gathering data when the new information adds no additional data to the qualitative method. Nevertheless, I stopped recruiting the participants when I received no more participant responses. Moreover, Creswell (2008) pointed out that observation is restricted to the research sites to which a researcher can gain access, because a researcher might find difficulties in connecting with the target subjects.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic, as this was the participants' preference. Rubin and Rubin (2012) pointed out that interviewers need to use an appropriate language their interviewees can understand. According to Dornyei (2007), doing interviews in the students' first language or their preferred language can improve the quality of the interviews. Students and their teachers asked for the questions before the interviews to prepare their answers. Nevertheless, some of the participants participated in the interviews a very short

time after filling out the questionnaires, so they did not prepare for the interviews. However, knowing the purpose of the interviews, as written in the information sheet, was enough to encourage them to take part in the subsequent interview stage.

It is worth mentioning also that a risk of researcher bias might threaten the validity of this study, especially the observation. According to Dane (2011), bias might arise from choosing what to observe, performing the observation itself, and interpreting what is observed. According to him, bias can be reduced, if observations are carried out at two places at the same time and/or if more than one person observes the same thing in the same situation. However, the only way I was able to reduce bias was to observe just one lesson for two teachers, each from a different school, and then compare the two sets of observed data. It was not practicable to involve a second observer alongside myself. Unfortunately, the supervisors apologized for not observing the classes with me or recruiting the teachers to take part in my study, because they were already over-loaded with work and too busy to take part in this phase. Furthermore, supervisors would not have been very suitable second observers since they are associated with inspection of classes as part of the institutional pedagogical requirements rather than research process. Therefore, their observation is normally done on behalf of the teachers' employer to evaluate the teachers against Ministry criteria in a way that could affect the teacher substantially if they receive a negative evaluation. I would not have wanted my purely research study to have been associated with that sort of evaluation which would likely make the teachers nervous and affected their performance. Thus, the data I collected via interviews was my plan B for overcoming the previous potential weaknesses of my observation task and did indeed yield relevant information about the nature of the culture related teaching that the students received and their view of it.

A bias was also present in that, due to the gender of the researcher, most of the participants in the main study were women, and for practical and cultural reasons most of the



interviews were carried out via mobile<sup>18</sup>. According to Creswell (2014), the researcher should respect the norms and abide by the restrictions of the research site and should be as unobtrusive as possible. Most of the interviews were not recorded on a recorder but manually recorded by hand. Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicated that interviewees' attitude toward being recorded differs, as some are shy or hesitant, while others have a positive attitude, believing that the recording of the interviews will guarantee the researcher can understand their opinions correctly. An audio or video recording of the events was not an option to record the observed data, as justified above. Nevertheless, the rhythm and speed of the lesson was appropriate and easy to follow. In addition, I had refreshed my skills in the observation task in Pilot 2. In addition, according to Dornyei (2007), observation requires some training because items can be high-inference items if they require some judgement from the observer. However, I documented every single item in the observed class and postponed judgment of the items to a later stage.

The above mentioned two issues were some of the big challenges for conducting the study because it is part of the Saudi cultural restrictions. For example, the segregation between males and females (See Chapter 1) challenged the way of conducting research in KSA with the use of a liaison to facilitate the process of collecting data from the opposite sex. This strategy is used in the few available studies conducted in KSA. For example, Alrahiali (2014) and Assulaimani (2015) (as cited and noticed by Moskovsky (2019) who used a female liaison to recruit female participants and to collect data.

Saudi cultural restrictions also challenge recording data. For example, the participants and institutions normally strongly refuse video recording due to Saudi privacy especially for

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<sup>18</sup> In the main study, the percentage of interviewed teachers via mobile phone mode of communication was 63.64 % (7) while the teachers interviewed via face-to-face mode of communication was 36.36 % (4). The percentage of interviewed students via mobile phone format was 22.22 % (4) while the students interviewed via mobile phone format of communication was 77.78 % (14). In this way, most of the interviews were carried out mostly via mobile phone.

females because in KSA from a religious perspective and mostly Arabic tradition that the voice of women is *Awrah* Doumato (2003) (See chapter 1) and if her picture or voice becomes public or sharable it is a family scandal and brings shame to the family. Alfahadi (2012) did an interesting strategy like recording his question and the female interviewee answer in his voice. However, as I indicated earlier (see Section: 3.9.1, p. 128) I was under security check in every female school. There was no video or voice recording to the female voices to respect the directions of the gate keepers. The Saudi male interviewees did not prefer any recording and I respect their preference. This is also not abnormal as the same case happened in Elyas (2011) when one of the two male interviewees refused to record his interviews. The ethics of research require participants “particularly those in countries with high power distance, feel free to express their opinions without fear of retribution” (p. 122).

The cultural restriction restrict the choice of sample as normally a male researcher choose male participants as similar to female researcher as noticed also by Moskovsky (2019), and thus the research site, etc. In this way, I was not able to observe any male teacher.

It is worth mentioning that the fact that KSA lack for a very long time the culture of research. Al- Hazmi (2007) stressed the need for studies that has the purpose of improving the teaching and learning of EFL. Moskovsky (2019) indicated that Saudi EFL studies only start thriving after 10 years as a result of the national scholarship program that started in 2000. As thus, I believe that the culture of research and the options for female researchers in KSA keep changing to the better especially after 2030 vision and the new trend of empowering women: from 2019 onward women has free travel; driving, renting home, staying in hotel by their own is allowed; and governmental papers are done with no presence of *mahram*.

This study featured a successful attempt to challenge the cultural restrictions within the available though not convenient limits like conducting mobile interviews and have a

liaison for collecting data. Doing this, was important because the EFL textbooks series are taught for both females and males. So that I was in need for male participants.

The aforementioned challenges are most of the ones I faced while I was recruiting participants and gathering data from them for my study. I believe that I achieved the best study practically possible within those limitations.

### **3.11. Data Analysis**

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches as detailed in the following sections.

#### **Section 1: Want analysis section**

This section includes the analysis of the both the close and open- ended items on the questionnaire. It also tackles the analysis of the follow- up interviews.

##### **3.11.1. Analysis of closed- ended items**

In order to answer the first research question investigating the students' wants with regards to the cultural content of their EFL textbooks taught in their EFL classes, I used closed ended questionnaire items responded to on the Five- point Likert scale for both teachers and students.

Before starting to analyse the results from the closed ended items, I performed two steps (i.e., normality test and choosing a test for statistical analysis). I carried out normality tests to test whether the responses on the dependent variables (the ordinal Likert scale items) had a normal distribution. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests showed that all items showed  $p < .05$ , indicating that they did not have a normal distribution. Inspection of histograms showed that the distribution of the dependent variables was very similar for teachers and students on each question.

Given that I wished to test the differences between two groups on a categorical variable (teacher or student), that the dependent variables were ordinal, and that the

distribution was not normal but was a similar shape for both students and teachers in each question, the most appropriate inferential statistic was the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U. This test is often considered the nonparametric alternative to the independent *t*-test (Dornyei, 2007). Where I wished to perform within group analyses for the same participants between different questionnaire items, for the same reasons the non-parametric Friedman test was used, with follow up paired comparisons using Wilcoxon tests with Bonferroni adjustment of the significances to protect against overclaiming significant differences. I used descriptive statistics (means) to show overall results for each group of participants. The statistical analysis was reviewed by a specialist in the department as an external audit technique, as recommended by Creswell (2008). All analyses were performed in Excel or SPSS.

### **3.11.2. General approach of analysing the qualitative data**

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are three tasks used by researchers to analyse qualitative data: data reduction, data display, and data interpretation. These tasks require clear, systematic procedures—specific methodologies such as grounded theory, or general analytical actions such as coding—in order to judge the validity of results (as cited in Dornyei, 2007). The data analysis used was basically the qualitative content analysis technique. It is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). It could alternatively be called thematic analysis, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I stored the data in a separate folder on the desktop of my personal computer.

#### **3.11.2.1. Open-ended questions**

**General Approach.** To analyse data on the open-ended questions in the questionnaires, I attempted mixing methods, which occurs at the level of data analysis by quantifying qualitative data—that is, transforming qualitative data into quantitative data by

counting the recurring examples that have been assigned to their appropriate category, as indicated by Creswell (2008). According to Dornyei (2007), data transformation is the most common type of mixed-method research as a data analysis strategy. This process is important in validating the results of the study to reduce researcher bias (Creswell, 2008). Quantifying data describe general trends in data and representing the prevalence of a theme that could be shown in other ways as “a rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 8). Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicated that qualitative data are not properly analysed if only counting and numeric interpretation are provided.

***Quantitative analysis.*** I used an Excel file to code the data and Excel formulas to count the coded data and the percentages marking the frequency of these tallies in each individual code to briefly compare between the participants’ answers on the closed-ended items of the questionnaire where possible (i.e., the first and second section of the questionnaire) (see Table 4.2, p.168 & Table 4.7, p.176). In regard to the third section of the questionnaire and the open- ended item on the BQ requesting the students to mention their reasons for learning English, the counting was done only to show the prevalence of data and the codes were grounded on the data obtained from the instruments of the study as explained below (see Section 4.1.3. p. 174 and Section 4.1.4, p. 182).

***Qualitative phase. Cultural items and topics.*** To qualitatively analyze the preferred topics and cultural items, the major theme or category preferred topics and cultural items included five codes. I categorized each suggested cultural item and/or topic under the five cultural senses suggested by Adaskou et al. (1990) in teaching English (i.e., the aesthetic sense, the sociological sense, the semantic sense and the pragmatic sense). Nevertheless, I divided the semantic sense into two separate points (distinctive and general semantic category) for the sake of clarity on the questionnaire, as justified earlier.

Adaskou et al. (1990) used their definition of culture to present their design choices regarding the cultural content of EFL textbooks for the national Moroccan secondary school. This definition was used by Lessard-Clouston (1996) to classify the responses of EFL Chinese teachers obtained from the open-ended questions in the interviews towards understanding what they learned about culture at the end of their summer intensive EFL teacher training. Part of Gray (2006) study used the categories of this definition to enquire about the interviewed participants' opinions on the degree of importance of these senses of culture in their EFL textbooks and classes to their students.

*Issues related to analysing data.* I faced some difficulties in coding the tallies under their proper categories with regards to analysing the cultural items and topics due to the open-ended responses not providing thick descriptions or explanations of the participants' intended meaning (Dornyei, 2007). Some of the tallies may fit into two categories. For example, "playing musical instruments" is a tally that could fit into the aesthetic category and the sociological category because musical instrument is part of the arts, and at the same time a leisure activity because it is part of people's way of life. There was no possibility to create a "family code" as suggested by Gibson and Brown (2009) to overcome the obstacle of having some related separate codes. However, such an obstacle is resolved by considering the tally of "musical instruments" to be a cultural item that belongs to the aesthetic category, while the tally of "playing musical instruments" is considered a cultural item that belongs to the sociological category.

However, it seems that coded data under the suggested four major categories was used with some modifications in related literature. For example, Lessard-Clouston (1996) considered "values" to be grouped under the semantic category. This is different from Adaskou et al. (1990) definition because they described the sociological category, "culture with a small c," to refer to underlying beliefs as "values," as indicated by Johnson and

Rinvoluceri (2011), rather than the semantic category. Moreover, Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) explained that they operationally expanded the scope of the aesthetic category to include other aspects such as geography and history when they analysed the sample of EFL textbooks in their study. In a similar vein, Rashidi and Meihami (2016) considered items including sightseeing, cooking around the world, and eating habits in the UK to be grouped under the aesthetic category. This might be justified by the fact that Adaskou et al. (1990) indicated that the aesthetic category referred to culture with “a capital C” (i.e., the explicit forms of culture), as indicated by Johnson and Rinvoluceri (2011).

Rager (2008) noted that “Even discussions of non-art objects and activities often focus on their resemblance to art” (p. 4). In another way, people could refer to items such as “dancing,” “drawing,” and “sports” as belonging to the aesthetic category because they are connected to beauty. However, he indicated that “the word ‘aesthetics’ is generally connected with the visual arts and music” (p. 1). I interpreted the subcategories provided by Adaskou et al. (1990), similar to Lessard-Clouston (1996), and Gray (2006, 2010a), to be information about the arts that provided examples about scientific and leisure activities, geographical information, and historical information to be grouped under subcategories of the sociological category.

*The sources of cultural items.* To qualitatively analyse the sources of cultural items, the type of sampled EFL textbooks in this study was a special edition for the Saudi teaching context of a famous series of global EFL textbooks. Gray (2002) indicated that the new type of EFL textbooks according to their cultural content is the edited version of global EFL textbooks. In this edited type of global EFL textbook, consumers’ local culture is represented.

To analyse data, the examples provided by the students about their preferred sources of cultural items and topics were categorized under the suggested source of culture on the second section of the questionnaire (UK, US, Other ENS, ESL, Saudi, Islamic, and World).

Interestingly, the participants suggested some topics with no specific culture, such as assigning a topic to the phrases “any culture in the world,” and “from English,” or not assigning any culture to a topic. This is either because the topic was scientific and does not need to be assigned to a specific culture (although even interpretation of scientific data may to some extent be affected by culture) or because students did not have a preferred culture for studying the suggested topic in their EFL textbook or class; they focused on how the topic could serve in achieving their English language learning goals (although such goals may be related to certain cultures), further discussion held in the following chapters. This led me to add a new category, cultural items with no specific source [N]. My category is different from Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017), Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), and Rashidi and Meihami (2016) studies, which added a fifth category, “culture-free themes” for the purpose of analysing cultural elements not from data collected on open-ended questions but from parts of EFL textbooks. This is because Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017) claimed that there are some culture-free themes that “carry no clear sense of a culture of any kind. ‘Calculator,’ for example, could be a theme that mirrors no definite sense of culture” (p. 126). This led Rashidi and Meihami (2016) to define a fifth category for the four senses of culture because they considered “advising teenagers can be attached to every culture so it is culture-neutral in this sense” (p. 6). The description of the code in this study is that cultural items with no specific source of culture are culture neutral [N]. This is the type of cultural content described by Alfahadi (2012) with culture-free and what described by Jiang (2010) with “not given” (p. 70) category to classify the instances of variety of culture.

In fact, I do not believe that there is a topic or an item in EFL textbooks that could be culture-free, a claim that is supported by (Gray, 2000, 2006, 2010a), who stated in Gray (2006) “Such commercially produced global materials, although designed explicitly for the



teaching of language, are also in themselves highly wrought artefacts and carriers of complex cultural messages.” (p.14)

It is also reached out by Adaskou et al. (1990) who indicated that “almost everything in a language course is capable of carrying a cultural load of some sort.” (p.5) but I support Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) realization that one of the hidden agendas of international and/or localized textbooks may implicitly “follow a ‘neutralization strategy’ whereby culturally related themes are integrated into textbooks without any reference to L1, TL or any other particular culture” (p. 183). Besides, I believe that discussing a topic such as advising teenagers with reference to many cultures does not make such a topic culture-neutral as claimed by Rashidi and Meihami (2016), because referring to a specific culture inherently carries a cultural aspect; however, discussing such a topic with no reference to a specific culture make it culture-neutral. For these reasons, I added cultural items with no specific culture [N] to refer to the possibility of the neutralization process that deprives some topics or cultural items to be discussed within the three major models (i.e., target, source, and international models) of EFL materials suggested by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). Accordingly, I do not follow the claim that some themes or cultural items do not fit into the four major senses of culture. Above this, these studies used the five categories to construct their checklists and analyse their selected EFL materials. In the case of my study, I used Adaskou et al. (1990) to analyse data from the open-ended questions similarly to Lessard-Clouston (1996), while in the construction of the checklist, I classified the suggested items and topics by the participants under major related themes fit for grouping the participants’ examples into themes. For example, musical instruments, movies, and poems, etc., are grouped under the section of examples relevant to arts.

*Desired way of teaching the cultural content.* I grounded data to the research question by coding the suggested ways that conveyed similar meanings in a column of a sheet in an Excel

file. Then, I assigned an emerging code to each column in the sheet. Emerging codes do not imply a passive role of the researcher as indicated by Taylor and Ussher (2001). Following Cohen et al. (2000) assertion that categories can be explained on the basis of the researcher's own interpretation that should be based on the participants' own answers related to the research topic, all the names of the categories were of my own interpretation based on the classified extracts from the participants' answers with relevance to the research questions.

Five codes (improving language skills, learning goals, communication, requirements for effective cultural content, and ways of teaching the cultural content) emerged under this category for students. In fact, teachers' answers did not include any coded data under the ways of teaching and learning the cultural content and improving language skills codes, but instead of a communication code, they had an intercultural communication code and a new code, practice.

Data were also sought to help with understanding students' reasons for learning English. The emergent eight codes were like learning English, instrumental communication, a skill that needs to be learned for life, self-achievement, the current status of the English language, intercultural communication, a better future, and a subject that must be learned.

### **3.11.2.2. Follow-up interviews**

Because the interviews were semi-structured, they included some fixed questions alongside emergent questions based on the participants' answers, which indicates that not all of the participants were asked the same questions. Saldaña (2011) indicated that "depending on the topic of your study, some interview questions will generate extended responses, while others will need a back-and-forth exchange with affirmations, questions, or prompting" (p. 41). Moreover, some participants preferred to justify their answers for each section of the questionnaire rather than for each item of the questionnaire. In addition, some participants provided similar answers to relevant questions in each section, whereas others expressed

themselves without any obstructions in their answers to the prepared list of questions for the interview. Thus, I ensured that each bit of data was coded as the answer to each question by mentioning a similar answer to the above question, “no answer” under the given question or what the participant mentioned, including “I do not know,” “because it is important,” and “yes, I think this is not important.” (see Appendix 10-A, p.35). What helpful for overcoming the limitation of a lack of voice or video recording of the interviews was that I had prepared flexible appointments for conducting the interviews according to their preferences, and therefore, there were no time limit issues.

Moreover, I manually transcribed data while conducting the interviews. Saldaña (2011) indicated that “depending on your research questions, goals, and experience, it is not necessary to transcribe the entire interview, just the high-lights or what directly addresses your inquiry” (p. 45). Then, I translated the interviews. The translation of one of the documents was revised to ensure trustworthiness.

**Analysis.** I imported the interviewed participants’ answers on the questionnaire and calculated those participants overall mean on each item of the questionnaire (see Appendix: 11, p.76). This strategy was helpful in understanding the extent to which the interviewed participants’ means matched with the means of the participants’ answers of the main sample to draw insightful conclusions about the two samples’ answers in each phase, a strategy that is recommended in the case of using follow- up interviews by Dornyei (2007) and called multiple level analysis.

I applied thematic analysis, which required the development of themes after the coding of the data, as well as a data-reduction process and the drawing of conclusions. So, I started the first part of the interviews by requesting the participants to justify their answers on the questionnaire with the major theme for this part was reasons for the secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their cultural preferences in textbooks and

favoured ways of teaching culture. There were three sub- themes (the purposes of each section of the questionnaire): Students' preferred cultural items, sources, and ways of representing and teaching these items. I used the Heading feature available in Word.

Afterward, I coded data in each document with the use of abbreviated key words for each category. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), methods of coding qualitative data depend on the researcher's preference, as this process is not restricted to a specific form. However, it is "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 96). For example, the first category was the participants' justifications for their answers regarding the varied categories of culture. There were four codes under this category: assisting in the learning and teaching processes, various personal interests, personal values, and secondary importance of improving language. The abbreviated key words under the code assisting in the learning and teaching processes was 'teach' and 'learn'. 'interest' was the abbreviated word to code data under the code various personal interests, see the full list on appendix: 12, p. 81. I used general coding signs for showing the participants' opinions on the questionnaire. For example, the participant's answer on the closed ended item with importance to with (+), the neutral (-/+), and the least importance with (-).

After the first analysis and the writing of the results section, I read the documents again and revised the analysis for a second time to check the reliability of the analysis and ensure the validity of the results.

## Section 2: Textbooks analysis and evaluation

### 3.11.3. Observation

The events I had observed were documented on a page divided according to the sections of the lessons I observed, with an added section for extra comments (see Appendix: 3.10, p. 44). Because I conducted the observations to validate the results, I had obtained from the interviews about teaching the cultural content on EFL classes. Saldaña (2011) advised that “what a participant says to us in an interview about his perspectives, and what we actually observe him doing in everyday life, may or may not corroborate” (p. 46). In this way, after analysing the interviews, I adopted some themes from the interviews. These themes were to ‘teach’ or ‘ignore’ the cultural content and include some codes—for example, ‘supplementing’, ‘extra materials’, ‘affordable technology’, and ‘internet’. Other codes included ‘omitting’ and ‘adding after-class activities’. Then, I marked the events I documented on the observed classes under these themes.

Table 3.1:

*An Excerpt From the Field Notes and Coding Process*

<b>Sections of the lesson</b>
<b>2 Read: (one part of the lesson)</b>
The writer designed the exercise to start with the names of famous people paired with pictures, and the students answer whether they are familiar with the people listed. This may make the cultural elements easier to understand, ensure that the students are not distracted by the obstacle of unfamiliarity, and exchange some cultural information. The students have to read the paragraph first, then do the matching exercise. After that, they have to listen to the paragraph and correct their answers. This might help them develop reading and listening skills. Additionally, I wonder about the presence of females in this lesson; don't they have any achievements? Where are the female scientists?
<b>The actual lesson procedures (A small part of entries)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher started with (warmup technique). She asked a question to attract the students' attention and introduce the lesson: 'Would you like to be famous? Why?' The students raised their hands, <u>but there was no discussion, only short answers.</u> (Ignore)</li> <li>- The teacher <u>did not follow the lesson sequence.</u> (No commitment)</li> <li>- She used a <u>CD.</u> (Technology)</li> <li>- The exercise from the book was presented on the board with a <u>projector.</u> (Technology)</li> <li>- She asked the girls, '<u>Are there any Arabic poets?</u>' (Elaboration). Students answered this question with Gazi Alqusaibi and Ahmed Shawqi.</li> <li>- Even though the teacher referred to <u>local culture,</u> she did not direct the students' attention to the issue of gender bias. The students also <u>did not provide examples of female achievements.</u> (Ignore)</li> <li>- The teacher <u>commented on</u> 'gossip', saying, 'Your good deeds are going to be reduced if you gossip', a remark related to Islam. <u>This is a typical way of teaching about Islam and considered a connection to reality.</u> (Elaboration).</li> </ul>

I used the analysis of observation to answer one of the checklist items concerned with teaching cultural content.

#### 3.11.4. Checklist basis

I used two methods to analyse and evaluate the cultural content of EFL textbooks (checklist and closed analysis process). In fact, I used both in-use evaluation through the use of some of the results of the follow-up interviews, and nonparticipant observation, as well as post-use evaluation through the use of the checklist and in-depth evaluation to provide a tentative evaluation of the effectiveness of the materials as McGrath (2002) and Ellis (2011) argued. The purpose of the checklist (descriptive framework) for analysing and evaluating the selected materials was to determine the extent to which the students' reported wants were

satisfied. The sections of the checklist were based on the results obtained from the participants and interpreted in a sequential manner (Questionnaire, interviews, and observation). This was necessary because the major claim of my study is that the direct consumers of textbooks (students and their teachers) are best for describing optimal cultural content. Many previous practical studies, such as Swe (2016), Adaskou et al. (1990), and Gray (2006), recommended this strategy. Pioneers in EFL material evaluation, such as Cunningsworth (2005); McGrath (2002); Sheldon (1988); Tomlinson (2012a), also recommended this strategy.

Part of the checklist was based on broader categories developed on the basis of students' and teachers' examples given in response to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, while the other part was about their opinions on suggested methods for presenting and teaching cultural content (see Section 3.11.5, p. 148). In this way, the checklist did not “tend to lead to generalized and impressionist judgements but rather than [this, it is supplemented with close analysis, that is] examining in depth what the materials contain” (Littlejohn, 1998; cited in Gray, 2006, p. 70 ). This is a problem with some of the available frameworks of instruments used to evaluate EFL materials (Littlejohn, 2011). Nevertheless, the materials' in-depth contents are not the focus of this study, so frameworks such as Littlejohn's (1998; 2011),<sup>19</sup> Byram's (1993), and Cunningsworth's (2005) were not used. This study investigated whether the broader categories developed from analysing the students' wants and (taking their teachers' opinions into consideration) were included in the book, how they were represented and taught, and what sources these categories were imported from.

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<sup>19</sup> Littlejohn (2011) declared that his framework was ‘a detailed description of the materials’ (p. 182) focused on ‘the methodology of the materials’ and ‘the linguistic nature of their *content*’ (p. 182). It is a descriptive checklist and the checklist used in this study is an evaluative checklist (see Appendix: 13.2, p. 95).

However, this claim does not undermine the role of an already-available designed checklist for evaluating the cultural content of EFL textbooks. There are many frameworks guiding the analysis of EFL materials (Littlejohn, 2011). Gray (2006) explained that reviewing already-available descriptive frameworks:

is necessary for two reasons: firstly, it gives an indication of how culture has been addressed in ELT thinking on materials, and secondly, by providing information on features of design it enables me to produce a framework which is appropriate for this thesis. (p. 59)

Gray used close- analysis to describe and evaluate the cultural content of his selected EFL textbooks with a guided descriptive framework (i.e., a checklist with open-ended questions) to guide the process of the evaluation based on his own purposes to answer his research questions. For example, in Gray's checklist, the elements of cultural content consist of two main parts: language system and skills content. The representational repertoire for each subcategory was described by a question. For example, the representational repertoire for grammar was, 'Which variety of English was represented?' (British, North American, etc.) (see Appendix 13.1, p.94).

In a similar vein, many studies, such as Rashidi and Meihami (2016); Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017); Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), opted to evaluate their selected EFL materials by using some or all of the categories of culture in the EFL teaching context that Adaskou et al. (1990) (the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture only) designed to evaluate their selected EFL materials according to the questions of the study with little modification (adding a new category: a culture-free category). In fact, most of the available evaluation tools of EFL materials could have their own biases with regards to many areas of the process of evaluation. Examples include a bias regarding what designers think the cultural content in EFL textbooks should include, the scope of evaluation (tasks, texts, images), and the evaluator (teachers, students, editors, etc.). These already-available tools could be too



general book evaluation tools that restrict items covered to the topic of culture at a minimum, not being sensitive to the various teaching contexts. For example, Sheldon (1988) created a general checklist for evaluating EFL textbooks, with few items for evaluating the cultural content. Some of them include items that need more clarification and renovation—for example, Byram's (1993) minimum cultural content for course books—see Appendix 13.5, p. 98.

Furthermore, it seems that the technique used to analyse EFL textbooks could be sensitive to the checklist design. This could be done using numbers to describe data, as in Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017), or using a thick description, as in Gray (2006).

Others, although designed specifically to select the appropriate cultural content of an existing EFL textbook, included points that were too general and thus were difficult to use as guidelines for evaluating the cultural content of EFL textbooks, as these items needed to be more nuanced as justified by Gray (2006), who avoided the use of some existing frameworks, such as Byram's (1993) minimum cultural content for course books. Such framework was the basis for constructing more nuanced frameworks such as Risager (1991) and Sercu (2000) frameworks. For example, they included several dimensions, fields, and/ or themes to describe and evaluate the cultural content of EFL materials based on Byram's (1993) framework. As such, researchers devise their own instruments and modify and/or redefine the items of an already-available set of instruments according to their own study purposes.

#### **3.11.5. Checklist items**

The checklist was based on the purposes of the sections of the questionnaire (categories to describe the cultural elements, sources of these elements, and the way of presenting and teaching these elements in EFL textbooks and actual teaching in English class).

Part A of the first section of the checklist investigates the extent to which the participants' categories related to cultural items and topics were represented in the book

series. It includes 19 categories (Literary works/ arts/ history/ science/ tourism/ food/ custom and traditions/ Education/ future goals/ leisure activities/ sports/ social status/ Religion: Islam/ sensitive topics/ systems/ language/ language in use/ citizenship/ intercultural communication), see Appendix: 12, p. 81. These categories were developed from the students' and teachers' answers to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews. They include the researcher's view via a close analysis process.

Part B of the first section aims to judge the extent to which the categories of the first part of the checklist could represent the four senses of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantics, and pragmatics) devised by Adaskou et al. (1990). It includes both the researcher's evaluation via a close analysis process and the interviews in which the interviewees were asked to state their opinions on the extent to which the cultural items in their book could satisfy the students' wants regarding their optimal cultural content.

The development of these categories—based on the analysis of the participants' examples of their favoured cultural items and topics—was similar to the way Meccawy (2010) analysed the cultural content of selected EFL textbooks in her study; she created some categories to evaluate the cultural content of EFL textbooks based on the students' answers on the focus groups. These categories, listed below, were also similar to this study's categories:

Religion/ Beliefs; Customs, Traditions, & Celebrations; The Way People Live & Think: Sense of Right and Wrong; Places/ Geography; Relationships: Family life & Women; Language; History, Monuments & Treasures; Law & Politics; Educational System; Business/Economy; Weather; Technology/Science; Literature & Famous People: Sports. (p. 192)

The second question investigated the frequency of the four major sources of culture (target culture, local culture, world culture, neutral topics), as clarified in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3. 2:

*The Checklist Categories for Sources of Culture.*

<b>World culture</b>	Europe	Far Asia	Brazil	Africa	Turkey	Arab Countries	Classical Cultures
<b>Neutral</b>							
<b>Target culture</b>	UK	US	Other ENS	ESL			
<b>Local culture</b>	Saudi	Islamic					

This section of the checklist is concerned with whether the participants' categories regarding the sources of culture and the neutralizing topic process (the inclusion of neutral topics) was present in the book series. For this section as well, results were collected from both the researcher's perspective via close analysis and interviews in which the interviewees were asked for their opinions on the extent to which the sources of the cultural items in their book could satisfy the students' wants regarding their optimal cultural content. Although this section is based on the analysis of the students' reported wants related to their favourite sources of culture in their EFL textbook, the major categories of sources of culture were similar to some of the descriptions of EFL textbooks, according to their cultural content. For example, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) described the types of EFL textbooks according to their cultural content (i.e., EFL textbooks based on only the target culture, the source culture, or international culture, including the target culture and many cultures in the world such as global EFL textbooks). Alfahadi's (2012) description of EFL textbooks' cultural content was similar to this study. For example, "British, North American, local culture (e.g., Saudi Arabian culture only), a variety of cultures (e.g., UK, France, Japan, India, and Saudi Arabia), and culture-free" (p. 234). It is also similar to Jiang's (2010) categories of the instances of variety of culture. The four categories are:

(i) native speakers' culture, which is divided into American culture, British culture and other native speakers' cultures, (ii) World cultures, which are divided into Chinese culture and other World cultures, (iii) internationally shared culture and (iv) 'not given'. (p. 70)

The last section of the checklist is concerned with understanding whether the suggested ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content of the questionnaire were present in the book series or adopted by teachers in English classes. Again, it includes the researcher's evaluation via a close analysis process and observation as well as the interviewees' evaluations (via interviews) of the extent to which the suggested ways of presenting the cultural content of EFL textbooks and actual teaching in English classes could satisfy the students' wants regarding their optimal cultural content. The items in this section are the same as the last section of the questionnaire and are summarized into bullet points as follows: topics; cultural understanding; ways of discussing, reflecting, and comparing; avoiding situations of misunderstanding; positive impressions about Islam; travelling; relating to other courses; international tests; and teaching cultural content. This section is similar to items from Jiang's (2010) checklist, in which he stated that 'the concerns that may influence the teaching of culture can be summarized as follows:

1. Do the language points help communicative competence?
2. Is the cultural information presented in the textbooks up-to-date?
3. Is the cultural information presented in the textbooks realistic?
4. Is a variety of cultural topics selected?
5. Do the texts create stereotypes?
6. Do the text exercises and activities consolidate or further explain the cultural information?
7. Is extra information about the culture integrated in the books given?  
(P.73-74)

My supervisor revised the checklist items to ensure that the instrument was reliable and would provide valid results.

### 3.11.6. Evaluation phase procedures

Gray (2006) considered every item of the textbook to be a “carrier content” to be “the characters, situations, texts, and artwork used to contextualize the language being taught” (p. 18) since this contributes to design of the page and influence the process of the creation of meanings. In this way, he considered these items to be cultural. His view followed “the work of Stuart Hall,” who claimed that “all carrier content is essentially cultural” (p. 26). Adaskou et. al. (1990) indicated that

the way teaching materials convey cultural content was in [their] view cultural information, varying from hard fact to a mere whiff of the exotic, can be communicated by:

- informative or descriptive text material;
- texts presenting foreign attitudes and opinions;
- human-interest texts (including dialogues), authentic or fictitious, with details of everyday life;
- questionnaires, contextualized practice activities, writing tasks;
- lexis—particularly idioms—and unfamiliar collocations, which involve alien concepts;
- the exponents of a communicative function;
- realia, or pseudo-realialia, of all sorts;
- illustrations in the student's book and other visuals;
- sound recordings. (p.5)

They proceed by explaining that this means that “almost everything in a language course is capable of carrying a cultural load of some sort”. Jiang (2010) clarified that “Because a language is a carrier of culture, the selection of the language used in textbooks also indicates cultural tendencies” (p.75).

Considering this, in the close-analysis phase that happened prior to the application of the checklist, I examined each section of the lesson and every part of the book, even the

appendices by category and questions from my checklist. This is similar to what Meccawy (2010) did in her study, in which “all entries of instances of these categories in the textbooks were recorded” (p. 193).

First, in the close-analysis phase, I extracted all the instances that I thought carried or could carry a cultural aspect, and I commented on these items. I applied this process to each section of the lessons in every unit of the six EFL textbooks for secondary school separately. See the analysed sample of Unit 1: Grammar & Vocabulary of Traveller 5 below (and Table 3.3 below).

Table 3.3:

*A Close Analysis Excerpt Sample From Traveller 5.*

Page	Content & Resercher comment
7	<p><b>Module 1: All over the world</b></p> <p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ If you had the opportunity to spend a month travelling around the world, which three places would you definitely like to go to? Why?</li> <li>▶ Describe your ideal place to live in. Consider the type of house, where it is located, the facilities of the house/area, etc.</li> </ul> <p>These two discussion questions refer directly to a specific culture or cultural item. The students could refer to their own culture, target culture, and/or a culture of their choice due to the open-ended nature of these questions.</p> <p><b>In this module you will...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ talk about places and holidays</li> <li>▶ learn to distinguish between permanent and temporary situations and use appropriate tenses for each</li> <li>▶ learn how to use appropriate tenses to link the past with the present</li> <li>▶ learn how to use nouns, quantifiers and articles correctly</li> <li>▶ expand your vocabulary by learning lexical sets related to people and places, adjectives describing people and places, words easily confused, etc.</li> <li>▶ learn how to write articles and e-mails</li> <li>▶ acquire skills and strategies that will help you in exams</li> </ul> <p>This unit is expected to refer to cultures around the world via the topic of travelling to various places during a holiday and the possibility of meeting different people. Additionally, it contains the relevant vocabulary to describe people and places. Learning the structure to speak about this topic by connecting the past and present allows students to speak about situations that could be permanent or temporary. The writing task should reflect this topic by teaching students how to write articles and emails. The writer expects to help the students acquire skills and strategies that will help them in their exams. In the two units of this module, there is a direct indication of a choice in learning about the preferred cultural items and referring to a specific culture of the students' choice—for example, including a unit about being on holiday and another about the (preferred) place to be.</p>

	<p><b>Flick through the module and find...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ a magazine article about an amazing country</li> <li>▶ e-mails from Manchester, England and Sydney, Australia</li> <li>▶ an article about a fun way of travelling in Europe</li> <li>▶ an article about a volcanic region in France</li> <li>▶ advertisements for unusual holidays/trips</li> <li>▶ a short text with advice for an enjoyable holiday</li> </ul> <p>In this small box, there is a clear indication that some of texts refer to a specific global culture, not necessarily the students' own culture or the target language culture.</p>
8	<b>Unit 1: On Holiday</b>
13/11	<p><b>Grammar:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Present Simple - Present Progressive</li> <li>▪ Stative verbs</li> <li>▪ Nouns and quantifiers</li> </ul> <p><b>3. PRACTICE</b></p> <p>Two friends are having a telephone conversation. Complete the blanks with the Present Simple or the Present Progressive of the verbs in brackets.</p> <p><b>Ahmed</b> Hi, Omar! What's up?  <b>Omar</b> Hey, Ahmed. Where (1) _____ you _____ (call) me from?  <b>Ahmed</b> Home.  <b>Omar</b> Home? You (2) _____ (usually / go) swimming at this time. What (3) _____ (you / do) there?  <b>Ahmed</b> I (4) _____ (think) I have a cold at the moment.  <b>Omar</b> Sorry to hear that. I hope you (5) _____ (not feel) too bad.  <b>Ahmed</b> Thanks, it (6) _____ (seem) to be getting better. What's up with you?  <b>Omar</b> Oh, you (7) _____ (know) me. I love going out. A gang of us from the gym (8) _____ (go) to that new place on Market Street this weekend. Do you (9) _____ (want) to meet up?  <b>Ahmed</b> That (10) _____ (sound) like a great idea. Who else (11) _____ (come)?  <b>Omar</b> Well, let me think. Of course, Josh and Larry. My brother (12) _____ (think) of asking some friends from his karate class, too.  <b>Ahmed</b> Great! What should I wear?  <b>Omar</b> Something casual. I (13) _____ (get) a new pair of trainers on Friday, so I'll wear them and, I (14) _____ (guess), I'll put on some smart jeans and a T-shirt.  <b>Ahmed</b> Thanks for the invitation. I have to go now. I (15) _____ (have) a headache.  <b>Omar</b> I (16) _____ (understand) mate. Get some rest! We'll talk later.  <b>Ahmed</b> Right, bye!</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Topics include swimming/karate class/what to wear in this class/cold and headache/expressing sorry to a sick friend/ use of polite expression (thanks) suitable for a close relation (informal conversation)/accepting an invitation/saying good-bye.</li> <li>- This conversation is an example of teaching grammar in a real situation or within a conversational context. The characters are supposed to be from the students' culture or a close culture, due to the use of the proper names of Muslims. However, the other proper names used (Josh and Larry) show that the situation is not supposed to be part of the students' culture. The speech and the politeness issues indicated are based on native English.</li> </ul>
10/13	<p><b>Vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words easily confused</li> <li>• Nouns ending in -ion, -ance, -ation, -ment deriving from verbs</li> <li>• Words related to travel and tourism</li> </ul> <p><b>Words easily confused:</b></p> <p>travel   trip   journey   tour   voyage cruise   flight   excursion   expedition</p> <p>hotel   hostel   resort   cabin suite   cottage   caravan</p> <p>arrive   get   reach   come   approach</p> <p>These words are learnt out of context; there is no indication of varying uses of these words by subcultures of the larger culture. For example, 'voyage' is used by sailors or travellers on ships. There is no indication of how these words could have the same distinction of meaning in the students' own language, which is a component of culture. This could be a superficial way of dealing with words that are easily confused.</p> <p>to Windsor Castle?</p> <p>to the North Pole.</p> <p>4. Many immigrants arrived in New York after a six-week _____ across the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>5. The _____ to São Paulo has been delayed due to heavy rain at the airport.</p> <p>6. It's a five-hour _____ by bus from Florence to Naples.</p> <p>a two-week Indian Ocean</p>

Washington

in Miami

13. Many South Sea islanders still live in traditional wooden \_\_\_\_\_.

the Hilton.

18. What is the best way to \_\_\_\_\_ to your uncle's ranch?

- Proper names refer to a specific culture and some cultural items. References to these cultures are superficial (only mentioning where an unknown person travels, for instance). The cultures referred to are mostly international, with no reference to the students' own culture.
- There is a shallow representation of a sensitive issue, only alluding to the issue in the target culture (i.e., immigration). This could raise the students' awareness superficially.
- Regarding the phrase, 'To your uncle's ranch'. The dictionary defines 'ranch' as a large farm, especially in the Western US and Canada, where cattle or other animals are bred and raised. This is not the typical type of Saudi farm, but the students may have learned about this cultural aspect via cartoons in their childhood due to the popularity of Walt Disney in our area. I hope that the authors addressed the cultural aspect of this word.
- Many South Sea islanders still live in wooden cottages. Item No. 13 indicates cultural information about South Sea Islanders who still live in traditional wooden cottages.

**Geographical features:**

coral reef      rainforest      islet      fjord  
volcano      pond      waterfall

**Facilities in a hotel:**

lounge      spa      conference room      beauty salon      business centre

**Sights:**

mosque      castle      tower      monument      archaeological site

	<p><b>Tourism Related jobs:</b></p> <p>travel agent tour guide flight attendant bellboy receptionist</p> <p>Some of these items could be familiar to some students from cartoons, travelling, or living in an area in Saudi Arabia that contains any of these items. The familiarity of some of these items, such as spas, is relevant to the students or teachers' lifestyles. The items could carry cultural importance; some definitely do. For example, a mosque is a building that is part of Islamic culture. Other items, such as 'castle', could be perceived differently from one culture to another. For example, Aldareyah Castle is different from Colchester Castle. The semantic features of some of these items have also changed over time. For example, many historical castles are no longer used to protect important people but are visited as museums.</p>
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As seen above, the instances were extracted from each section of the lesson, and I commented on these instances in different colours and used the highlight feature to emphasize some comments. After this, I coded these items under the relevant checklist sections to justify my choices on the checklist. Each answer was supported with concrete examples extracted from the EFL textbooks. Table 3. 4 below represents a small number of entries in the art category to explain how I used the checklist items.

Table 3.4:

*An Excerpt From the Checklist: Entries From the Art Category*

Category	Entries & evaluative comments
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traveller 2: Unit 8: Cross-curricular: Art: Installation art (<u>a detailed text: Deep representation of arts</u>).</li> <li>- Traveller 5: U2: Listening: The other mentioned items (i.e., The London Dungeon, Abdul Raouf Khalil Museum, National Museum of Saudi Arabia, and Madame Tussaud's Waxwork Museum) <u>need cultural background knowledge about what is exhibited in these museums. In other words, they require more clarification or extra materials to be understood. For example, Madame Tussaud's Waxwork Museum is about famous celebrities (and interesting figures, as the students expressed in their interviews).</u></li> <li>- Traveller 5: U6: A brochure about an exhibition called <i>Building the Future</i>. It seems necessary to direct the students' attention towards the value of exhibition, museums, galleries, etc. <u>These kinds of institutions are supported by the societies of most English-speaking countries because they have educational and entertainment value. This is a positive aspect about the target culture and should be stressed to reach cultural understanding.</u></li> <li>- Traveller 6: U1: All the experts concluded that the painting wasn't a Picasso. <u>This sentence contains only the name of the artist, representing a shallow reference to the aesthetic sense. No extra information was provided.</u></li> </ul>

As can be seen in the table above, the category has more than one entry from every book, and each entry was commented on. Moreover, I used the electronic versions of the textbooks to save time in typing, coding, and commenting. I divided each document according to the sections of each lesson. I developed some codes to refer to specific books or specific techniques. For example, SCA = same comments applied as discussed above, AC = aesthetic cultural sense, and OP = a question that can elicit open responses. Based on the above, I used qualitative content analysis, although numbers were used where relevant in all the sections of the checklist except the section related to the sources of cultures. In this section, quantitative content analysis was appropriate to show how the cultural content is biased towards the West. I considered Gray's (2006) justification for why his study focused on providing a thick description (qualitative analysis) rather than using numbers (quantitative analysis) for analysing the selected materials in his study, quantitative content analysis mostly ends up being an inadequate method for analysing EFL textbooks. In my study, the participants confirmed in their interviews that their major concern was not the quantity of the cultural items in each topic but rather the types of elements and how they are represented in EFL textbooks and actual teaching in English classes. Nevertheless, I counted the sources of culture of the major sections of the lesson after assigning each section the appropriate source in green to show how the books are biased towards the West in number. Table 3. 5 shows the process of assigning the appropriate source to each major section of the lesson.

Table 3.5:

*An Excerpt of the Process of Assigning the Appropriate Source to Each Major Section of the Lesson from Traveller 5.*

Unit	Vocabulary	Reading	Practice	Listening	Speaking	Writing
(2) The place to be	Words easily confused	A magazine article about Iceland  World culture	Dialogues  Neutral	An interview with a boy who has just been to the London Dungeon  Text 1- UK  Text 2- Saudi museums	Choosing between options (which place to rent)- Discussing where to live.  Neutral	An article  France-World culture
	Words related to the weather		<i>Farasan</i> Island  Saudi Arabia	People talking about why they visited or moved to a particular place  Neutral		
	Expressions with make and do		Mount Etna  World culture			
	Adjectives ending in -ed and -ing		Neutral			
	Adjectives describing people and places		A trip to Madina  Saudi Arabia			
		A magazine article about InterRailing  World culture		People talking in seven different situations  Neutral		

After assigning each section the appropriate culture, I counted the number of times each source appears in each book and gave the total number for each source (see Table 5. 1,

p. 232). Moreover, to validate my analysis of the books, I intended to include another evaluator to review my analysis of the textbooks. As such, I planned to provide an EFL teacher<sup>20</sup> with my analysis of three units after explaining what I did. According to Kumar (2011), to reduce a researcher's subjectivity in the data analysis process, it is important to have another researcher revise the analysis of data to ensure the credibility of the results, diminish researcher bias, and guarantee descriptive validity. This plan was invalid, and I abandoned it because the reviser was unable to consider some of the implicit meanings. For example, the reviser did not realize that the salutation was restricted to one form or that the abbreviation was a feature of the English spoken language. However, I found that this could not be applied to my study. This might be explained by teachers failing to notice implicit cultural elements (Cunningsworth, 2005), as discussed in Chapter 2. This could happen for many reasons—in this case, inadequate cultural knowledge and unfamiliarity with the topic due to insufficient education and training.

However, for a more concise analysis of the cultural content of the selected textbooks, I supported the evaluation of this section with the participants' answers in the interviews regarding their opinions of whether the suggested methods for teaching and presenting the cultural content were included in Traveller series. I also used my comments on the field notes to observe the teaching context in which these textbooks were used. In this way, I triangulated the results to obtain a more valid evaluation of the cultural content of these textbooks by reducing the subjectivity of the analysis.

I ended up with six documents (see Appendix: 10.4, p. 49), one for each book and a document for the complete list of relevant extracted examples coded under the sections of the checklist. The evaluation of the cultural content of the textbooks is presented in chapter 5 according to the sections of the checklist.

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<sup>20</sup> An EFL teacher who was not a participant in the study.

In short, the detailed description of the steps involved in the data analysis procedures is followed by a presentation of the results in Chapters 4 and 5.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: WANTS ANALYSIS

This chapter compares the opinions of Saudi secondary students and their teachers regarding the cultural content that they believe should ideally be included in EFL textbooks and be taught in their EFL classes to assist their learning of English. The chapter reports the findings for three main themes that were covered in the questionnaire. These were: preferred types of cultural items, preferred sources of such items, and preferred ways of representing cultural items both in EFL textbooks and class teaching. It also tackles the teachers and students' reasons for their choices on the questionnaire.

### **Section 1: RQ1: What do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia think should be present in their optimal cultural content of their EFL textbook and associated teaching?**

The answer of this question is discussed in the following sections. Showing the participants' preferences from two sets of data: quantitative data from the closed- ended items on the questionnaire analysed with the use of descriptive statistics (means) and comparison between the means of the two groups were performed with inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney  $U$  test). For pair comparison, the Wilcoxon test was used and the significances obtained were Bonferroni adjusted by multiplying them by the number of comparisons made. Moreover, I supported the answer with qualitative set of data from the open- ended items on the questionnaire and some examples were also provided by the participants in their interviews. These data were analysed with qualitative content analysis process.

#### **4.1.1 Cultural items from five categories**

*Quantitative data.* Section 1 of the questionnaire for both students and teachers investigates beliefs about the importance of including cultural items from the five categories proposed by Adaskou et al. (1990). Both students and their teachers responded on a five-



point Likert scale (1 indicating no importance, 2 least importance, 3 indicating neutral, 4 indicating importance, and 5 indicating the most important). The results on this scale are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

*Student and Teacher Opinions on the Importance of Including Various Types of Cultural Items*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Aesthetic</b>	<b>Sociological</b>	<b>Distinctive Semantic</b>	<b>General Semantic</b>	<b>Pragmatic</b>
<b>Students</b>	3.02	3.78*	3.84	3.97	4.23*
<b>Teachers</b>	3.18	3.24	4.07	4.40	4.67
<b>Total</b>	3.06	3.65	3.89	4.07	4.33

\* =  $p < .05$

Overall, both groups considered all the items to be quite important, apart from the cultural items in the aesthetic category, which received a neutral score ( $\approx 3$ ).

However, there were some slight differences in the amount of support for each category of culture between the teachers and students at the group levels. For example, the teachers had slightly higher means than the students for all the categories except the sociological category. Interestingly, the teachers rated the sociological category only a little above neutral, but the students considered including items from the sociological category to be fairly important ( $M = 3.78$ , which is close to 4, the score that indicates moderate importance). Inferential statistics (e.g., from the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test) confirm that there was a significant difference ( $U = 2810, p < .05 = 0.006$ ) between the two groups in this category. The results also show that there is a significant difference between the two groups

regarding the pragmatic category ( $U=2973$ ,  $p < .05= 0.013$ ). The teachers considered the pragmatic category to be of the utmost importance ( $M = 4.67$ , which is close to 5, the score for the highest importance), but the students only considered items from this category to be moderately important ( $M = 4.23$ ).

Notably also both groups in effect ranked the categories of culture in the same order, based on their means, giving them increasing support from aesthetic to pragmatic in order as listed in Table 4.1. Within each group, a within subjects comparison across the five categories of culture showed that there was a significant difference across the categories in both groups (Friedman test: student chi sq. = 76.8,  $p < .001$ ; teacher chi sq. = 77.3,  $p < .001$ ). Following that up with Wilcoxon tests of each pair (with Bonferroni adjustment) it was found that the students judged aesthetic category as significantly less important ( $p < .010$ ) than all the other types; they also judged pragmatic category as more important than all except general semantic category. Teachers judged all pairs of categories significantly differently ( $p < .010$ ) except aesthetic and sociological, general semantic and distinctive semantic, general semantic and pragmatic.

**Qualitative data.** The second open-ended item on the questionnaire (in Section C) required students and their teachers to provide examples of cultural items and topics of the students' interest. Only 51% (23) of the teachers and 61.59% (93) of the students provided an answer to this question. There were 378 topics suggested by the participants: 306 (80.95%) by the students and 72 (19.05%) by the teachers. The topics and cultural items provided by the participants were categorized under the same categories on the questionnaire, Section 1 (the aesthetic, sociological, and semantic: distinctive, general, and pragmatic sense). The

frequency of the examples in each category is presented as percentages<sup>21</sup> in Table 4.2 for comparison with the results of the closed-ended items.

Table 4.2

*The Frequency of Each Category Assigned for the Suggested Topic*

Group	Aesthetic	Sociological	Semantic		Pragmatic
			Distinctive	General	
Students: (No.) %	(42) 91	(191) 79	(26) 96	(6) 75	(41) 76
Teachers: (No.) %	(4) 9	(52) 21	(1) 4	(2) 25	(13) 24
Total: (378) %	(46) 12	(243) 64	<b>(27) 7</b>	<b>(8) 2</b>	(54) 14

Both groups provided examples mostly from the sociological category, which had 64% of the overall examples; the other categories received much fewer examples (pragmatic category = 14% (54); aesthetic category = 12% (46); distinctive semantic category = 7% (27); general semantic category = 2% (8). This result was also valid for each group. The students had more frequent responses than the teachers did. The fact that the participants provided examples from all the categories confirmed that they have interest in items from all categories.

On the questionnaire, the teachers were neutral towards considering items from the sociological category to be important, and both groups were neutral to consider cultural items from the aesthetic category to be important; however, more than half of the examples from

<sup>21</sup> The frequency of examples in a specific category for a group was counted as percentages. This was calculated by dividing the number of group examples in a category by the number of overall examples provided by both groups in a specific category, whereas the frequency of the total number of examples provided by both groups in a specific category was counted by dividing the overall number of examples of both groups in a category by the number of overall examples provided by both groups in all of the categories.

each group were from the sociological category, and the number of examples provided for the aesthetic category was roughly the same as the numbers for the other categories. On the questionnaire, the second most important category was semantic category, but that category had relatively few examples from each group.

The participants' examples of cultural items and topics provided in Section C and the follow-up interviews were coded under the five main categories of culture provided by Adaskou et al. (1990). The codes used under these categories were similar to those of Meccawy (2010). However, the coding data were grounded to the study results, as shown in Table 4.3. (See the full list of the examples under these codes in Appendix 12, p. 81).

Table 4.3:

*The Categories and Codes of the Participants' Examples on the Open- Ended Questions*

Aesthetic Category			Sociological Category		
Code	Students	Teachers	Code	Students	Teachers
Literary works	15	2	History	13	3
Arts	27	1	Science	33	6
Distinctive semantics			Tourism	13	5
Code	Students	Teachers	Food	12	5
Language: Proper nouns	26	1	Custom & Tradition	17	4
General semantics			Education	12	5
Code	Students	Teachers	Future goals	8	10
Language: Word relations	2	0			
Language: Language relations	4	2	Leisure Activities	23	6
Pragmatics Category			Sports	39	2
Code	Students	Teachers	Social Status	2	2
			Religion: Islam	5	1
Language in use	41	13	Sensitive Topics	2	1
			Systems	12	2
Intercultural communication	From interviews		Good citizenship	From interviews	

Under the aesthetic category, two codes were used: literary work and arts. Under the sociological category, 13 codes were used: history, science, tourism, food, customs and tradition, education, future goals, leisure activities, sports, social status, religion: Islam, sensitive topics, country systems. Under the distinctive semantic category, one code was used— language: proper nouns—and under the general semantic category, one code was used— language which includes two sub-codes word relations and language relations. Under the pragmatic category, one code was used: language in use.

The participants' interviews provide more interesting examples of the topics and cultural items the students are interested in with two new codes: Good citizenship under the sociological sense of culture and intercultural communication under the pragmatic sense of culture. A summary of the cultural topics and sources that the participants suggested during the open-ended questions and follow up interviews (see the full list of examples on these topics in Appendix: 12, p.81<sup>22</sup>). The given examples were from a variety of topics. Though small in number, the examples in the semantic category were also from a variety of sources. The intersection of Arabic with other languages was a common topic. The results also indicate that the students had interest in all codes of the aesthetic category. The teachers, however, provided the least number of examples on the aesthetic category after the two semantic sub- categories even though they rated the semantic category as important in their answers on the questionnaire.

Regarding the pragmatic category, the students focused on the issue of informality, but the teachers focused on the issue of manners and politeness in conversation. There is an overall lack of nuanced examples for the semantic and pragmatic categories by the

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<sup>22</sup> I used the full list of themes to evaluate the cultural content of the selected book series.

participants. This might indicate that the participants had inadequate linguistic and cultural knowledge regarding these categories but had a desire to learn more about these two categories of culture, as they rated these categories with importance on the questionnaire. The teachers and students' follow-up interviews added no new codes except in the pragmatic category. Intercultural communication was the only code that emerged from the teachers' answers. However, the interviews clarified the reasons for this mismatch between the groups' questionnaire answers and their examples. The interviews also showed that the students' interests varied with regards to the items in the suggested categories.

#### 4.1.2 Seven sources of Cultural items

**Quantitative data.** Section 2 of the questionnaire for both students and teachers investigates the perceived importance of including cultural items from various cultural sources for both students and their teachers on a five- point Likert scale (1 indicating no importance, 2 least importance, 3 indicating neutral, 4 indicating importance, and 5 indicating the most important). The results on this scale are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

*Student and Teacher Opinions on Suitable Sources of the Cultural Items*

Group	UK	US	Other ENS	ESL	Saudi	Islamic	World
Students	3.03	3.13*	3.00*	2.11*	3.42	3.97	2.50
Teachers	3.02	2.71	2.58	1.51	3.33	3.84	2.27
Total	3.03	3.04	2.90	1.97	3.40	3.94	2.44

\*  $p < .05$

Both groups of participants considered the Islamic source to be quite important, with an overall mean of 3.94, followed by Saudi ones. Interestingly, the student overall means for the UK, US, and Other English native speakers' cultures (Other ENS), were almost identical ( $M \simeq 3$ ). These means indicate that the student respondents overall occupied neutral positions

towards these sources of culture and the teachers somewhat lower ones. However, there was slightly lower support for the other two sources (ESL and World), both of which were supported below the midpoint by both teachers and students.

In contrast to the results for the first section of the questionnaire, the students had higher means than the teachers on all items in this section. When we consider which of the student-teacher differences are significant, the inferential statistics (i.e., the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test) showed that there was a significant difference in three instances: US sources ( $U=3049$ ,  $p=.043$ ), other ENS sources ( $U=3044$ ,  $p=.043$ ), and ESL ones ( $U=2736$ ,  $p= 0.002$ ).

I also ran a within subjects comparison for teachers and students separately. This showed that for both groups there were significant differences in their judgments across the seven sources (students Friedman chi sq. = 166.2,  $p<.001$ ; teachers chi sq. = 107.3,  $p<.001$ ). The follow up paired comparisons (with Bonferroni adjustment) showed that in both groups Islamic culture was rated significantly higher in importance than local Saudi culture (student Wilcoxon  $z=-4.77$ ,  $p<.007$ ; teacher  $z=-3.28$ ,  $p=.007$ ) and indeed than all the other sources. ESL culture was rated significantly lower than world culture (student Wilcoxon  $z=-3.17$ ,  $p=.014$ ; teacher  $z=-4.06$ ,  $p<.007$ ) and indeed all the other sources by both groups. The middle-rated group of sources (world, other ENS, UK, US, local Saudi) formed a continuum without clear internal differences for the teachers (80% of the pairs were nonsignificantly different). For students, there were again no significant differences among US, UK, other ENS, and local Saudi culture but World culture was rated significantly lower than all of those (with ESL significantly lower than World).

**Qualitative data.** The first open-ended question was about the other preferred world cultures: 13 (28.89%) teachers and 56 (37.09%) students provided an answer to this question. However, most of the answers to this question were not the requested answer. For example,

they provided examples from the other sources provided in the second section of the questionnaire. It seems that the participants either did not understand the question or they confirmed their answers to the closed-ended items. There were 75 examples considered for this question: 73 from the students and two from the teachers.

From the students' answers, seven codes (i.e., Europe, Far Asia, Brazil, Africa, Turkey, Arab countries, and Classical Cultures) were emerged under the World cultures category. The far Asian cultures (e.g., those of Korea, China, and Japan) were the most desired cultures from which to import cultural items. Other preferred cultures were Arab countries (e.g., Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq) and European countries (e.g., Spain, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany, and Greece). Only two codes were emerged from the teachers' answers (Far Asia cultures and classical Cultures) of world cultures (see Table 4.5 below).

Table 4.5:

*Participants' Opinions on the Desired Cultural Items from Specific Cultures*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>Far Asia</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Africa</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Arab Countries</b>	<b>Classical Cultures</b>
<b>Students:</b> (No.) %	(18) 100	(20) 95	(6) 100	(4) 100	(5) 100	(18) 100	(2) 67
<b>Teachers:</b> (No.) %	(0) 0	(1) 5	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0) 0	(0) 0	(1) 33
<b>Total:</b> (No.) %	(18) 24	(21) 28	(6) 8	(4) 5	(5) 7	(18) 24	(3) 4

The open-ended question in Section C of the questionnaire requested that the teachers and students provide examples of their preferences on topics and/or cultural items alongside their source for learning English more effectively. I noticed that many of the topics and cultural items were not assigned any source of culture, as indicated in the previous chapter. Therefore, the category that emerged was labelled cultural items with no specific culture (N). In other words, topics or cultural items that are neutral do not belong to any source of culture.



Neutral topics were prevalent in the sociological category, but the number of neutral topics differed across categories. For more clarity, this code was further divided into three sub-codes: topics from the cultures of native English speakers (N: NES), topics from cultures in the rest of the world (N: W), and neutral topics that did not refer to any specific culture (N: NT). The total of the examples on the N source was 203 examples. The students provided 141 examples while the teachers provided 62 examples. The most frequently cited N subcategory in each group is the NT subcategory (see Table 4.6 below).

**Table 4.6:**

*Frequency of Neutral Topics and/or Cultural Items*

<b>Group</b>	<b>N: NES</b>	<b>N: W</b>	<b>N: NT</b>
<b>Students: (No.) %</b>	(39) 71	(31) 82	(71) 65
<b>Teachers: (No.) %</b>	(16) 29	(7) 18	(39) 35
<b>Total: (No.) %</b>	(55) 27	(38) 19	(110) 54

Below, Table 4.7 shows the frequency of the examples the students and teachers provided for the open-ended question in Section C about the cultures they preferred their topics and/or cultural items to be imported from compared to their answers to the closed-ended items on the second section of the questionnaire, as presented in Table 4.4, p.169. As a result, the category preferred sources of culture has the same codes used for the closed-ended items (United Kingdom, United States, Other ENSs, ESL, Saudi, Islamic, and World). Table 4.7 also compares the total number of examples of specific cultures (SC) versus the total number of examples of neutral topics, the emergent topic N.

**Table 4.7:***Frequency of Examples on Preferred Sources*

Group	Codes								N
	SC	UK	US	Other ENSs	ESL	Saudi	Islamic	World	
<b>Students:</b> (No.) %	<b>(221) 93</b>	(34) 87	(46) 87	(7) 100	(12) 100	(29) 13	(11) 92	(82) 98	(141) 70
<b>Teachers:</b> (No.) %	<b>(16) 7</b>	(5) 13	(7) 13	0	0	(1) 6	(1) 8	(2) 2	(62) 30
<b>Total: (No.) %</b>	<b>(237) 54</b>	(39) 17	(53) 22	(7) 3	(12) 5	(30) 13	(12) 5	(84) 35	(203) 46

Overall, the SC code (54%) was cited with a higher frequency than the N code (46%). This is valid for the students (61% SC vs. 39% N) but not for the teachers, who had a higher frequency of N (80%) than SC (21%). The teachers focused on items from the UK and US.

On the closed- ended items of the second section of the questionnaire, the participants considered the Islamic culture to be more important than any other source of culture. However, the results from the open- ended item on Section C indicate that the most frequently cited source of culture was the World culture. This is true even though the participants rated that category as having slightly below average importance on the closed- ended items of the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the questionnaire.

On the closed- ended items of the second section of the questionnaire, the participants showed no preference for any country in the ENS categories. However, the US was the second most frequently cited source of culture (after the World category) with 22%, and the UK was third with 17%. There thus was an incompatibility between the participants' ratings

for each source of culture and their actual examples of these sources. The participants' interviews provided explanations and justifications of their answers.

#### **4.1.3. Representing and teaching the cultural content in EFL textbooks and Teaching classes**

*Quantitative data.* In the third section of the questionnaire for both students and teachers, the participants indicated their level of agreement with certain suggestions for how to represent and teach the cultural content of their EFL textbooks (using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating *strong disagreement*, 2 indicating *less agreement*, 3 indicating *neutral*, 4 indicating *agreement*, and 5 indicating *strong agreement*). The results are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

*Agreement on the Way of Representing and Teaching the Cultural Content*

Items	Teachers	Students	Total
13 Include updated and familiar cultural items within relevant topics	4.4	4.3	4.3
14 Avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics from local culture	3.8	3.6	3.7
15 Avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics from target culture	4.1	3.7	3.8
16 Adopt a view of cultural understanding: avoid bias & stereotypes	4.6	3.9*	4.0
17 Compare own culture with English culture: reflect on, discuss, explore and research some cultural items of English culture.	4.3	3.9*	4.0
18 Compare own culture with other cultures: reflect on, discuss, explore and search some cultural items of other cultures rather than English culture.	4.2	3.8*	3.9
19 Help in possible future visits to an English-speaking country or in contacts with ENSs	4.6	4.3	4.4
20 Help in possible future visits to countries that use English as a lingua franca or in contacts with people who speak a different language	4.6	4.3*	4.4
21 Help in other courses	4.4	4.0	4.1
22 Avoid situations that could cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication	4.6	4.3	4.3
23 Creating a positive impression of the Islamic culture for others	4.6	4.3*	4.4
24 Achieving high scores on the international English proficiency tests	4.7	4.4*	4.5

\*  $p < .05$ .

Both groups showed high levels of agreement with the statements in the third section of the questionnaire, well above the scale midpoint of 3. In contrast with the responses to the second section (but in line with those to the first section), the teachers recorded higher means than the students on all items although Item No.14 showed an approximate agreement between the two groups (teachers' mean= 3.8 and students' mean= 3.6). Nevertheless, in this section, none of the items received a neutral ( $M \approx 3$ ) or low ( $M \approx 2$  or  $M \approx 1$ ) degree of agreement for either group. Moreover, the results obtained from the Mann Whitney  $U$  test show a statistically significant difference between the students and the teachers' agreement on half of the items.

Recall that the items in this part of the questionnaire really fall into two thematic subsets, those about how to teach culture (13-18) and those about the reasons for teaching/learning about culture (19-24). In the first subset No.16 ( $U= 2347, p = 0.001$ ), No.17 ( $U=2712, p = 0.030$ ), No.18 ( $U= 2656, p = 0.020$ ), were all significant. This shows that students and teachers felt the same about the teaching of culture needing to be up to date and avoid sensitive issues. However, teachers felt more strongly than students about comparing home with outside cultures in an unbiased way.

With respect to the items about reasons or purposes, No.20 ( $U= 2799, p = 0.041$ ), No.23 ( $U=2778, p = 0.032$ ), and No.24 ( $U=2758, p = 0.023$ ) were significant. This shows that students and teachers agreed on communication with ENS, helping in other courses, and avoiding misunderstandings as reasons for studying culture, but disagreed on its value in relation to using English as a lingua franca with ENNS, promoting Islamic culture, and doing better in proficiency tests.

Overall, item No.24 (concerning the value of learning about culture for taking English proficiency tests) marginally received the highest degree of agreement ( $M = 4.5$ ), and item

No.14 (avoiding sensitive material from local culture) marginally received the lowest degree of agreement ( $M = 3.7$ ).

A within subjects analysis of the six items concerning the appropriate approach to teaching culture showed significant differences among items for both teachers and students (students Friedman chi sq. = 31.11,  $p < .001$ ; teachers chi sq.=25.08,  $p < .001$ ). From the follow up Wilcoxon paired tests (with Bonferroni adjustment) it emerged that for students this arose from the fact that including current and familiar cultural topics (item 13,  $M=4.3$ ) was rated higher than each of the other five culture teaching related items (Wilcoxon  $z < -3.24$ ,  $p = .015$ ). For teachers the overall Friedman result was solely due to a significant difference between their lower judgment of the need to avoid sensitive topics in local culture (item 14,  $M=3.8$ ) and their greater concern to show cultural understanding/lack of bias (item 16,  $M=4.6$ ) ( $z = -3.44$ ,  $p = .015$ ).

A within subjects analysis of the six items concerning the reasons for learning and teaching culture showed significant differences among items for both teachers and students (students Friedman chi sq. = 18.93,  $p = .002$ ; teachers chi sq.=12.07,  $p = .034$ ). From the follow up Wilcoxon paired tests (with Bonferroni adjustment) it emerged that for students this was due to two significant differences. One was between helping with visits/communication with ENS (item 19,  $M=4.3$ ) and helping with other courses (item 21,  $M=4.0$ ) ( $z = -3.32$ ,  $p = .015$ ). The other was between helping with international proficiency tests (item 24,  $M=4.4$ ) and helping with other courses (item 21,  $M=4.0$ ) ( $z = -3.74$ ,  $p < .015$ ). For teachers this arose solely due to a near significant difference between helping with international proficiency tests (item 24,  $M=4.7$ ) and helping with other courses (item 21,  $M=4.4$ ) ( $z = -2.85$ ,  $p = .060$ ). Helping with other courses was thus relatively lower valued by both groups.

*Qualitative data.* In the last section of the questionnaire, students and their teachers provided some examples for the open-ended item requesting the students' desired ways of having their suggested cultural items represented in their EFL textbooks and the teachers' ways of teaching these items in their classes. Only 109 participants—83 students and 26 teachers—attempted this question on the questionnaire. Thus, this question received an overall 55.61% completion rate. A total of 172 tallies were calculated from the coded data under each code: 128 from students' answers and 44 from teachers' answers (for a summary of the suggested ways of presenting the cultural content in EFL textbooks and teaching the cultural content in classes, see p. 90 in Appendix: 12.2).

Data obtained from the third open-ended question on the questionnaire answered by students were coded under the major category representing and teaching the cultural content. Five codes (improving language skills, learning goals, communication, requirements for effective cultural content, and ways of teaching the cultural content) emerged under this category for students. In fact, teachers' answers did not include any coded data under the ways of teaching and learning the cultural content and improving language skills codes, but instead of a communication code, they had an intercultural communication code and a new code, practice.

The answers that repeated items from the last section of the questionnaire were disregarded because they did not add any new data. There were 17 items repeated from the students' answers. Nevertheless, the students might have intended to confirm their answers in the last section of the questionnaire by repeating or paraphrasing the items, such as item Number 24, which focused on the value of teaching culture in IELTS and TOEFL preparation. For example, S91 indicated that the cultural content needs to “focus on IELTS and TOEFL.” The teachers' answers included 14 items repeated from the last section of the questionnaire. The coded data in this category were mostly repeats of items Number 23 (help

the students reflect a positive impression of Islamic culture), Number 16 (concerned with the way that can ensure cultural understanding), Number 24 (concerned with helping the students on their international tests), and Number 18 (concerned with having cultural content that can enable the students to compare their own culture and other cultures not necessarily ENSs). The students and teachers' suggestions are presented below according to the most frequent code.

**Students.** There were 52 pieces of coded data (40.6%) under the first code (improving language skills). They were mostly about improving the pragmatic area of language (i.e., conversation). For example, S99<sup>23</sup> indicated that the cultural content of the EFL textbook should help them “to understand conversation.” Many other participants focused on ways that would help them understand the native accents of ENSs. For example, S114 indicated that the cultural content needs to “help in differentiating between the accents in countries I intend to visit.” Others were concerned about how to be more polite in communicative situations. For example, S59 indicated that he needs to “know how to treat people politely in conversation.” Informal language and its uses also were recurring. For example, S30 indicated that he needs an “understanding [of] the informal language of American people,” and part of S81’s answer was that he needs to know “the abbreviations of informal language.” The students focused more specifically on improving their speaking skills and increasing their vocabulary knowledge. According to S76, “Teaching vocabulary that is used in our daily life or commonly used in their [ENSs] daily life” is necessary.

The second code (learning goals) included 30 tallies (23.43%). These goals were instrumental ones. For example, S3 indicated that the cultural content should help in “having a good level of English proficiency in order to get a scholarship to study abroad.” “Having a better future” was a recurring goal. For example, part of S46’s answer was that he needed the

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<sup>23</sup> S99 stands for a student participant whose number was 99.



cultural content to help him “complete my higher education,” and S43 indicated that he needed “to get a respectable <sup>24</sup> job and occupy a great position in society.”

Regarding the third code (communication), the word “communicate” was recurring. It was repeated 18 times (14%). For example, the students wanted the cultural content to help them in “communicating with foreigners who live occasionally in Saudi Arabia,” as S73 indicated; “communicating with British and Americans,” as S84 indicated; “speaking fluently in communication,” as S94 indicated; and “understanding people in conversation,” as S76 indicated. The code (communication) included six tallies (4.7%) that were directly concerned with intercultural communication. For example, S105 stated that he needed “to understand the nature of other cultures in a better way.”

The fourth code focused on the students’ requirements for effective cultural content. This category included 11 tallies (8.6%). For example, they did not want complicated cultural content. For example, S116 stated that he needed “easiness, with no unnecessary stuff.” They wanted “increasing examples in the book and making the topics more varied and interesting,” as S145 stated. The book should “contain funny topics that make you like the language,” according to part of S27’s answer. They needed the cultural content “not to concentrate on grammar,” as S115 indicated, and “to more present the Islamic culture in the book,” as S96 indicated. They wanted to ensure that their books include “real-life situations that are beneficial to us,” as S61 indicated.

The last code (ways of teaching and learning the cultural content) included 11 tallies (8.6%). The students looked for extra materials to be used either after or within class to support the teaching of culture. The students suggested the use of YouTube programs. For

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<sup>24</sup> Culturally speaking, in Saudi Arabia, a well-paid job in a company or a governmental position is considered a respectable job.

example, S150 suggested the use of channels “like *Fallemha* on YouTube presented by Lo’ay Alshareef to learn language from movies,” which focuses on teaching English in a funny and attractive way. Other affordable methods that were mentioned include “to practice with the Internet to search for information like [a] Google search,” as S28 suggested, and to have “CDs to improve pronunciation,” as S10 suggested. S89 suggested the use of the cultural items at the level of assessment “exercises to gain more marks,” implying a desire for extra-credit activities to improve their grades. S89 indicated that the students would like to have a choice in doing the activities so that they “can choose our preferred cultural items and our favorite cultures.”

**Teachers.** The first category (intercultural communication) contained 17 tallies (38.6%). They were mainly about including topics that deal with the current representation of Islam in the media to ensure cultural understanding. For example, T6 indicated that the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks needs to help the students “understand the pros and cons of the other cultures in a way that can help in understanding them even when they are not suitable in the local culture.” The teachers’ comments was mostly to enhance their pride in their national identity, promote good citizenship, improve society, spread good images about Islam, and so on (i.e., for pedagogical purposes). For example, T9 indicated that the cultural content should “present Islam and Saudi people positively,” part of T7’s answer was about “being able to spread Islam,” and T1 referred to “answering some questions about their religion, the ones that attack their religion, country, culture, the Arabic and Islamic ones.” Teachers’ desires to enable students to achieve their communicative purposes were mostly to improve the students’ intercultural communicative competence, especially while ensuring cultural understanding, unlike the students, who cared more about successful communicative situations in general.

The next code is practice. This code included 11 tallies (25 %). Teachers focused on practice outside of class, for example, improving students' research skills, as T5 stated that the cultural content of EFL textbooks needs to include "learning about journals and online articles to help build good researchers." Others suggested having activities outside of class, such as a day for English. T41 indicated that the cultural content needs to "motivate the students to use the language, for example, one day for English in the activity lessons."

The coded data in the third code (requirements for having effective cultural content) were similar to the students' data because the teachers suggested the inclusion of real-life situations and the exclusion of cultural items that require extra effort to explain. The cultural content also needs to prepare the students for their future careers and needs to reflect the students' own culture. The teachers required "no profound cultural information," as T18 indicated. T2 requested that the cultural content "be useful for a daily life: I mean the book should be realistic; the focus should not be on grammar." There were nine tallies (20.5%) in this category.

Teachers were also concerned about helping the students achieve their purposes for learning English as T7 and T3 indicated. There were seven tallies (15.9 %) for instrumental purposes (prepare the students for their future careers and higher education).

The summary of the participants' answers to these questions will be used to develop a checklist that will be designed to analyse the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks.

#### **4.1.4. Students' Purposes for Learning English**

On the BQ, students were required to mention their reasons for studying English. This question was important because understanding the students' purposes for learning English could help in understanding whether the students have integrative purposes, thus, supporting teaching the cultural content in an effective way. This question was answered by 143 students (94.70%).

**Quantitative data.** The major category of students' purposes for studying English included a discussion of the students' answers in each emergent code. There were 304 coded tallies for this question. The coded data were grouped under eight codes: like learning English (30 tallies, 9.9%), instrumental communication (47 tallies, 15.5%), a skill that needs to be learned for life (70 tallies, 23%), self-achievement (10 tallies, 3%), the current status of the English language (57 tallies, 18.8%), intercultural communication (20 tallies, 6.6%), a better future (59 tallies, 19%), and a subject that must be learned (11 tallies, 3.6%). In this way, the sum of the percentages of the students' purposes for learning English was 64.1% under five codes (instrumental communication with others, a skill that needs to be learned for life, self-achievement, a better future, and a subject that must be learned), indicating that the students have an instrumental motivation for learning English more than an integrative motivation for learning English. The current status of the English language code, encompassed 18.8% of the students' answers. The sum of the students' purposes under the two codes (like learning English and intercultural communication codes) indicated that 16.5% of the students' have an integrative motivation. The answers under the code like learning English showed a high motivation for learning English, whereas the answers under the code a subject that must be learned showed the least interest in learning English.

From a different angle, more students (63, 44%) provided instrumental purposes than integrative purposes (50 students, 34%). Some students (30 students, 21%) had both instrumental and integrative purposes. In fact, eight students (5% of the sample) did not provide an answer to this question. This might be an indication of their lack of motivation to learn English.

**Qualitative data.** Data were sought to help with understanding students' reasons for learning English. According to Masgoret and Gardner (2003), there are "two measures of reasons for learning another language, one the *instrumental orientation* subtest, which

assesses one's pragmatic reasons for language study, and the other the *integrative orientation* subset... assesses reasons that involve interaction with the other community" (p. 171). The emergent eight codes were (like learning English, instrumental communication, a skill that needs to be learned for life, self-achievement, the current status of the English language, intercultural communication, a better future, and a subject that must be learned).

**Like learning English.** Students indicated that studying English was of interest to them. S84 indicated that she studies English because she "love[d the] English language since childhood." S75 is "very fond of English language." S1 "like[s] to learn it because it is a new language." S100 stated, "I enjoy learning English, and I love to know new things and language. I consider English as fun." The 30 coded pieces of data under the code (like learning English) include the recurring words "like," "love," and "interest."

**Instrumental communication.** The students indicated that they learn English for the purpose of communicating with others. Part of S2's answer was that he "need[s] it to communicate with others." Part of S3's answer was that he wants "to communicate with foreign people in my country." S15 indicated that he "also talk[s] to [his] my internet friends in English so more learning of English would really help me create more friendships." S143 is learning "for conversation." The recurring words with 47 tallies under the code instrumental communication were "to communicate with," "to speak with," and "to talk to."

**A skill that needs to be learned for life.** Some students thought that knowing English is a key to learning from different domains and a skill for everyday life. For example, S2 indicated, "I need to study English to understand most topics and issues in the world." S36 indicated that knowing English "makes life easier." S43 answered, "We need [English] in all our time." Of the 70 tallies of coded data under this code, the words "knowledge" (five tallies), "information" (four tallies), and "for life" (nine tallies) recurred. The other recurring coded data under the code a skill that needs to be learned for life explained the students'

various purposes for learning English in their daily life. For example, using English because they need it for English in hospitals (six tallies), airports (five tallies), some restaurants (seven tallies), and shopping centres (five tallies); in some video games (seven tallies), applications (two tallies), and programs (two tallies); to understand movies and songs (six and three tallies, respectively) and read novels written in English (two tallies); and in their travels (seven tallies).

**Self-achievement.** Some students indicated that they need to learn English because they need “to develop myself to a highest level,” as indicated by S120, or simply to be “excellent in English,” as indicated by S71. The small amount of coded data under this code included the recurring words “improve,” “develop,” “achieve,” “excellent,” and “high.”

**The current status of the English language.** Students stressed the important status of English in the current time in 57 tallies. The words “international,” “around the world,” “everywhere,” “universal,” “common,” “the current time,” “strong,” “important,” “essential,” and “basic” recurred to describe the English language. For example, S25 indicated that English “is the most used language in life,” and part of S68’s answer was that English is “an international language and a formal language in most countries.”

**Intercultural communication.** This code included 20 tallies. The recurring tallies were “other cultures,” “different cultures,” “familiar,” “cultural knowledge,” and “their culture.” For example, part of S137’s answer was that he learns English “to enable [him]self to communicate with people from different cultures,” and part of S75’s answer was that she learns English “to speak with other people who have different culture[s] from the world culture to be[come] familiar with their culture, and most of them speak English.”

**A better future.** The 59 tallies in this code showed that the students understand studying English would help in improving their future choices to the extent that S52 believed that English “guarantees the future.” The recurring words were “job” (12 tallies), “work” (11

tallies), “university” (seven tallies), “future” (eight tallies), “study abroad” (six tallies), “major” (five tallies), “scholarship” (five tallies), and “higher education” (five tallies). For example, S65 indicated that he learns English “to get a job and because studying at a university requires English a lot because it is university level, and the curriculum in university is in English,” and part of S67’s answer was that English “is a shared language in most respectable jobs that require English.” S107 stated that he “want[s] to study in [the] USA.”

**A subject that must be learned.** It seems that some students were less motivated to learn English because they stated that they only study English because it is a subject in the curriculum. For example, S16 indicated that he learns English “because it is a subject in my schedule.” The 11 tallies had the recurring word “a subject.”

## **Section 2: What reasons do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their preferences of the cultural content of textbooks and ways of teaching culture?**

In the follow-up interviews, the students and their teachers were asked to mention their reasons for their answers on the sections of the questionnaire. The participants’ answers to these questions justified their opinions on the closed-ended questions of the questionnaire. The following sections discuss the participants’ answers.

### **4.2. Overview of the data**

The participants’ answers in their follow-up interviews are discussed under three main themes. These themes were the purposes of each section of the questionnaire: students’ preferred cultural items, sources, and ways of representing and teaching these items. The first category was the participants’ justifications for their answers regarding the varied categories of culture. There were four codes under this category: assisting in the learning and teaching processes, various personal interests, personal values, and secondary importance of

improving language.

The second theme, preferred sources, was discussed under two categories: justifications for including cultural items from specific sources and justifications for importing items from the N category. The former was discussed under three subcategories: native English-speaking cultures, local culture, and cultures around the world. Under native English-speaking cultures, there was a discussion of the participants' answers under four codes (concepts regarding the ownership of the English language, familiarity of culture, pragmatic reasons, and difficulties related to the standards of English). The local culture subcategory was discussed under three codes (its role in activating the students' learning goals, concerns about the impact of the target culture, and the possibility of being counterproductive). Under the subcategory cultures around the world, the participants' answers were discussed under two codes (activating the students' learning goals and questions regarding the effectiveness of engaging the students).

The last theme was discussed under the major category justification, and it concerns the ways of representing and teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks and teaching classes. This category includes four codes: achieving the students' learning goals, the counterproductive nature of the suggested treatments, personal interests, and the challenges related to the teaching context.

Each section includes a comparison of the interviewed participants' overall means compared to the main sample of the questionnaire to enrich the data (see Appendix 11, p. 76). All the data was coded except in the case that the participants justified their answers with "because it is important," "I don't know," and/or provided no answer.

### **4.3. Justifications for including varied categories of culture**

The overall means of the interviewees' answers for each item in the first section of the questionnaire matched with the means for all participants—except for the sociological



category, for which the interviewees expressed a neutral attitude regarding this category's importance (see Appendix: 11, p. 76). The following sections include the participants' justifications of their answers.

#### **4.3.1. Assisting in the learning and teaching processes**

*Students.* The students stated that using arts and literature can facilitate and even accelerate their learning of English. For example, S11 indicated that “Students will know some stories, and these stories can encourage them to read more. My friend read some famous novels, and she is excellent in English”. Another student, S12, indicated that “Movies can improve your accent and speech in a language, and rap teaches you the language quickly because you will be used to hearing and understanding the language quickly”. Information from the sociological category is helpful to assess learning. For example, S1 realized that items from the sociological category were important to facilitate understanding of English, as “I could read something or speak with a native speaker about something of their social life and . . . understand what it is about.” Students, S9 and S4, confirmed that using grammatical structures correctly and pronouncing the words correctly might necessitate an introduction to speech from native English speakers via movies or television shows. For example, S4 confirmed, “Some accents or speech might not be pronounced correctly, except if I hear it from an English person if I can watch a video from a movie or TV series.”

The students preferred the inclusion of certain cultural items from the aesthetic category, such as movies, as supplementary materials in their English classes because “they include conversation and some enjoyment, and are helpful in role playing. . . I mean, re-enacting the conversation from a short clip instead of dull role plays in the class”, as S6 indicated. Also, items from the sociological category are important in class activities. For example, S13 stated, “I can compare between my society and their society.” The students considered cultural items from the distinctive semantic subcategory to help in facilitating

their learning. For example, S1 indicated that these items would enable her to learn faster (as she could Google these items and thus read about them on English or Arabic websites); S2 confirmed this by stating “I will easily be able to talk about these items because I will already know about these topics in Arabic”. The students considered items from the general semantics subcategory and the pragmatic category to be important in avoiding misunderstandings and communication breakdowns, as well as for increasing their vocabulary capacity. For example, S1 indicated that ‘this is very important to avoid confusion, we need to know the differences, especially in conversation or reading’.

**Teachers.** Teachers such as T5 and T7 indicated that they supported teaching items from the aesthetic category because they are effective in teaching language because the students who are interested in the target culture’s media have advanced proficiency levels. T5 suggested that, by using a “20-minute movie, we will attract them more to learn the language”. This might be why the teachers focused on movies and literature as examples of what the students would be interested in. T7 said, “The distinguished students watch series such as *Game of Thrones*, *Songs*, and *WWF* episodes.”

Some teachers indicated that it is important to study items from the general semantic subcategory, as T1 indicated, the students may think that their teachers are incompetent to teach them English because “the students pick some vocabulary from different resources such as TV, and these words are basically American while the vocabulary of their EFL book is British.” As such, including some items from this category would help in understanding conversation and reading passages. The cultural items from the sociological category and pragmatic category are beneficial in class activities as teachers indicated. For example, “they are important to open discussions, [as well as] to compare” as T5 indicated. T4 even used class activities such as going to the school café and role-playing exercises to train students in how to use polite expressions in situations such as ordering from the menu at a restaurant.

Teachers understand the role of teaching items from the distinctive semantic subcategory in facilitating the students' learning. For example, T2 indicated, "Students know more than us with these items; much more things they know I do not know. ... These items might be of more help to them."

#### 4.3.2. Various personal interests

**Students.** The students' interests varied with regards to including cultural items from the suggested categories. For example, S11 indicated that "It is possible that music like karaoke—the ones I see in movies—are of interest to me, but this is not acceptable here". The students implied that administrative elements prevented the use of cultural items from the aesthetic category. Nevertheless, some of the students showed indifference towards having cultural items from the aesthetic category because they were generally not interested in the arts, as they were in scientific majors or were not interested in certain types of art such as the target culture's dance, music, and poetry. According to S10 and S2, these elements would not motivate an ESL learner. The items from the aesthetic category showed the various interests of the students. For example, students preferred US, Indian, and Egyptian movies (S16 and S1), as well as contemporary novels such as "the series of books about vampires" (S14) or other romantic literary works (S7).

**Teachers.** some teachers think that most students were not interested in the arts in general, especially in terms of media from the target culture. This was either because Saudi Arabia has a conservative society<sup>25</sup> or because some items do not match with the society's religious values, as most of the teachers indicated.

Various interests due to differences by gender included cultural items from the distinctive semantic subcategory. For example, T1 observed that elements from the

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<sup>25</sup> This could start changing since 2019 because the General Entertainment Authority and Ministry of Culture work hard to prove – up with regards to issues considered as taboos in Saudi culture like music and cinemas.

distinctive semantic subcategory could improve these items that are connected to their interests. For example, “girls might be interested in brands different from boys.” The standard of the students’ living might affect the choice of these items and their sources as stressed by T3 and T2. T4 stated that local items would attract his less advantage students’ attention.

### 4.3.3. Personal values

*Students.* The participants disagreed about the inclusion of items that contradict their own values. For example, some items from the aesthetic category were expected to clash with their cultural beliefs, such as “music or drawing living creatures”, as S14 noted. However, some students, including S1, thought that including cultural elements with values that contradict those of their own culture is important in intercultural communication like in avoiding misunderstanding.

*Teachers.* Similarly, the teachers disagreed about the inclusion of items that contradict the students’ values. T9 noted, “Poetry and novels are OK. But not dancing or music. They are not suitable for class and for religious beliefs”. T7 stated that some topics are completely unsuitable for formal education like some topics such as dating; these topics are taboo. T7 also explained that introducing extremely contradicting values such as “pornography, protestation, legalizing marijuana, etc. does not enhance the good aspects of their culture”.

Nevertheless, other teachers confirmed that some contradictory cultural items that can recur in the native English speakers’ daily speech (e.g., ways of greeting people of the other gender and swear words) need to be introduced wisely. For example, T5 tried to activate items from the sociological category in his own way to engage his students. For example, a book contained a small paragraph about embarrassment: A boy with a rash on his face; unfortunately, he has a job interview on the same day. T5 tried to discuss the cultural aspect

of this issue by comparing this situation to a Saudi person, who would not consider this to be an issue. Some teachers, including T4, stressed the importance of how these items are taught. This implies that some teachers are more competent, creative, and motivated to use cultural content and thus can more effectively engage their students. Many other teachers, including T9, thought that such topics were not their responsibility, even when the students requested that teachers clarify these elements.

#### **4.3.4. Secondary importance on improving language**

*Students.* It seems that some students considered activating the cultural aspect of the textbook's content to be of secondary importance to improving the linguistic competence. For example, S10 declared that "I need words. I do not need dancing or other unnecessary things. . . . it would be a waste of our time. I could learn about arts in separate subjects", and S7 indicated, "when I understand the language, I will understand the other stuff".

*Teachers.* Similar to the students some teachers considered teaching the cultural aspect of the textbook's content to be of secondary importance to improving the linguistic competence. Interestingly, T7 pointed out that items from the distinctive semantic such as "Brands are kinds of luxurious things. This topic might be better for professional learners", including the students who planned to travel abroad or study English as a major. However, T8 explained that some "cultural items are marginal when compared to our difficulties in teaching English in Saudi Arabia".

#### **4.4. Justifications about including cultural items from different sources**

This theme included the justification for the participants' answers regarding learning cultural items from the native English-speaking cultures, local culture, and cultures around the world.

#### 4.4.1. Native English-speaking cultures

Overall, the interviewees considered the United Kingdom to be more important than the other sources of the target culture; they also considered the United States to be important (see Appendix: 11, p. 76). This contrasts with the results for the main sample, in which all the sources of the target culture received neutral scores. The interviewed students and teachers considered “a balance when choosing cultural items” from these ENS cultures, as T10 and T11 suggested, “focus[ed] on only the UK and the US together,” as T5 suggested, or focused on only one culture, as T7 suggested: “There should be a focus on only one culture like UK culture to not confuse the students.” I detailed the participants’ justifications for their answers to these items in the following sections.

##### 4.4.1.1. Concepts regarding the ownership of the English language

The participants held some concepts about native English-speakers’ ownership of the English language.

*Students.* Students’ answers showed that they considered cultural items from the United Kingdom to be the most important because they think that this country was the point of origin for the English language, whereas in other native English-speaking countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Canada, English was only an official language. For example, S5 indicated, “It is better to know the mother tongue language—the British one.” S6 said, “UK is the mother tongue language of English.” S7 described ESL cultures by saying, “They are colonies.” To S8, English is “a mother tongue in England, official language in the other countries,” which was similar to what S10 and S13 said. S11 indicated, “The basic is UK English; then the American comes after.” When the students evaluated the ESL cultures as being of less importance, they said they would like the focus to be on the native English speakers’ accents and the differences in vocabulary. For example, S2 indicated that she felt “their accent is difficult. I do not think it is easy to understand,” and S7 said, “The

most important is pronunciation and vocabulary, and British is enough.”

**Teachers.** Similar to students some teachers believed that ESL cultures were secondary to focusing on native English speakers because “These countries were only colonies,” T1 indicated. The teachers also felt that the UK has the “original language—English is supposed to be from the source of language,” T4 declared. Some others referred to the points that “America is supposed to be a mixed culture” (T3) and that “Australia is [a] colony” (T6). In this way, it seems that EFL students and teachers in Saudi Arabia believed that English belongs to British people. This very fact showed that EFL students and teachers lacked updated cultural knowledge about the debate concerning native speakers of English. Similar to students, the teachers take in consideration that the focus should be on the native English speakers’ accents and the differences in vocabulary. For example, T3 indicated that learning about ESL cultures is “not important, because the accent affect[s] the pronunciation ... but their vocabulary is not of benefit.” S8 indicated, “Of course [it is] not important, because [the] accent is not original.”

#### 4.4.1.2. Familiarity of culture

The familiarity of cultural items from the suggested cultures could be considered a facilitative factor.

**Students.** Some students believed that items from UK culture could cause difficulties in learning the language. S2 said, “America has popular culture, but [the] UK is difficult to learn about; it is not familiar to me,” which was similar to S3’s belief: “It easy to know more about American culture but not the British culture.” S1 explained that “American culture is easier to learn. It is learned from movies”. Some other students supported the inclusion of cultural items in their EFL textbooks from both the UK and the US because “UK culture and US culture are more popular than other major English-speaking countries”, as S14 noted. Interestingly, some students, such as S5, showed a lack of knowledge about other

major English-speaking countries: “I do not know anything about them. Are they English?” However, students such as S6 insisted that by understanding one culture of native English speakers, they would be able to understand others.

Nevertheless, the familiarity of cultural items was also a point that caused less motivation among students when learning about a culture. For example, S12 thought there was no need to import items from ESL cultures because “they live with us, I mean India and the Philippines. . . . It is easy to know about them”. S2 indicated that the native ESL speakers who live in Saudi Arabia “eventually will learn Arabic, and thus we will eventually understand their culture” because they will end up communicating in Arabic not English.

*Teachers.* Similarly, teachers considered the familiarity of the United States’ culture to facilitate the learning of its standard of English. For example, “American culture is more common in the world; in this way, acquiring the language is easier” said T5 and added that the U.K. language “is not used—not the common one.” T5 explained, “The American production of movies assisted the American standard.”

#### **4.4.1.3. Practical reasons**

It seems that sociopolitical<sup>26</sup> factors of the target culture countries affected participants’ preferences for cultural sources.

*Students.* As many participants recommended getting scholarships in UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. For example, S1 indicated, “Students get scholarships to study in these countries, like my sister who studies in Australia.” Some did not like studying in the US. For example, S7 noted that the current US foreign policy “I don’t think that their politics is beneficial for Muslims.” S7 provided this answer at the time of the presidential campaigns in the United States, declaring that US would “become rubbish after Trump”. It

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<sup>26</sup> According to Your Dictionary, (n.d.), “sociopolitical is something that involves both social and political factors. An example of something that is sociopolitical is the issue of environmental conservation, which is influenced by both social attitudes towards ‘going green’ and political policies.”



seems the student's answer was affected by the politically tense situation at the time the study was conducted, which was 2016. This suggests that political issues regarding immigration or conflicts such as minority issues or terrorism issues might have made the participants to consider importing cultural items from the other major native English-speaking countries to be important for their learning of English, like Canada and New Zealand. However, in 2018, Canada was excluded from receiving scholarships from Saudi Arabia due to a politically tense situation. Moreover, in 2019 New Zealand suffered from carnage in two mosques. These two events might change the platonic picture about studying in these countries. This confirmed that the socio-political factors could affect the cultural content of EFL textbooks due to a change in students' instrumental reasons.

Another point raised by some of the students was that contact with native English speakers was difficult for Saudi EFL students. As a result, it would be reasonable but not preferable to include cultural items from ESL cultures. For example, S1 was not hesitant about considering importing items from the cultures of people who spoke ESL because "It was easier to communicate with people from these countries than with native speakers ... I met a Singaporean girl in an online chat." S11 stressed this point by stating, "Some ESL speakers worked in Saudi Arabia; it is much easier to communicate with them via English."

**Teachers.** Teachers supported the inclusion of cultural items from the other major native English-speaking countries because their sociopolitical circumstances were appropriate for studying. For example, T7 believed that other English native speaking countries "are more suitable for Saudi students than US culture because those countries' have more stable sociopolitical circumstances." T3 indicated that, although he understood that both UK culture and US culture were important, he stated that his "knowledge for language programmes and courses in New Zealand is better ... there were more Saudi students there... The UK was mostly for higher education".

#### 4.4.1.4. Difficulties related to the standards of English

*Students.* Some students declared that including items from UK culture meant imposing the British standard of English, which they strongly believed was more difficult than the popular US standard of English. For example, S2 stated, “The British standard of English spelling and accent is more difficult than the US standard.” However, some of the students strongly believed that “the British standard is more formal and academic,” as S15 indicated, which would be more helpful in understanding their EFL textbook, especially because “our books are based on the British standard,” as S18 said.

*Teachers.* Some teachers thought adopting items from ESL cultures such as accent variations could be harmful to the students. For example, T8 justified his answer by stating that other cultures’ accents were “not original, thus students’ constructions would definitely be impaired”. However, the familiarity of the culture could affect language learning negatively, as T1 indicated:

I cannot deny its important [USA]. The books are based on the British standard. The problem of the girls that they use the American accent, vocabulary, and slang language because of movies, media. Sometimes I struggle with them because they consider that a word is pronounced in one way [The American spoken language]

#### 4.4.2. Local culture

The interviewed participants had only different opinions about the importance of including cultural items from the Islamic category because it received a neutral score (see Appendix: 11, p. 76), whereas this source of culture was considered the most important amongst the other sources on the questionnaire.

##### 4.4.2.1. Their role in achieving the students’ learning goals

*Students.* Most students pointed out the importance of including items from the local culture to achieve one of their instrumental purposes of studying English. For example,

S16 stated that “I wish to learn the words for my favorite items to use in my travels”, such as her favorite fruit “(e.g., dates)” or important habits in the Saudi culture, such as praying in mosques, so that she needs to learn some questions such as “Where is the mosque to pray?” Some students stressed the importance of discussing the issue of stereotypes for pedagogical purposes to help the students change others’ stereotypical views of the local culture. For example, S3 listed some stereotypes of the Saudi culture, such as “people only considered us as exporters of oil.” S3 also stressed the importance of educating others about the issue of stereotypes: “My colleagues, both inside and outside of the Saudi culture, need to know that this is a generalization [ All Saudi people are rich].”

The students considered importing items from the Islamic category to be important for intercultural communication. For example, they wished to “be able to respond to anyone who asked about items such as salah [an Islamic ritual], wudu [an Islamic ritual], and fasting during Ramadan [Muslims' fasting holy month]”, as S11 indicated. S4 stressed the importance of her country, as “Saudi Arabia is the custodian of the two sacred places for Muslims—Mecca and Medina—and the host of the umrah and hajj”.

**Teachers.** Some teachers required the inclusion of cultural items from the Saudi culture that could enhance citizenship, (i.e., for pedagogical purpose). For example, T7 indicated that “Saudi Arabia has some important cultural legacies, such as Prince Sultan bin Salman, indeed he is a national legacy because he is the first Arabic guy travelled to space”, which according to T7 “should be employed in a way to enhance citizenship”. T4, suggested teaching learners about some important events in the history of Saudi Arabia, such as the *Almasmak*<sup>27</sup> victory to liberate Riyadh. The teachers explained that items from the Islamic culture could enhance the students’ intercultural communication when those items are

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<sup>27</sup> Almasmak was a historical battle when King AbdulAziz (the founder of KSA) seized Riyadh in 1902 and regained his ancestors’ legacy in Almasmak castle.

included for a pedagogical purpose: “Islamic culture is part of the students’ culture; students had to be able to express themselves when they needed to,” T6 indicated.

#### **4.4.2.2. Concerns about the impact of the target culture**

*Students.* Some students refer to the negative impact of embracing some cultural items from the target culture on their local culture. This is compatible with some students’ opinions, as various students (e.g., S12) indicated that “Some of my colleagues abandon their culture and traditions in favour of other cultures, especially the popular American culture.”

*Teachers.* Some teachers had concerns regarding the impact of the target culture on the students’ identity, and thus they supported the inclusion of cultural items from the local culture. For example, T11 believed that “importing cultural items from the local culture is of high importance, especially our customs and traditions”. In his own opinion, the students’ own culture might help to resist the Americanization negative impact on Saudi society, as he believed that “we experience a kind of Americanization in our gulf society”. Nevertheless, not all teachers advocate this belief. For example, T4 believed “We do not imitate the West. Even in our society. Too few people become Westernized”, and he supported the inclusion of cultural items from the target rather than those of the local culture.

#### **4.4.2.3. The possibility of being counterproductive**

It seems that, although the participants supported the inclusion of cultural items from the local culture, they had some concerns regarding the fact that these items could be counterproductive in engaging the students.

*Students.* Some students showed less interest in importing cultural items from the local culture. For example, S15, considered studying cultural items from the local culture to be more “boring than any other country”, and she stressed the fact that “I learn much about my country in other subjects”.

**Teachers.** This is compatible with the justifications of some teachers, who indicated that “items from the Islamic category were stressed in other courses [e.g., on Islamic school subjects]” as T5 stated and T7 noted. In fact, T7 understands that “the items from the Distinctive semantic category are important because the students can learn from tangible or familiar items that relate to their lives”. However, he stated that “my class turned a discussion on players such as Majid Abdullah and Nawaf Altumyat” into an aggressive discussion on “hooliganism in sports”.

#### 4.4.3. Cultures around the world

The interviewed participants’ means were compatible with the main sample’s means. The interviewed participants justified their answers in the following two sections.

##### 4.4.3.1. Achieving the students’ learning goals

**Students.** It seems that including cultural items from the World category is important to some students. For example, S13 indicated that “knowing a lot about other cultures is important to increase my cultural knowledge”. Others found that these items could help them pedagogically, such as S12: “Items from Japan and Korea can help Saudi students to do the same as the people of these cultures did to make their countries on the top rank. . . . They improve themselves by themselves. They live a respectable life”. S2 stated, “Some countries have great and important history, but there are no items included in the book, and we need to include other countries, not only the UK”.

**Teachers.** The group of teachers added nothing to the code about activating the students’ learning goals. Most of the interviewed teachers confirmed there should not be a focus on including items from the World category, in comparison to items from the target culture. T5 stated, “It is enough for the students to learn cultural items from UK and US... cultural items from the local culture are also important for the students,” and T9 clarified, “Cultural items from the world cultures should not be included in the book at the expense of

the local culture.” Nevertheless, T4 explained, “I am not with eliminating them, but a few are OK,” and T9 clarified that a “few items only are what the students need.”

#### **4.4.3.2. Questions regarding the effectiveness of engaging the students**

*Students.* Students expressed dissatisfaction that their current EFL textbooks do not include interesting items about other cultures, as they do not appreciate the inclusion of, for example, fruits from Malaysia, as S18 indicated. Some students declared that they might not understand some of these items. As a result, these items “need extra effort to be comprehended”, as S7 explained. This reason is what made the students think that “items from the World category could be included—but only minimally—in EFL textbooks”, as S10 suggested. To overcome this challenge, students suggested the inclusion of a successful selection of interesting items. This is compatible with the teachers’ answers. Others suggested including these items at the level of evaluation and testing, such as “maybe in an activity, and from that activity I can infer the culture”, as such S6 explained how these items could be effective.

*Teachers.* most of the interviewed teachers (including T3) found, based on their experiences, that “students do not want to study these items and do not find them stimulating”. Some teachers, including T5, justified their answers by stressing that “students could learn about these items from other references”. A successful selection of interesting items could be a solution for engaging the students. For example, T1 suggested, “A better choice of places from the world could make the students more stimulated.”

#### **4.4.4. Justifications for importing items from the N category**

Teachers and students provided examples of cultural items from specific topics with no reference to any specific culture on the open- ended question on Section C of the questionnaire. The teachers’ examples, unlike the students’ examples, were mostly from the N category rather than the SC category as discussed earlier. Teachers’ justification

concerning what items and sources can help students learn English might be different from what their students need or are interested in learning. It is also possible that teachers might be either indifferent towards what interests their students, for example, regarding the distinctive semantic subcategory or they might lack knowledge about what their students' preference regarding that subcategory. However, the former possibility was not shown in the interviewed teachers' answers in terms of how they expressed themselves (e.g., body language or facial expressions in face-to-face interviews and suprasegmental speech features and tone of voice in phone interviews). Others required applying the neutralizing process on certain items. Some teachers needed items relevant to sensitive topics to be presented scientifically and in an unbiased way. For example, "for medical reasons you should avoid drinking alcohol", as T5 suggested. This might indicate that teachers "need a specific training", as stressed by T5 and T7.

The best explanation for why teachers and students provided examples from N was that they stressed that the examples themselves are of more importance than the source or the quantity of the cultural items and the method of teaching these items is of the most important when they explained the low importance given to the sources of culture on the questionnaire.

**Students.** The students declared that the focus should be on choosing the examples. For example, S1 said, "I think the examples of cultural items [are] more important than the source itself." S3 indicated, "How the teacher teaches these items is more important than the sources of the cultural items." S7 stated that a "few items from everything [are] perfect. ... We need good teaching."

**Teachers.** Similarly, T11 stated, "Quality is more important than quantity," and T10 explained, "Numbers are not important; the important thing is the how and why." T5 indicated, "The way of teaching is key to effective cultural content."

To conclude, maintaining a balance between the sources of culture was highly requested by the participants. For example, S2 stated, “A balance between the sources might be ideal,” which was similar to what T10 said: “A balance between these items and sources is key to successful learning and teaching.” It seems that the sources and the examples were in support of a multicultural type of EFL textbook that includes items from the students’ local culture. However, the focus was on the target culture (i.e., the United States and/or the United Kingdom) in addition the Saudi category by adhering to the Islamic norms through the inclusion of the most common examples from all sources of culture as discussed earlier.

#### **4.5. Justifications and concerns regarding the ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content in Saudi EFL textbooks and EFL classes**

The following sections are justifications of the participants’ answers regarding the suggested ways of presenting and teaching the cultural items from specific topics, whereas the participants’ evaluation of the cultural content of EFL textbooks and teaching classes will be presented and discussed in the next chapter. The interviewed participants’ answers on the questionnaire showed high agreement on the suggested ways, although a few of those participants had neutral or low scores on some of the items. This showed that the interviewed participants disagreed amongst themselves about the possibility of applying the suggested ways.

##### **4.5.1. Achieving the students’ learning goals**

*Students.* The students thought, S6, “it is necessary to include topics relevant to important courses such as computer science, maths, sports, history, and religion” because this could help in preparing them “to study at the university and get a respectable job,” as S6 argued. Moreover, “receiving the required score on the international English proficiency tests would help in getting a scholarship,” as S13 indicated.



Interestingly, the students expected that the inclusion of topics that could enhance cultural understanding would reduce stereotypes about the students' cultures, such as the stereotype that "Saudi Arabia only exports oil." (as S14 pointed out and S3 indicated). It seems that including some sensitive cultural items from the target culture could help in preparing the students to their future visits to ENS countries. S13 indicated the importance of understanding "when someone says something bad".

*Teachers.* Some teachers support the introduction of stereotypes about Muslim culture as a whole. For example, the negative image of Islam developed due to several terrorist attacks that were attributed to Muslims. T10 suggested that such topics were important because students need to understand that "terrorism has no religion and should be defeated"; "focusing on the positive events of Islamic history can support the creation of a positive impression about Islam" as T7 indicated. T1 stated, "The curriculum could help to reduce the negative stereotypical picture about the target culture. ... The students think that everything is acceptable in the West." Including some sensitive cultural items from the target culture could help in preparing the students to their future visits to ENS countries eating the right foods – for example, "avoiding pork because it is not allowed in Islam", as T10 noted; T7 believed that "students will encounter these topics anyway, they need to be prepared". Moreover, some topics could be included for a pedagogical purpose once they are abided by the Islamic restrictions. For example, T6 suggested "the effective use of the prophet Muhammad's Hadith", such as "the Hadith about orphans" to discuss issues related to orphans.

The teachers confirmed that differences between the students' culture and the target culture could cause misunderstandings in intercultural communication. For example, T11 noted, "There was someone in the book named Mr. Green, and students laughed at the

possibility of a person named Green. What is their meaning? English is unlike Arabic that necessitate meanings to names. They must understand that”.

#### **4.5.2. The counterproductive nature of the suggested ways**

*Students.* Some students were worried about the introduction of some sensitive cultural items from the target culture. Interestingly, S16 and other students stated that—after being exposed to items that the students might not have been aware of before, such as swear words— “the students might use these items negatively”. The students were also worried about the introduction of locally sensitive items. In fact, most of the participants admitted that “we are not used to people, except experts, publicly dealing with locally sensitive topics in the Arabic world” as S2 explained. According to S14, even if these topics are discussed in class, “there are no or little opportunities to talk to native English speakers about these topics”. Effective ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content could solve the challenges related to the inclusion of cultural items from sensitive topics. For example, cultural items related to sensitive topics from the target culture – such as “the side effects of wine”, as S11 noted – can be “addressed in an unprovocative way”.

Most students did not prefer to compare cultural items from the native speakers’ cultures and with cultural items from their local culture. S14 explained this by saying, “They exceed us in many levels, even in morals. It is not a fair comparison at all”. However, S13 stated “I prefer to compare other cultures over the cultures of native English speakers.” S15 explained that “our culture has more similarities with the foreign cultures of non-English speakers than it has with the cultures of native English speakers”.

Nevertheless, some students indicated that such a way “is time-consuming and required extra effort” from them as S7 indicated, along with others, recommended that “Applying this way might be more suitable at the university level.”; S17 explained this

recommendation, stating, “I’m afraid that I am unable to compare and contrast. And research is difficult”. This implies that such a way of presenting and teaching the cultural content might require adequate analytical skills.

*Teachers.* It seems that some suggested treatments could be counterproductive in EFL classes. For example, some teachers were against dealing with issues relevant to stereotypes and bias because they had several “concerns about enhancing some stereotypes” as T11 noted; T8 stated that “I do not trust the competence of the teachers nor that they have balanced minds...Some teachers might introduce these issues with the use of stereotypes, and they can teach their biases to their students”. It seems that treating the cultural content in the suggested way requires a model to follow or specific training.

Teachers such as T11 believed that addressing sensitive topics might be counterproductive, as students might react negatively to these topics and discussing these topics could enhance negative stereotypes about other cultures and biases against them. For example, T11 wondered about including “topics that have some depth, like religions. I am with the idea of tolerance in Islam”. However, she stated that, when she presents this topic to students, she wonders how to present religions other than Islam to the students. This implies that the way in which cultural items are represented is important, regardless of the teachers’ experience.

Some teachers were concerned about addressing locally sensitive topics, as many teachers doubted the effectiveness of addressing them in EFL classes. T1 suggested that “these topics could be dealt with more effectively outside class by doing a campaign to encourage volunteering, for instance, than inside class”. T1 has already done a campaign entitled “Warm Winter” for low-salary workers with her English teacher colleagues; in this campaign, students had to write short informational messages in English.

However, it seems that all topics, even when they are not sensitive, have negative sides and can cause conflict in discussions. T1 confirmed this fact by sharing her experience of discussing an ordinary topic, the students' idols:

I asked the girls to describe the person they admired most. . . It was my mistake—I might have asked them to describe one of their family members or friends instead of prescribing the book's open question. . . the shocking answer was the one who said, "Saddam Hussein is my idol". I asked, "Why do you admire him?" The student's answer was, "He is a brave leader who is wise and firm and killed the most Shia!"<sup>28</sup>

This showed that controversial opinions are unavoidable, and the teachers could encounter them in EFL classes. Besides, some teachers as T9 think that "restricting the range of open-ended questions" is the ideal solution for avoiding sensitive issues.

Discussing "cultural items relevant to sensitive topics could help students to understand the communicative situation when they encounter the topics outside class... the choice of topic should be based on the students' learning goals" as T4 pointed out. Some teachers indicated that "discussing these topics would be more beneficial for ESL students than for EFL students" as T11 suggested because "the students would encounter some communicative situations related to these issues while living abroad" as T7 indicated.

For some teachers, comparing items from similar cultures to the students' local culture are more familiar to the students rather than comparing items from the native English speakers' cultures, T11 indicated T11 indicated, "It would be more effective as a teaching tool." Nevertheless, it seems that the students needed to overcome another difficulty, as T1 argued that "the students' level of English is an obstacle". T1 explained, "I might opt to raise the discussion questions in the scientific department and not the art department. They cannot speak English fluently as well as students in the scientific department. So, teachers

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<sup>28</sup> The Shia and Sunni are groups of Muslims with distinct tenets. Shiites are a minority in Saudi Arabia but a majority in other countries, including Iran. Saddam Hussein was Sunni.

omit this part—they ignore these items.”

#### **4.5.3. Personal interests: Ways of learning**

*Students.* Some students did not enjoy comparing, reflecting, discussing, exploring, and searching about cultural items because those actions were not their preferred way of learning or assessing knowledge, S5 stated, “I prefer multiple choice questions rather [than] comparing between things,” and S18 stated, “I prefer true and false questions rather than discussion questions.” These students preferred the traditional method of using drills or teaching with the above methods, which “may be options in the lesson,” as S5 indicated, and not as the norm for teaching the cultural content; for example, a delivered lesson could involve “a brief search about a point,” as S2 indicated. Some students did not prefer this way of learning because these methods require them to state an opinion or debate a topic. For example, S18 indicated, “I do not like to express my opinion and argue about a topic in class.” S10 did not think this method effectively motivated the students because she thought “stating my opinion in class could cause troubles and create conflict in the class.”

*Teachers.* T4 stated, “Students learn in a traditional way, and teachers use a traditional way of teaching. ... Students depend on their teacher for information. ... They use their book; they may not use technology nowadays for learning,” which is why most of the teachers were upset about the new method of assessment that emphasizes projects or research. For example, T1 stated, “The traditional way of assessment is more suitable rather than the new way of using projects, especially [because] we have [a] great number of students in class.”

#### **4.5.4. Obstacles related to EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia**

The participants expressed their opinions about the challenges they may face when learning or teaching the cultural content using the suggested ways.

*Students.* Administration restrictions were a point referred to with few students. For example, S4 argued that “music, television series, movies, and social media already expose

most students to these topics”, and thus, “there is no logical reason for the exclusion of these items.” The students worried about the amount of information these methods require them to study because they have exams based on what they already have studied. S15 explained. “I am afraid that I will memorize for [the] exam all that is discussed in the class plus what is in the book.”

**Teachers.** Some teachers admitted that several challenges related to the students might contribute to not adopting the suggested ways of teaching their classes. For example, some teachers believed that “the students might need more before we can apply these methods. ... They lack the skill, enough information, suitable vocabulary, [an] adequate proficiency level, and self-esteem. ... Once they get them, they will be able to discuss and argue such topics,” as T5 indicated. On the other hand, what was deduced from the teachers’ answers was that teachers’ teaching skills, motivation, experience, and education are some challenges to teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks. For example, T5 explained, “When we teach about chemistry in language, this will be laborious on the shoulders of the teacher”. T7 suggested a practical solution to the issue of including sensitive topics in the curriculum involves “the teachers could choose from several topics that they are capable of teaching”. Some teachers, such as T5, noted that the suggested methods might “require special training or skills” – such as “adequate English proficiency” and “the abilities to manage classroom debates” and debate a topic with “adequate background knowledge”. T5 also emphasized the role of teachers’ experience in dealing effectively with these items, explaining that “I bought the Oxford Dictionary. It is accompanied with some pictures of bikinis”, he admitted that “I was a very naïve teacher at first”. To overcome these challenges, T4 indicated that “Saudi English teachers need to cooperate to prepare a good lesson plan and use the suggested ways”, and he wondered “why the teachers do not collect ideas or exchange expertise with each other”.

Administrative restrictions could hinder the use of cultural items, such as music, and some extra supporting materials. For example, few teachers did not agree with excluding sensitive topics from Saudi EFL classes; as T7 stated, “I am not with eliminating these items at all.” and T4 who explained that “these topics have not been included in EFL textbooks in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s instruction to avoid topics” – such as “politics, women who drive cars, religion, and music” – that could “cause conflicts in classrooms”.<sup>29</sup>

The teachers also emphasized the use of supporting materials and affordable technology to activate cultural items. For example, T7 criticized the lack of “affordable technology” that can support the students’ learning, such as “apps on students’ smartphones”; “attractive presentations of vocabulary in the books”; and some important class equipment – including “microphones, CD players, and projectors for showing data”. The participants confirmed that, by the time of my study, they had not received the CDs that should have accompanied the books in the series.

Another teacher, T4, explained the fact that students showed lack of motivation to study English because the students understood that English as a course would not cause them to fail, even if it were a compulsory module, by stating, “We are living this nightmare! They understand that they will pass”. So, they simply cannot fail this course, however low their grades in it. As such, students and their teachers wish the inclusion of a reasonable amount of information about the cultural items because “at the end of the course the students have exams based on what is included in their EFL textbooks”, as T1 explained.

Other teachers referred to the different barriers to teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia. T4 questioned whether applying the suggested methods was “realistic with the level of student proficiency”; “the method of distributing the books in the pilot phase, which negatively

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<sup>29</sup> Some topics, such as women driving, are no longer sensitive issues in Saudi Arabia.

affected the use of this book series’’; ‘‘the number of students in the class’’; ‘‘the teaching load’’; ‘‘the lack of English teachers, especially competent ones’’, in Saudi Arabia; ‘‘the low number of English lessons’’; and ‘‘the lack of teachers’ autonomy’’, as they are ‘‘obliged to teach the whole textbook’’.

Because of the challenges in using cultural items from specific sources, some teachers believed that the fact that non-native speakers of English rather than native English speakers would teach the book series would decrease the books’ focus on including cultural items from specific native English-speaking cultures. For example, T4 indicated that ‘‘the person who designed the course was a native speaker of English’’: ‘‘He knows the culture and language because of being native’’. T4 stressed the importance of having ‘‘a locally produced curriculum’’ in which units ‘‘had to be supported with positive items from other cultures.’’ Teachers such as T3, who believed that ‘‘the current series of books was unsuccessful in improving the situation of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia’’. Because the book series are not sensitive to ‘‘the problems related to teaching English in state Saudi secondary schools’’.

To summarize, this chapter presented the results obtained from the wants analysis phase of the study. This phase was the first step in the subsequent evaluative phase, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.



**CHAPTER 5:**

**CLOSE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION: TEXTBOOK & ASSOCIATED  
TEACHING**

The examples provided by the students and their teachers on the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews about their favourite items, sources, and ways of learning and teaching the cultural content were used to construct the checklist sections, which were designed to analyse and evaluate the cultural content of the students' EFL textbooks.

I used both an in-use evaluation using some of the results of the follow-up interviews in which the participants were asked for their opinions about whether the methods suggested on the last section of the questionnaire were satisfied in their EFL textbook and their actual teaching, as well as a nonparticipant observation and a post- use evaluation using the checklist and in-depth evaluation. The evaluation of the cultural content of the textbooks will be presented according to the sections of the checklist after applying the close analysis phase to answer the third research question as follows.

RQ3: Does the actual textbook used (imposed by the MOE), and the associated teaching, involve what the students and teachers want?

**5.1. Section A: Cultural items & Topics**

This section of the checklist investigates the extent to which the participants' categories with regard to the cultural items and topics were represented in the Traveller series.

**5.1.1. The Prominent themes (Researcher view)**

The provided examples were grouped under 19 themes listed in the following sections. It includes the researcher view via a close analysis process.

### 5.1.1.1 Literary works

This category includes different subcategories (for example, novels, stories, poetry, biographies, and magazines). The close analysis phase showed that there are few or no items of literary works. The examples provided lack deep representation. For example, the included poems were composed poems by the writers of the books or from unspecified sources, without giving an author of the poem and/ or a well-known artistic work. Moreover, these poems were included in a separate appendix, as in Traveller 1 and Traveller 2. These poems lacked the mature poetic artistic techniques. With regards to the famous and/or contemporary novels (e.g., *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer and famous plays based on love stories, e.g., *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare), in fact, what was included in the textbooks was either an extract from a novel, as seen in the reading text from Traveller 5 (i.e., *King Solomon's Mines*, which is an adventure novel), or an extract from an untitled novel, as in the reading passage from Traveller 1 (i.e., "Chapter 1: Who am I?" which is mystery story). In fact, there were other types of literary genres included in the series of books. For example, Traveller 4 included writing a book review on *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. Shallowness of representation reaches a point that in Traveller 5, the writer exemplified the concept of the adventure story with the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* in a sentence.

### 5.1.1.2. Arts

This category includes different subcategories (for example, cartoons, exhibitions and museums, crafts and pottery, movies, TV series and programs, dance, social media, photography, drawing, and music). The close analysis phase showed that there were few or no items of arts. There was no deepness of representation in most of the examples provided. For example, it was only a mere example of deep representation of the topic of social media

in Traveller 4<sup>30</sup>, that there was a discussion question about the role of media in young people's lives and which suggested type (i.e., surf the net, magazines, and radio) had a great influence.

With regards to the examples of museums and what they exhibit, Traveller series included many examples from the students' own culture, as in Traveller 3, such as a brochure to join an Islamic art course in King Abdul Aziz Museum and/or lessons dealing with elements related to museums, galleries, and exhibitions. For example, Traveller 4 included lexical sets related to art galleries and museums.

Nevertheless, there were some superficial attempts to represent items from the media, such as a reference to watching the news in Traveller 1; cartoons on TV in Traveller 5; documentaries on TV in Traveller 4, with mention of Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006); etc. superficial attempts were also include a short text about an art movement known as cubism in the form of gap-filling activity in Traveller 5.

### 5.1.1.3. History

This category includes different subcategories (for example, world wars, victories of the Islamic empire, Islamic empires, history of KSA, and history of classical cultures). There was reference to the Second World War in one item of an exercise, and there was no examples on colonies and empires such as the British, Ottoman, and Omayyad Empires. For example, in Traveller 5, there was a short text about the Alhambra palace and fortress with reference to the Moorish rulers of the Emirate of Granada in present day Andalusia.

Nevertheless, there were good examples about classical cultures. For example, there were items from these cultures in a reading passage in Traveller 5, such as great Greek scientists who participated in the development of dictionaries and ancient Greek philosophers

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<sup>30</sup> Traveller 4 refers to the close analysis phase of *Traveller 4* so that the number adjacent to Traveller refers to the level of a book from Traveller series.

such as Aristotle and Socrates. In fact, there were other examples in Traveller 6 such as a magazine article about the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun and a reading passage on the collapse of the empires, such as the demise of the Akkad culture of central Iraq and the Egyptian kingdom. Lastly, there was plenty of examples about famous historical figures from the students' local culture (e.g., Saudi and Islamic cultures) and from other world cultures in Traveller series.

#### **5.1.1.4. Science**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, health, space, technology, innovations, advancement in science, biology, and plants). Traveller series included interesting items related to science. For example, Traveller 1 included a magazine article entitled "A Rainbow on Your Plate"; Traveller 5 featured a short text in the format of a gap-filling activity entitled "Run For a Better Life!"; and Traveller 6 featured a radio interview with an expert talking about aromatherapy, etc.

There were new topics about science in Traveller series. For example, Traveller 1 featured a text discussing a 3D plan for a house (e.g., a special computer programme to rearrange the furniture in different rooms); Traveller 2 featured strange inventions such as the use of USB desk vacuum, radio trainers, car coffee maker, and solar jacket to charge mobile phones; Traveller 3 included a magazine article about high-tech dining, a conversation between two people about Robonauts, a text entitled "Beam Me Up" discussing hologram images that will be "beamed to wherever we want or have to be"; Traveller 4 featured a magazine article about flying cars; etc.

#### **5.1.1.5. Tourism**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, sightseeing, travelling tips, and favourite destinations). The Traveller series included many examples related because

most of the books included units on the topic of travelling. For example, Traveller 3 featured a magazine article about the Window of the World Theme Park, Edgware Road/Marble Arch; Traveller 4 incorporated advertisements for four theme parks; Traveller 5 included a short text in the form of a gap-filling entitled “A Trip to Madinah”; etc. These elements were included with reference to many cultures.

Nevertheless, some of items related to providing helpful information about travelling were to some extent satisfied. For example, Traveller 1 featured holiday activities; Traveller 2 mentioned words related to travelling by plane; Traveller 5 included advertisements for unusual holidays and trips and a magazine article about InterRailing; etc. It seems that booking a hotel room or service is satisfied in Traveller 2. However, these items are not relevant to the students’ lives.

It seems that Traveller series included plenty of items about travel destinations. For example, in Traveller 1, the task required the students to write about one of the countries (e.g., Egypt or Morocco); Traveller 6 included a short text entitled “Visit Malaysia” and Traveller 6 included a short text entitled “A Trip to South Africa”, etc.

#### **5.1.1.6. Food**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, different cuisines and restaurants). There were few or no examples of types of cuisine and famous dishes. In fact, there was more focus on talking about food in a more general way and with no reference to any culture. For example, there were examples about food courses and drinks, ordering food, and taking an order in Traveller 1, and Traveller 2 focused on adjectives describing food, talking about exotic food, words related to cooking, a conversation about a recipe, talking about food and quantity, and so on.

#### **5.1.1.7. Customs and traditions**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, festivals and habits). Traveller series included a few examples: Traveller 1 featured a poster about Teacher’s Day, and an article about the *Eid al-adha* festival; Traveller 2 included a cross-curricular page entitled “A Mango Festival in Jizan,”; Traveller 3 featured a short text about a tea ceremony in Japan; and Traveller 6 included a magazine article describing a traditional ceremony titled “A Moroccan Wedding.” However, there was little if any description about the underlying beliefs of the festivals as suggested were not included in either the book nor the EFL class

#### **5.1.1.8. Education**

This category includes different sub- categories. For example, the formal and informal education and studying abroad. There were some items relevant to scholarship and studying abroad and/or a reference to the concept of a host family. For example, Traveller 3 included part of a radio programme about the use of English as an international language; Traveller 4 featured a writing activity discussing the issue of opting to stay with a host family or in a flat on the student’s own; Traveller 5 included a speaking task discussing the matter of finding a place to rent at the beginning of the journey of studying abroad; etc.

In fact, there were some items relevant to learning, such as in Traveller 1 with a culture page entitled “The Saudi vs. the British Education System”; in Traveller 3 with a magazine article about learning English by using new technology and a radio interview about a project called “One Laptop Per Child”; and in Traveller 6 with a radio interview with an elementary school teacher discussing extracurricular activities.

#### **5.1.1.9. Future Goals**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, preparation for finding a job and starting a family). In fact, there was a good range of elements about this category. For

example, in Traveller 5 the reading passage included some concepts such as CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Moreover, Traveller 6 featured a magazine article entitled “Are You Happy?” a newspaper article with money tips; and a speaking activity requiring students to compare photographs and to speculate on and discuss issues relating to jobs.

With regards to elements that could prepare students for their future major, there were some dedicated lessons regarding these elements. For example, Traveller 2 included a speaking activity enabling students to make predictions about the future, and in many places in Traveller series, the issue of applying to a university was discussed in many activities.

Although the Traveller series did not include direct reference to the available jobs in Saudi Arabia, the topic of jobs in Traveller series was covered by dedicating some units to the topics of work and career life. For example, Traveller 2 featured two conversations about a problem at work and writing a CV; Traveller 3 included a magazine article offering advice about job interviews; Traveller 6 included a writing task about a formal letter of application; etc.

#### **5.1.1.10. Leisure activities**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, video games, shopping, using social media, watching TV, fashion, and gym). There were some items relevant to video games. For example, Traveller 1 included a magazine article entitled “Do You Spend Your Life in Front of a Screen?” and included some of the video game names that may not be popular in Saudi Arabia. For example, Traveller 4 featured the Wii Fit video game, ZetaGames, and some of the more recent types of games such as virtual reality games. However, there were other types of games played by people from the local culture or people from the target culture.

The examples included in Traveller series may not include examples about the sub-categories above, but there were many examples in Traveller series about activities that can be done in the participants' free time because there were units in some books dedicated to leisure activities. For example, Traveller 2 included a unit about "Youth Culture"; and Traveller 3 featured a unit about work and leisure and included lexical sets about appearance and fashion; Traveller 4 included a unit entitled "Leisure" that included a discussion about different forms of entertainment and shopping; etc.

#### **5.1.1.11. Sports**

This category includes different sub- categories. For example, football match, karate, table tennis, swimming, and mountain climbing. There were many examples in Traveller series relevant to sports. For example, Traveller 1 included an interview with a karate champion, a text about martial arts, and another about action sports; Traveller 2 included a reference to Formula BMW; Traveller 4 featured a short biography about a Saudi football star, Majed Ahmed Abdullah Al-Mohammed; etc.

#### **5.1.1.12. Social status**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, marriage and standard of living). I did not find any examples from this category.

#### **5.1.1.13. Religion: Islam**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, Islamic rituals, prohibitions, balanced views about others, most frequently asked questions, Qur'anic verses, and images of Islam in the media). There were no examples of these subcategories in Traveller series except that an item was included in a manifest way at one place in Traveller 1, including the Prophet Mohammad's declaration, "I and the guardian of the orphan will be



in heaven like that,” indicating his forefinger and middle finger. This prophet’s statement reflects the importance of taking care of orphans.

There were some items that could include underlying Islamic view about some issues but needs to be taught explicitly by the teacher because they are not discussed in the book series. For example, Traveller 1 included phrases related to misfortunes and a speaking activity about misfortunes; Traveller 3 included a writing activity dealing with the topic of dreams that involved writing a short story that had to end in the following way: “So, Peter realized it was a dream after all in a competition.” This topic could elicit some of the underlying beliefs about dreams. Traveller 3 included the sentence, “Some believe that there is life on other planets,” another shallow reference for the underlying beliefs is the inclusion of the fact that Aboriginal Australian groups “are linked by common beliefs which tie them to the land.” Traveller 4 featured a listening activity about five people giving their views on dreams and reflects how cultures could vary in their view of dreams. For example, in Muslim cultures, some dreams are called visions and foresee either good or bad news. Nightmares are from Satan. Some other dreams are called a reflection of your own self. The sentence, ‘The statue in front of the Town Hall was placed in memory of the soldiers killed . . .’ indicates that statues serve to honour the memory of a good person, which is a sensitive issue in the local culture because statues were worshiped in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam, so these statues are banned in Muslim culture and hated due to some myths related to the occupation of these statues by evil spirits.

#### **5.1.1.14. Sensitive topics**

This category includes different sub- categories. For example, women driving cars, some ailments: HIV, breast cancer, illegal drugs, Taboo language. Traveller series did not include items about sensitive topics.

There were successful examples on mildly sensitive topics. For example, Traveller 1 included the topic of disability in the reading activity entitled “They Made It,” which was about famous people who overcame their disability and went on to be successful.

Other topics of sensitivity were seen in Traveller 3 with reference to the issue of slavery (e.g., in the sentence, “Peruvians, to be taken to Peru to work as slaves”).

#### **5.1.1.15. Systems**

This category includes different sub-categories. For example, traffic, juridical system, and army. The topic of crimes was included; the writers of the books might have intended to soften this topic through the inclusion of minor and funny crimes. I only found one serious crime (i.e., vandalism) that was tackled with considerable depth (e.g., discussing the causes of vandalism, providing examples of vandalism, and discussing vandalism with reference to a specific culture, the United Kingdom). This was done via discussion questions, an article in a local newspaper, and writing a letter to the editor in response to an article. The other topic was hooliganism through the inclusion of an article concerned with the violent behaviour of fans at football matches, followed by discussion questions about the students’ opinions regarding the causes of fans’ violent behaviour at football matches, the kinds of problems that can be created as a result of this behaviour, and the suggested solutions regarding this issue. There was an example of a strange law in Traveller 5 regarding the law on chewing gum in Singapore, which is slightly stricter than the one in Thailand, and Traveller 2 provided information regarding a strange fruit, the durian, with a bad smell that is prohibited from being eaten in the underground in Singapore and that was discussed in the reading activity from a magazine article entitled “A Strange Fruit.”

#### **5.1.1.16. Good citizenship**

This category includes one subcategory (important current topics in Saudi Arabia, for example, Saudi Vision 2030 and Saudi operations in Yemen). There were no examples of

these subcategories included in Traveller series. Traveller series includes successful examples of some deep topics that could promote good citizenship, such as volunteering and saving the environment. For example, Traveller 4 includes a unit about nature, and Traveller 5 includes a whole unit about the environment.

#### **5.1.1.17. Language**

This category includes different sub- categories. For example, proper nouns, loan words, English standards, and dialects. The writer included proper nouns in a superficial way. These items were used only to refer to specific institutions such as Sheringham Hotel, and/or to refer to the activity of visiting a place, such as Kennedy Space Centre but with no extra information or a link to the appendix or a website.

There are good examples relevant to some elements related to language interrelation to culture that could satisfy these sub- categories. For example, Traveller 1 included a culture page entitled “The History Behind a Name”; Traveller 3 featured part of a radio programme about English use as an international language and, in another place in Traveller 3 the differences in accents between two standards (i.e., American English and British English) and the issue of language flux. As similar to Traveller 6, there was a reading passage titled “Same language, different meanings!”. In fact, the series was committed to the standard use of English, mostly the British one and there was mention in many places in Traveller series and the appendixes regarding the differences between the American and British standards. Traveller 4 included a radio programme about a foreign language-learning convention; However, the concept of dialects were not referred to even in a shallow way. Language relation as appeared in loan words were few. For example, in Traveller 3, the use of the term tsunami from Japanese and Coco-Taxi from Spanish. The specific uses of words by a small culture shared by people from a specific profession, in Traveller 1, there was a conversation between Larry and Tom on a boat. They were learning about sailing and learned that “port”

means left and “starboard” means right only in sailors sailing communication. However, as with the activities related to words with close meanings that may create confusion in their usage in Traveller 5, most of the vocabulary was included without a conversational context or extra information or the different usage of these words due to different cultural aspects. For example, the word “voyage” is used by sailors or travellers on ships although it can be used in a different context, i.e., the voyage of life although the two meanings are related.

#### 5.1.1.18. Language in use<sup>31</sup>

This category includes different sub- categories. For example, degree of formality in languages and manner in conversation: politeness, gestures, use of humour, and accents. Traveller series contained plenty of examples about idiomatic expressions and proverbs. For example, Traveller 5 included the idiom “not my cup of tea,” meaning something one does not prefer, desire, enjoy, or care about; and Traveller 6 featured idioms about parts of the body, idioms relating to feelings and emotions, and idiomatic expressions incorporating *give*, etc. However, there is no indication that these idioms could have linguistic equivalents across cultures for intercultural communication purposes. The writers raised the students’ awareness about implied meaning in conversations in the reading and listening activities.

Traveller series included plenty of examples about speech acts. Moreover, Traveller series includes several alternatives for some speech acts in small boxes to assist in the speaking and writing activities, and more choices in a separate appendix regarding how to make suggestions, accept invitations, decline invitations, apologise, etc. For example, Traveller 1 included a writing activity to invite and accept an invitation in a letter; and Traveller 4 included instructions for students to express opinions, make suggestions, and

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<sup>31</sup> Language in use is a short definition of pragmatics (the use of language in context). Idioms are good examples of how culture from an essentialist and nonessentialist point of view makes meaning. Idioms tell about the small cultures and the big cultures in a society.

express criticisms or regrets in many activities, etc. Traveller 6 included a talk by an expert about body language.

There was an indication regarding the issue of formality in some conversational contexts and the issue of politeness in many places in Traveller series, the writers raised the students' awareness of the issue of politeness in the "Tip" section that follows some of the activities. Additionally, most of the conversations include polite remarks, such as thanking, polite requests, and refusals.

With regards to gestures, there was a reference to this element in Traveller 6. However, there was no use of short videos to support the teaching of culture from EFL textbook to help the students understand the appropriate manner in conversation in a more effective way, as suggested by the participants. There was a shallow reference to the use of humour in conversation in two places in Traveller series in Traveller 1:

Hamid: 'I'm only joking. Lunch is from 1:30 till 2:30.' (p.24)

In another place in Traveller 2, when Jack says to Lee, "What? Lee I'm only kidding!"

Traveller series includes many contexts in which students could shift from formality to informality; for example, the use of dialogues, practicing monologues and debates; reading an announcement, etc. For example, Traveller series included items relevant to debates as in many activities. For example, Traveller 1 included the use of monologues to express opinion; Traveller 2 included a writing activity discussing the advantages and disadvantages of an issue (debate), agreeing and disagreeing, and expressing preference and opinion; and Traveller 3 featured a writing task asking the students to write a letter (to the editor) expressing opinion, which was a common method in many other places in the other book series. Traveller series also uses semi-formal letters to express opinions, complain, and exchange information. Most of the conversations followed the informal style: "Morning mate!" "Any good," "A bit down," "Pretty bad," etc. Nevertheless, there were no examples

from different accents in conversation. There was only an indication in Traveller 3 in a listening text “Bob: No, I'm from the States. Tom: I thought so, I could tell by your accent.” (p.8). Moreover, some aspects of the spoken language such as the frequent use of swear words in spoken language were not referred to. A direct explanation of this issue is needed for adequate language competence, because what is acceptable in the students' own culture might be considered unacceptable in the target culture.

#### **5.1.1.19. Intercultural Communication**

This category includes different subcategories (for example, stereotypes, biases, and racism). There is no example in Traveller series that raised the students' awareness of issues that they should avoid in their intercultural communication, such as stereotypes, biases, and racism. In fact, the aims listed before each unit in Traveller series do not include the aim of improving the students' intercultural communication. Although there were plenty of examples of speech acts, the different use of speech acts from one culture to another was not referred to. Moreover, the cultural content of the series mostly do not use conversational contexts that reflect the use of English as a common language in intercultural communication. For example, two persons from two different cultures use English as a common language.

Nevertheless, there are a few examples in Traveller series that could raise the students' awareness of intercultural communication. In Traveller 2, the discussion question required the students to think of gestures or customs that exist in their country and whether they think they are the same elsewhere in the world. There was a reading text entitled ‘They do it differently’ that showed different customs when inviting guests from other cultures, and a situation in the three texts showed a misunderstanding. Another example was included in a writing task that required the students to imagine they were in a foreign country and what they would do if, for example, they made a gesture and everyone laughed, they went to a restaurant and did not understand the menu or waiter, and so on.

Traveller 3 included a paragraph about the perception of colours from one culture to another. In Traveller 4, the writing task required the students to imagine they had received an e-mail from an English-speaking friend who would be visiting their country and asked for directions to his or her hotel. Traveller 5 included a writing task that was a reply to Peter's letter by Saleh, who was expected to visit Peter in Manchester.

### **5.1.2. The representation of the different senses of culture**

This section aims to judge whether the items of the first part of the checklist could meet the students' optimal cultural content according to the four senses of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantics, and pragmatics) devised by Adaskou et al. (1990). It includes both the researcher evaluation via a close analysis process and the interviewees' evaluation in which they were asked about the extent to which their wants with regard to the inclusion of cultural items from the different senses of culture were satisfied.

As presented in Section 5.1.1.1 to Section 5.1.1.16, there were some attempts to introduce cultural items from the aesthetic and the sociological sense of culture with and/or without reference to a specific culture. In fact, what is provided in Traveller series is apparently a superficial reference to items from the arts. There were plenty of topics from the sociological sense of culture in Traveller series as presented from Section 5.1.1.3 to Section 5.1.1.16, but with shallow representation, or included with no reference to a specific culture. In this way, these items are limited in enriching the students' background cultural knowledge about aspects from the arts and the life of a specific culture.

From the interviews, teachers confirmed that items from the aesthetic category are "mentioned in the books with shallowness or sometimes not mentioned at all", as indicated by T2. For example, T4 indicated "The book contains an acceptable or weak presentation of that items from the aesthetic category". However, it appears that some items considered popular arts, such as music, TV series, and movies are purposefully eliminated from the first

distributed versions of the books. For example, T2 confirmed that items from the aesthetic category of culture— “were mentioned in the pilot phase<sup>32</sup> of distributing the books”—and many other teachers. T4 indicated that he reported that “a painter who is famous for striptease paintings” so that the books were adjusted during the pilot phase of the current series because of complaints received from the teachers and their supervisors. This implies that designers and the administration experienced some restrictions from the consumers of the book and vice versa because some teachers confirmed that their administration-imposed restrictions on including elements from this category. For example, T6 indicated that the fact that “These items are not taught in schools or allowed to be supplemented in general education is with contradiction to their lives out of school”. T6 confirmed that by doing so, “there is no connection with real life”<sup>33</sup>. Teachers and students confirmed that Traveller series contains much about the sociological sense of culture.

As presented in Section 5.1.1.17 to Section 5.1.1.19, there were good examples from the semantic and the pragmatic senses of culture, but Traveller series has no or few examples of how different cultures use language differently as an aspect of language usage, as presented in Section 5.1.1.19.

Interestingly, according to the interviews, most of the teachers and students indicated that their book series included few items about the differences between the British and American standards of English. For example, S1 stated, “In the last year, I studied only ten words that are different between British and American English. They repeat these words this year again

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<sup>32</sup> There is no study; it is a trial phase of the three chosen book series’ distribution. There is no announcement on the part of the MOE regarding the results of any study. The decision was made, and the teachers were told that they had finally decided to teach only the Saudi edition of Traveller series. This is the usual way MOE announces new regularities.

<sup>33</sup> In the students' normal life, they watch movies and listen to music on TV and listen to music via their car radio. This is in contrast to the students' school life in which curriculum and non- curriculum activities do not include activities related to music and movies.



in our books’’. T4 stated, ‘‘The book contains very small amount of words, ten words only to show differences between British and American English’’. In fact, the series includes activities and a separate appendix to provide the students with examples of these differences. It seems that appendixes were not used by those teachers and students.

From the close- analysis process, it appeared that most of the conversations were unrealistic. For example, in Traveller 1: a conversation takes place in which John asks Emad to spell his name and to tell him about his current address. This conversation could happen when someone requests a service or fills out an application via phone, but it is not realistic as a face-to-face conversation during a first meeting in a school. Moreover, one of the interlocutors mentioned that the address was the airport road; this confirms that the conversation is context neutral. Besides that, most of the conversations used neutral interlocutors as A and B. This fact showed that some conversations lack an important pragmatic feature of communicative context as to the interlocutors and the relative distance between them. However, it seems that the pragmatic usage of language included in Traveller series could help familiarize the students with some aspects of the standard usage of language by native speakers of English.

From the interviews, T4 stated that ‘‘Throughout the book, they do not know anything about original conversations.’’ He implied there is no examples of original accents and the spoken language. ‘‘The book is just Blah, blah, blah. It goes in steady way . . . I mean a humdrum. The book is so traditional.’’ He added that ‘‘the conversation of knowing each other or meeting someone is either not realistic or not included. For example, ‘‘how old are you?’’ No one is asking others this question for the first time. In speaking or in conversations, they do not include the things that we need.’’ T5 explained that ‘‘conversations in restaurants exist between the customer and the waiter, but they do not include the cultural aspect of the language—that you have to order with, ‘‘may I’’ or ‘‘would you please?’’’’

## 5.2. Section B: The sources of culture and neutral topics

This section of the checklist is concerned with whether the participants' categories with regard to the sources of culture and the process of neutralizing topics (the inclusion of neutral topics) were present in Traveller series. Results were collected from both the researcher view via a close analysis process and interviews in which participants were asked about the extent to which their wants with regard to the inclusion of cultural items from the different sources of culture were satisfied.

The close analysis process indicated that Traveller series included many examples from many cultures other than the students' suggested sources (for example, Russia, Malaysia, and Mexico). This result was confirmed by most of the interviewees. For example, T2 stated, "The books contained many topics from different cultures", and S7 stated, "The books discussed many topics from different cultures." Table 5.1 shows the distribution of sources throughout Traveller series.

Table 5.1:

*Sources of Cultural Items and Topics Throughout the Sections of the Lessons in the Traveller Series*

<b>Neutral</b>	334		Semi- neutral		8
<b>Specific culture</b>	226				
<b>World culture</b>	78				
<b>Target culture</b>	UK	US	Other ENS	ESL	Total 104
	44	38	16	6	
<b>Local culture</b>	Saudi	Islamic	Total		
	37	7	44		

The above table showed that Traveller series included many items from the target culture with more focus on the U.K. and U.S. cultures. There was less focus on the students'

own culture compared to items from the target culture or items from the other world cultures. This result was confirmed by some interviewees. For example, S2 indicated that “the book does not talk about Islam or Saudi Arabia except in a few sections of the book”, and T4 stated that “Traveller series is more about the target culture”. Interestingly, Traveller 6 does not include any examples of Saudi culture. However, most of the activities in the Traveller series includes discussion questions that elicited self-reflections from the students on their own culture. In addition, Moreover, many cultural elements and/or topics were discussed in a neutral way. The number of neutral topics outweighed the number of the topics from a specific culture. This fact confirmed that the process of neutralizing topics was present in Traveller series.

### **5.3.1. Section C: Representing and teaching the cultural content**

This section of the checklist is concerned with understanding whether the suggested ways for presenting and teaching the cultural content of the questionnaire were present in Traveller series or adopted by the teachers in English classes. It includes both the researcher evaluation via a close analysis process and observation. It also includes the interviewees’ evaluation.

#### **5.3.1.1. Topics**

This section investigated the students’ and their teachers’ opinions of the extent to which the methods suggested in Items No.13 (include updated and familiar cultural items within relevant topics), No.14 (avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics from the local culture), and No.15 (avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics from the target culture) were included in Traveller series and adopted by the teachers in their teaching classes.

***Familiarity.*** There was an inclusion of items from different cultures, but not necessarily familiar items. In fact, the familiarity of these items could vary from one student to another.

For example, there were examples of items from the students' own culture that might not be familiar to some students. The reading passage titled "A Trip to Rijal Alma" in Traveller 4 is less famous than *Aldareyah Castle*. Moreover, Traveller series introduced items unfamiliar to the students' own culture, such as sports like bungee jumping. The unfamiliarity of these items depends on various factors such as the students' lifestyle and their experiences encountering these items in the media. Additionally, teachers' involvement could be helpful in facilitating understanding of unfamiliar items. For example, they could use specific teaching aids such as PowerPoint or methods to explain these items and attract the students' attention as a game.

In the interviews, some students indicated that, S10, "Some of the topics are not clear or difficult to understand or to know more about from extra sources." It seems that some topics are not comprehensible, due to the students being less familiar of these topics or the topics having little relevance to the students' lives. Additionally, both the teachers and the students were less motivated to search and learn more about the incomprehensible topics, as stressed by S10 who indicated, "I do not try to know about them because the teacher does not do that".

***Students' varied interests and learning goals.*** Traveller series includes varied topics, but some of these items might be unsuitable to the students' stage of study. For example, In Traveller 2, the students were requested during their first year of secondary school to mention their past job experience, or the introduction of some concepts related to life pressure or stress. Although Traveller series does not cover all the students' purposes of learning English in an effective way, some of the items, such as writing a CV and a formal letter of application in Traveller 5, might help the students achieve their instrumental goals of learning English. The role of teacher is important to adjust these tasks to suit the students and improve their skills.

The interviewed participants indicated that their EFL textbook does not include many topics that of interest to them and can motivate them to learn English on several reasons. For example, T8 believed that the books contained some topics that need extra effort for the teachers to explain but do not offer any advantage to the students' studies. For example, T8 said, "Iceland is a topic in the book. It is an unfamiliar place, and the whole lesson was spent on teaching them about this island. This is an obstacle". In this way, the choice of the topic was a barrier to comprehension. However, most of the participants indicated that students' interests require an effective presentation of the cultural items. For example, T8 criticized the presentation of the topics in the book: "The topics in the book do not stimulate the students because they are repeated topics and presented in the same way. You just read and give information."

It seems that the cultural items given as examples might not adhere to the students' various interests, such as gendered interests relating to the arts and ways of life in a society (e.g., leisure activities) because of some limitations. For example, most of the activities were discussed with no reference to females. Teachers might find it difficult to include examples from the arts and/or to help students learn about the target culture's way of life based on movies, television programs, news, and/or social media. Besides that, the characters mostly were not of a similar age to the students, and the interests presented, such as extreme sports, are unusual interests that do not apply to most people although because they are unusual, they may stimulate discussion. The types of leisure activities and jobs discussed in the books were mostly irrelevant to the students' lives, unless the student encountered these experiences while living abroad, among other possibilities. However, discussion questions could allow the students to reflect on their own experiences. For example, the question that preceded the writing task in Traveller 3, "What is the most interesting place you have ever visited?" could

engage the students by allowing them to discuss any concept relevant to their own experience, with reference to their own culture and to their goals of learning English.

***Up-to-date cultural content.*** It seems that the cultural content of Traveller series aims to introduce up-to-date cultural items as indicated by the authors in the burlap of the books (the cover of the Traveller series). The cultural content of Traveller series can potentially be updated with some effort by the teachers.

For example, once the topic of media was discussed, there was a discussion question on the types of media that interest the students the most. In this way, the lesson content could be updated to include social media. Another point is that most of the topics were discussed from their past until their current impact, such the short text titled “A Visit to Umlij” in Traveller 4 that describes a man’s visit to Umlij. However, there was no indication of the use of recent printed and/or electronic resources. In fact, Traveller series does not include any extra links to clarify a cultural item, as requested by the participants, except for two references in Traveller 6.

From the interviews, the interviewed participants disagreed among themselves of the recentness of the cultural content. The students indicated that few topics are updated in their books, which barely cope with the current times. For example, S14 indicated that each topic “must be supplemented with examples from our reality and include updated topics to make understanding easier, such as the use of iPhones, apps, social media, Google, new hacks, etc.”. In fact, the teachers indicated that the books include updated cultural content but that “the book is not updated as it is hoped to be”, as indicated by T1.

As a result, some students suggested that the books be updated annually “to reduce the monotony and flatness of the topics”, as indicated by S2. Others stressed the importance of the teacher modifying the curriculum to be more interesting and updated. For example, S7

indicated her “hope that my teacher updates my curriculum and improve my skills and makes me like the subject and learning more about English”.

***Sensitive topics.*** As presented in Section 5.1.1.14 there was no sensitive topics in the books either from the local or the target culture. The interviewed participants confirmed this very fact. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, T1 narrated how the format of an open-ended question turned a simple discussion of a person you admire to a complicated discussion about a sequence of sensitive topics. A point that T7 stressed by narrating the same experience with the introduction of football teams. In this way, there is no escape from these topics and teachers’ experience, skills, education, and training play an important role in dealing more professionally with these topics.

***Reasonable depth.*** Topics seem to vary in their depth. For example, some topics were discussed in some places with considerable depth, such as the topic of studying a language course abroad, whereas in another place they are discussed in a superficial way, through a reference to the immigration issue or the Second World War. Moreover, some topics or cultural items are introduced for a pedagogical teaching purpose; for example, the discussions about volunteering to save the environment and endangered animals in Traveller 5 and Traveller 6. However, elements from the local culture, such as King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Traveller 4, a biography on Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Sinan al-Battani al-Harrani in Traveller 6, a description of a trip to Rijal Alma in Traveller 4, etc, were not introduced to improve the local culture and enhance citizenship, change others’ stereotypical views of the local culture, or to support the discussion of misunderstandings that fuel negative views about Islamic culture due to certain radical practices.

### **5.3.1.2. Cultural understanding**

The suggested methods in Item No. 16 (adopt a view of cultural understanding: avoid bias and stereotypes) were examined in this section according to the participants' opinions.

From the close analysis phase, Traveller series did not address issues related to biases, stereotypes, and generalisations. The interviewed participants agreed that Traveller series did not contain any detected kinds of biases, negative stereotypes, and generalisations about any kind of culture. The interviewed students confirmed that their teachers did not pay their attention to issues related to cultural understanding. S1 stated, “even my teacher has never been talking about these issues [bias, stereotypes, and generalizations].” Most teachers think that calling their students’ attention to these issues is not a requirement for teaching English. For example, T6 stated, “It is not part of my job to speak about bias and stereotypes; I teach them how to read and write in correct English.”

### **5.3.1.3. Use of discussion, reflection, and comparison methods**

This section examined the participants' opinions on the suggested ways in Item No. 17 (compare own culture with English culture: reflect on, discuss, explore, and research some cultural items of English culture) and Item No.18 (compare own culture with other cultures: reflect on, discuss, explore, and research some cultural items of cultures other than English culture).

From the close- analysis phase, Traveller series provides students with opportunities to reflect on, discuss, criticise, compare, and/or comment on the cultural items within specific topics, thus enabling the students to express themselves (i.e., using items from their culture and/or those of personal interest). Traveller series included some examples about the research culture: Traveller 2 featured a speaking task requiring students to answer questions on a questionnaire; Traveller 3 included a writing activity that involved filling out a questionnaire; Traveller 6 featured a magazine article entitled “Teens and the Internet” and discussed the



results of research about the use of the Internet by teenager; etc. The types of exercises included in Traveller series could be challenging and interesting and encourage the students to move and act, adding suspense to the lessons, because some of the tasks require the students to use their imagination to come up with dialogue, answer questions, and write stories. For example, in Traveller 1, the reading activity entitled “Are You Adventurous Enough?” is in the format of a quiz, and the students can analyse their characters and discuss the quiz results with their colleagues. In Traveller 5, the writing activity requires the students to write a short story for a competition hosted by an international magazine that should start with “Ammar couldn’t stop laughing every time he thought about what had happened that day.”

Unfortunately, these strategies (discussion, reflection, comparing, etc) were mostly ignored by the teachers, as a result they must be unnoticed by the students. For example, only one student indicated that “the book contained a few places” dealing with the cultural content in the suggested techniques as “the discussion question,” as indicated by S1 who confirmed that such items might be “ignored by the teachers.” On the other hand, most interviewed teachers thought these items were included in the book but were ignored by most teachers. Some indicated that these items “were included in a good way in the book as a warm-up question,” as indicated by T7 and others as T1 indicated that “they were few.” Opposite to this opinion, some thought that in the case of these methods “it depends on the teacher. The teacher is responsible for teaching in this way or not,” as indicated by T2. Some teachers, although they support the use of such methods, think that they require “classroom management,” as T5 stated. The effectiveness of these methods may “depend on the students’ motivation in discussion tasks... students may not interact because of their low proficiency level and self-esteem.” T1 said “it depends on the class; silence is the response in the arts section,” referring to the low proficiency level of the students in some classes.

#### **5.3.1.4. Avoiding the situations of misunderstanding**

This section discussed Item No. 22 (avoid situations that could cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication) in details.

From the close analysis phase as indicated in Section 5.1.1.19, there were few examples in Traveller series that could help the students on their intercultural communication.

From the interviews, some students wished that the books include items relevant to the avoidance of misunderstanding in intercultural communication, as indicated by S10, who remembered that “there was only one situation mentioned in the book that was about how staring can be unacceptable in some cultures.” The students confirmed that their teachers did not include items that could help the students in avoiding misunderstanding in their intercultural communication. With regards to interviewed teachers, they declared that “the books contained too few examples”, such as T2, whereas other teachers such as T4 confirmed that “the current series of books did not contain situations that could help the students to avoid misunderstanding in intercultural communication”. T1 indicated that “because the focus on the book was on grammar and that the time limits. The teachers are unable to adapt the book to help the students in avoiding misunderstanding in their intercultural communication”, T1 added “there were no directions via supervisors or teacher guides to help the students in avoiding misunderstanding in their intercultural communication.”

#### **5.3.1.5. Positive impression about Islam**

This section detailed an investigation on Item No. 23 (creating a positive impression of Islamic culture for others).

From the close- analysis phase, as presented in Section 5.1.13, Traveller series did not include sufficient examples about the students’ Islamic culture in a sufficient way. From the interviews, students do not like that there were little or no items in the book about the Islamic

culture. For example, S1 indicated that “unfortunately, [there are] no topics about Islam in the book”. Interestingly, S10 expressed, “I preferred Islamic things to be in the book. There is no need to learn about Islamic culture from extra resources.”

Nevertheless, most of the interviewed students indicated that “creating a positive impression about the Islamic culture was not part of the book content or the teacher teach us about” as S2 indicated. With regards to the interviewed teachers, they confirmed they were committed to the book items and rarely attempted to adopt such way. T4 indicated that “we are not required to do so via Teachers’ Guides, because the book content was not helpful on teaching the students how to create a positive impression about Islam, nor did their supervisors encourage them to do so”. Interestingly, T8 indicated that “creating positive impression about Islam was one of the goals for teaching English language in the policy of education in Saudi Arabia but it was mostly not taught in Saudi EFL classes”.

#### **5.3.1.6. Travelling**

This section tackled Item No. 19 (help in possible future visits to an English-speaking country or in contacts with ENSs) and Item No. 20 (help in possible future visits to countries that use English as a lingua franca or in contacts with people who speak a different language).

From the close analysis phase as presented in Section 5.1.1.5, there were good examples on tourism around the world. However, the interviewed students had a slightly different opinion because they mostly agreed that the books did not include cultural items that could prepare them to travel to countries that use English for communication in an effective way. As indicated by S3, “The book contains few topics that can develop this area. It is mostly grammar and no conversation.” S1 confirmed that although “the book contains lots of vocabulary, I do not think that these words have ever helped me or would help me abroad.” Whereas the interviewed teachers disagreed amongst themselves about whether Traveller series discuss the topic of travelling in an effective way, as T1 indicated that “Traveller

series deals with travelling to an interesting different destinations''. Yet T8 thought that the book evaluated the extent to which this goal was achieved with "7 out of 10." Opposite to this, T2 thought that the books contained sufficient items about travelling but dealt with them in a more general way. Yet T3 thought that the suggested method was not included in an effective way in the book because the book "does not discuss the everyday life or behaviour of conduct abroad. It is about certain cities and sightseeing only but is not included for achieving the suggested way." For T4, he explained that the book "does not include the basic things in our life like airports or restaurants—just simple items." It seems that it is not a matter of quantity but of quality.

#### **5.3.1.7. Relating to other courses**

This section is a discussion on Item No. 21 (help in other courses).

From the close analysis phase, there were some cross-curricular pages in Traveller 1 such as Information technology: Spamming and phishing related to the course of computer and Traveller 2 such as a great explorer related to the course of history; and there were also many topics relevant to science and history. However, I do not think that Traveller series was either relevant or directly referred to any of the courses the students studied and did not encourage the students to connect the lesson to one of their other courses.

From the interviews, the interviewed students declared that, in some sections of the current series of books, relating to the other courses was included, "in few places" as indicated by S1. Like the students, most interviewed teachers indicated that the application of the suggested way was restricted to "only a few places in the books," as indicated by T2. This was confirmed by T3, who indicated that "Some topics such as geology, physics, and biology are included or connected in a simplistic way."

### 5.3.1.8. International tests

This section is a discussion on Item No. 24 (achieving high scores on international English proficiency tests).

From the close- analysis phase, there was no introduction to the international language proficiency tests. This might be due to matters related to copyrights.

From the interviews, most interviewed students indicated that they were not quite sure about the efficiency of the book towards helping them meet the required tests. They even declared that preparing the students to achieve high score on international proficiency tests was not included in the book or taught by the teacher. This may be because the test administrators themselves, such as Cambridge University Press, publish their own books for test practice. In fact, some of the students declared their lack of knowledge about these tests. For example, S12 stated that “I do not know what they are, but people who study abroad say that they are important.” Interestingly, only two students indicated that the books could help them with international tests. For example, S2 indicated that, “From the grammatical aspect, yes, it helps. There was no direct explanation of these tests, but the books may help in these tests.” In fact, there is no grammar section on these tests; also, the students indicated an important point that the current series of books lacked an adequate conversation section. Another student, S4, thought the reading passages could help in these tests. However, the students confirmed that neither the teachers nor the books introduced these tests directly to them, but they knew about these tests on their own. With regards to teachers, most interviewed teachers thought the book was strong enough to prepare the students for these tests to a certain level, as indicated by T8, although they admitted that the books did not introduce these tests or refer to these tests. Some teachers thought that this was not part of their job; thus, they were not required to apply the suggested method while treating the cultural content in EFL classes. Others, such as T6, indicated that he had no idea about these

tests. Others indicated that there were some barriers towards applying the suggested method. For example, the book lacked direct reference to these tests, the students had a low level of proficiency, as these tests required a reasonable level of proficiency, and the teachers lacked autonomy to modify the books, as indicated by T5. T2 indicated that the books could improve the students' skills in these tests implicitly, but "it might be unnoticed by teachers." Yet T11 indicated that "these tests were ignored in Saudi EFL textbooks and needed to be changed first in teachers' education because the teachers themselves lacked the adequate competence to lecture about these tests".

### 5.3.1.9. Teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks

This section is concerned with how the teachers teach the cultural content, for example, whether the teachers rely only on the book to teach culture or use other materials to supplement the cultural content.

The interviewees confirmed that the teachers do not use extra materials, affordable technology, the internet, and so on to supplement the cultural content, except on a few occasions. Nevertheless, the interviewees confirmed that teachers also do not strictly abide by the book content, although they are requested to do so by their administrations. They opt in rare occasions to adapt the cultural content to satisfy their students' wants. For example, they may use after-class activities in a creative way. The observed classes are summarized in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2:  
*Observation Task*

Teacher	BOOK	Unit	Lesson
OT1	Traveller 1	(5) Thinking Back	Fame
OT2	Traveller 5	(5) What the future holds	Vocabulary & Grammar

From the observation task, neither of the observed teachers used extra materials to elaborate on a point of the lesson the cultural content. Nevertheless, OT1 was able to use the class facilities (data show) to explain the lesson content, while OT2 only had the whiteboard

as a class facility. In this way, using the CD that accompanies the book depends on the class facilities. Sometimes Saudi EFL teachers did not notice some issues related to teaching the implicit cultural content. For example, OT2 did not refer to the possibility that words could be confused due to cultural aspects when she was teaching the “Easily Confused Words” section of the lesson nor OT1 was aware of the issue of gender bias because there is no inclusion of successful famous females with disabilities to balance the cultural content when she used the discussion questions. Nevertheless, it seems that some adapting the cultural content for pedagogical goals were present in Saudi EFL English classes. For example, OT1 tackled the deep issue of disability and show that suffering from disability is not a barrier to success. She referred to the figures from Islamic culture in the reading passage in a way that can leave a positive impression about Islamic culture and asked the students to provide similar examples. Beyond this, she reflected on the concept of the word *gossip*’ by saying that “your good deeds will be affected if you gossip” to meet a pedagogical goal. At the same time, her method of teaching the cultural aspect of this word through one of the students’ Islamic values to abandon gossip showed that teachers may adapt the cultural content to connect the students with local culture. In fact, relating a concept from the lesson to an Islamic value for a pedagogical purpose is the typical way of referring to Islamic culture, as discussed in the results of the Interview section. Another finding was that Saudi EFL teachers might ignore the methods for teaching the cultural content, such as discussing an issue. For example, OT1 used open-ended discussion questions to provide extra examples about famous and successful people with disabilities after the reading text, whereas the discussion question before the reading and the writing activity were ignored. This also confirmed that Saudi EFL teachers might not be committed to the content of their book. This is also occurred with OT2 class when she omitted some items of the exercises. Both observed teachers did not

recommend after-class activities for the students in a creative way. OT1 did not assign her students any homework while OT2 assigned some activities in the workbook as homework.

To sum up, this chapter was a detailed presentation of the evaluative stage of the study. The next chapter includes a detailed discussion of the results presented in this chapter and in Chapter: 4.



## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the opinions of Saudi secondary students and their teachers regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks and teaching classes. A discussion of the extent to which those students' interests were satisfied or not in their EFL textbooks and teaching classes is also included. This discussion is guided by the main questions of the study as follows:

RQ1: What do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia think should be present in their optimal cultural content of their EFL textbook and associated teaching?

RQ2: What reasons do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their preferences of the cultural content of textbooks and ways of teaching culture?

RQ3: Does the actual textbook used (imposed by the MOE), and the associated teaching, involve what the students and teachers want?

### **6.1. What do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia think should be present in their optimal cultural content of their EFL textbook and associated teaching?**

This question is discussed within four major topics: the categories of culture, the sources of cultural items, the way of presenting and teaching these cultural items, and differences within and between groups.

#### **6.1.1. Categories of culture.**

The results showed that the participants had a mostly positive attitude towards importing items from the different categories of culture. They considered all of these categories to be quite important within the close-ended items because the overall means on these categories do not indicate low or no importance (i.e., 2 or 1 on the Likert scale, see Table 4.1, p.164). Moreover, on the open-ended questions, the participants provided

examples from all of the suggested categories. Thus, they require—and are interested in—including items from all of the suggested categories of culture.

In the interviews, the participants generally emphasised the importance of the different categories of culture. However, they had some concerns regarding the possibility of teaching these items (or at least some of these items) in each category. For example, dealing with the items that clash with the students' cultural values.

It seems that the participants' interest in all categories of culture adhered to the answers provided by the Chinese middle school EFL teachers who were interviewed in the study by Lessard-Clouston (1996). Lessard-Clouston (1996) concluded that the results of his study confirmed that the different categories of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic) are valuable in the EFL teaching context of China.

In a departure from Lessard-Clouston (1996) results, research conducted by Adaskou et al. (1990) emphasised the importance of the pragmatic sense to a higher degree than the semantic sense. However, according to their opinions, neither the aesthetic sense nor the sociological sense of culture was relevant to the Moroccan EFL secondary school students' context.

In research conducted by Gray (2006), the interviewed Spanish EFL teachers for adults were asked to rank the senses of culture in the order of their importance to their teaching practice. Although the teachers' rankings on this matter varied, the prevalent result, according to Gray (2006), was that the pragmatic and semantic senses were mostly more important than the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture.

### **6.1.2. Sources of cultural items.**

The overall results showed that the participants gave low importance to the source of culture for learning English because all of the suggested cultures either received a neutral or

low importance score (3 and 2, respectively) except on one category: Islamic source (see Table 4.4, p.169).

An indication of the participants' indifference towards considering the source of cultural items to be important might be that although the participants suggested cultural items from many cultures, many other examples were not related to any specific culture, Neutral source.

Most of the interviewed participants indicated that the source of culture is of secondary importance to the cultural item; the method of presenting these items in EFL textbooks and teaching these items in actual teaching English classes is of primary importance. Neutralizing the source of cultural items can be used, according to their opinion, in the case of dealing with some sensitive cultural items that are important to their learning goals of English. The participants highly request that a balance be maintained between the sources of culture and the inclusion of a successful selection of the most common interesting items. However, they focused on the target culture (i.e., the United States or the UK) besides their own culture with an adherence to the Islamic norms when selecting cultural items. It seems that elements related to the Islamic culture was considered to be important to Saudi EFL teachers and students by studies that tackled issues related to the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks, such as Alfahadi (2012); Meccawy (2010). It also appeared that UK and U.S. cultures were the typical cultural targets in many studies including Adaskou et al. (1990), Gray (2006), and Alfahadi (2012).

However, the study results showed that the students are interested in including cultural items from different cultural sources because it seems that the examples provided amongst the open-ended questions supported cultural content that includes a variety of cultures with a focus on the target culture and the students' local culture. Similarly, Alfahadi

(2012) concluded that Saudi EFL teachers needed cultural content that included many cultures that do not mismatch with the students' own culture.

### **6.1.3. Ways for representing and teaching the cultural content.**

The overall means showed a high level of agreement with the suggested ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content on the questionnaire (see Table 4.8, p.178). Moreover, the participants proposed some techniques, topics, and conditions to successfully teach the suggested ways on their responses in the follow-up interviews and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, which indicates their high agreement on the attitudinal scale of the questionnaire. However, although a few of the interviewed participants had showed a neutral position or disagreement with some of the items of the questionnaire, during the interviews the participants disagreed amongst themselves about the possibility of applying the suggested ways. They also referred to the counterproductivity of the suggested ways besides the challenges related to applying these ways.

### **6.1.4. Differences within and between groups**

The degree of importance might vary within the same group, similar to Gray's (2006) conclusion, and from one group of participants to another, as in this study.

A within subjects comparison across the five categories of culture showed that there was a significant difference across the categories in both groups, differences in their judgments across the seven sources, and among the ways of presenting and teaching English. There were significant statistical differences on 11 out of 24 of the closed-ended items between the teachers' and students' answers. For example, the teachers' group was neutral towards considering the aesthetic and sociological categories to be important while the students were only neutral towards considering the aesthetic category to be important (see Table 4.1, p.164). Moreover, the students were approximately neutral to consider cultural

items from World culture to be important, while teachers considered these items to be of less importance (see Table 4.4, p.169).

Regarding the two groups' answers on the open-ended questions, the teachers' response rate was significantly lower, especially for the semantic and aesthetic categories, as they focused on pragmatic and sociological cultural elements. They also focused on U.S. and UK culture, while students were mostly interested in World culture, US, and UK, respectively. The students' answers were more in number and varied than those of their teachers. Such an observation might indicate that there was difficulty with providing examples on what could be helpful in assessing the learning of their students on the different categories of culture. This understanding might appear due to the fact that only two examples were provided on World culture, which can be considered a lack of response to this question. Besides, the significant result was that the number of neutral topics was prevalent in the teachers' total answers rather than the students. These results indicate that the teachers might lack knowledge of what interests their students. This might be a result of their strict commitment to the book due to administration constraints (see Albedaiwi, 2014). In this way, reliance on the book might prevent the teachers from understanding their students' interests regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks and, thus, fail to assist in their acquisition of English.

Similar subthemes emerged from the two data sets under each category of culture. Nevertheless, there were some differences in the occurrence and/or frequency of cultural items under each subtheme. For example, the results showed that the students were interested in the inclusion of cultural items such as literature, visual arts, and music from the aesthetic category, whereas the teachers focused on literature; only one teacher mentioned movies. This finding indicates that teachers do not support every kind of art. Regarding the pragmatic category, the students focused on the issue of informality, but the teachers focused on the

issue of manners and politeness in conversation. Overall, the students provided more interesting and creative examples of the distinctive semantic subcategory than did the teachers; the teachers provided only one example for each of the distinctive semantic and general semantic subcategories, even though they rated the semantic category as important in their answers on the questionnaire. This might indicate that students' abilities are unpredictable and need to be considered in designing EFL textbooks.

Unlike students, teachers provided examples on topics that reflect deeper meanings such as breast cancer, enhancing good citizenship, and enhancing and defending the Islamic image. In teachers' suggested ways, they focused more on intercultural communication than the students. They also focused on the importance of achieving some pedagogical goals, which might indicate that some of the teachers were interested in "the Humboldtian view" of ELT that necessitate a "pedagogic link between language and culture" (Gray, 2006, p. 51). According to Gray, from there the pioneers Claire Kramsch and Byram in intercultural communication teaching and learning developed their view of language teaching; they believed that language teaching and learning "has a specific kind of educational value" (p. 52).

The students focused on the way of teaching the cultural content inside the class, such as using task-based activities including role plays and supplementing the cultural content with audiovisual materials; in comparison, teachers focused on extracurricular activities research skills. It seems that these suggestions could enhance the students' learning experience and innovation because they were based on their opinions and proves that "Eclecticism" is a strong methodology for English language teaching (Young, 2000).

The above indicates that teachers' and students' opinions did not exclude each other, but they were complementary in providing an optimal cultural content. This is a valid

assumption, as discussed above. Besides, investigating the opinions of both students and teachers provide some hints about the extent to which teachers understand their students' interests and, thus, are able to modify the cultural content to satisfy these interests. The discussion above showed a somehow slight divergence between the students' and their teachers' opinions, which could reflect that they understand what might interest the students and what they need to learn about in their EFL classes.

## **6.2. What reasons do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their preferences of the cultural content of textbooks and ways of teaching culture?**

The interviews were more comprehensive in detailing varied opinions about the optimal cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks. The justifications of the participants' answers are discussed below.

### **6.2.1. Understanding language in an adequate way**

Most of the interviewed participants emphasized the importance of the different categories of culture. When they explained how integrating cultural items is important in adequately understanding language and avoiding communication breakdowns, T10 declared, "I am for including everything because one who is studying a language has to study everything". This realization of the participants matched with the thoughts of many researchers who have argued for the interrelation of culture and language. For example, Kramersch (1998), Moran (2001), and Jiang (2000) explained that culture is an inseparable part of language. Buttjes (1991) and Byram (1991) believed in the importance of mediating between languages and cultures and supported combining language and culture teaching due to the strong links between them. In fact, "second language learning is often second culture learning" (Brown, 1986, p. 33; as cited in Buttjes, 1991).

## **6.2.2. Helping students achieve their learning goals**

A detailed discussion is presented into the following subsections.

### **6.2.2.1. Different learning goals**

There were some common reasons for justifying inclusion of cultural items and sources and the preferred ways for representing and teaching of these items. For example, students interested in studying abroad need topics about living with a host family and applying to a university. They would like to include items from Islamic source to answer the most frequent questions about Islam from non-Muslims. They reported preferring to deal with cultural content in ways that enable them to contact people from the other cultures to facilitate their travels, for example including a topic about online video games and tips for booking flights and hotels. Another example was that they need to master English to get a job, and they need topics about how to apply for a job and join a university for a language course, etc.

When investigating the students' learning goals for English, more varied and context-specific topics can be included, and it could help in evaluating the effectiveness of cultural content in an authentic way and improve the teaching and learning experiences of EFL students and their teachers. In fact, it seems that major themes, like studying English to get a job, are shared goals for EFL students, as was reported in Meccawy (2010) with a different study level of students (university level) and a study by Jiang (2010) with a different teaching context (China). Accordingly, EFL textbook writers might consider these two observations when they choose the topics and subtopics of EFL textbooks. Apparently, self-response questions might not be enough for EFL textbooks like the case in this study, as discussed earlier, which illustrated how answering these questions depends on many factors, for example teacher and student motivation. Some researchers have disrupted conventional practice of teaching language for instrumental purposes. One such pioneer was Byram (1989;



2014), who believed that foreign language learning should have educational values instead of focusing on improving learner skill sets. Focusing on instrumental purposes of learning English may result in what Adaskou et al. (1990) called “decultured English—the English of hotel and airport, of foreign visitor or business correspondent— [which] is equally remote from the personal experience of most of our learners, and equally beyond the economic reach of the majority of them” (p. 8).

#### **6.2.2.2. Intercultural communication and pedagogical goals**

Teaching cultural content could help students avoid communication failure due to cultural differences. This was a common reason for justifying the choices on the questionnaire. For example, the students had a general interest in communicating with other people in English in their possible interactions with non-Arabic speakers, including intercultural communication, because interacting with cultural items from different sources increased their cultural knowledge, provided them with opportunities to express themselves, and showed them similarities and differences among cultures. It seems that Saudi EFL students and their teachers were in support of achieving the goal of improving students’ intercultural communication, and few of them realized that such a way allows for including contradicting values, such as the inclusion of alcohol for requesting alcohol-free dishes in a restaurant. Saudi EFL teachers in Alfahadi (2012) and Saudi EFL students and their teachers in Meccawy (2010) showed a relatively positive attitude towards improving students’ intercultural communication in every case.

Including cultural items from different cultures into instruction is helpful in achieving some pedagogical goals supported by teachers. For example, most teachers explained that including cultural items from students’ own culture helped them avoid bias and alter stereotypes about their own culture and other cultures. This was suggested as being achievable by focusing on positive elements of each culture, such as politeness issues, ways

of apologizing and thanking, and the Japanese appreciation of work, and maintaining good habits, like walking in many cultures in China, Europe, and ENS cultures. In this way, knowing about different cultures helps students learn to improve themselves and their local society and increases cultural understanding. Seemingly, some teachers supported the need for an alternative way of teaching EFL, as suggested by Michael Byram and Claire Kramersch's sequential studies (as cited in Byram, 2014), such as an educational approach (Gray, 2006) that includes improving students' intercultural communication as a goal of language learning instead of focusing solely on improving English proficiency skills. However, the majority of teachers would like this approach to be an option and not the norm of their teaching. Considering this, switching between the two approaches according to lesson content could be more effective in achieving students' learning goals.

This conclusion might be justified by some reported concerns about the impact of the target culture when compared to the local culture of the students in enhancing students' negative attitudes towards their own culture like being only experts of oil. Some teachers were concerned about the effect of the target culture on the students' identity, which was an argument against linking culture to ELT for a very long time (Byram, 1991). Interestingly, a student mentioned that she preferred to use her own cultural norms of communication in respect to her identity as long as it does not affect mutual understanding in conversations. Another reason is that, for some students, there are little or no opportunities to interact with native English speakers. It seems that there are still some concerns, as referred to in studies by Adaskou et al. (1990) and Alptekin and Alptekin (1984), regarding issues related to the alienating effect of target culture items, fears of the effect of the target culture on the students' own identity, and few chances to meet or contact native English speakers when selecting items from the target culture. In this way, it seems that the focus on the similarities between the local culture and culture X is more appropriate for avoiding drawbacks, which

align with Byram (1997) who recommend foregrounding similarities rather than differences to improve learners' attitudes.

However, this belief was not embraced by all teachers, as some supported including cultural items from the target culture rather than local culture. In addition, a few teachers had pedagogical goals for addressing stereotypes because they thought students need to respect other cultures, and the students themselves indicated that they wished to know more about their culture in English. For example, a stereotype of Saudi Arabians is that everyone exports oil and is rich. Such stereotypes need to be avoided in their intercultural communication. In fact, I did not detect negative stereotypes about other cultures except in an interview with a student who reported that Americans are fools and Britons are traditional and boring. This might be the reason why Byram (1997) and Kramersch (1998) recommended foregrounding stereotypes in English language classes.

The debate about intercultural communication in ELT flourished in the 1980s (Buttjes, 1991). It resulted in adopting the goal of improving students' intercultural communicative competence as part of the CEFR<sup>34</sup> in the 1990s, which was reflected by avoiding issues that hinder successful intercultural communication and eradicating bias in EFL textbooks (Gray, 2006). In fact, including the goal for improving intercultural communication was gradual (see Oriolo & Broadbent, 1991). However, it seems that Europe is more advantaged in this regard.<sup>35</sup> In many European countries, the way was already paved for successfully achieving improvement of intercultural communication (Buttjes, 1991), which is different from many

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<sup>34</sup> The common European framework Reference for the study language “consist [s] of a comprehensive description of levels of language learning.” (Heyworth, 2006, p. 181) (See Heyworth (2006) for further information).

<sup>35</sup> In European countries culture is frequently taught as a separate subject in formal school systems, such as in the Spanish case (Sercu et al., 2004). They teach many languages in schools, while most of the other countries around the world might restrict foreign languages to only English, as was the case in Saudi Arabia before 2019, where Chinese is also currently taught. However, some reported dissatisfaction about the school system focus on the dimension of culture in language teaching, like in New Zealand and Sweden (see Byram, 2014).

EFL teaching contexts around the world, including Saudi Arabia, where neither teaching legislators nor teacher education programs require this may be because they would like to avoid the inclusion of sensitive topics. However, Byram (2014) declared that there was still insufficient understanding of the importance of “intercultural competence and its relationship to linguistic competence” (p. 209), though he believed that, in general, the roles of culture and intercultural communication in language classes has been acknowledged in policies and pedagogical practices.

This study confirmed that improving intercultural communication was not the primary goal of EFL students so that teaching language along culture is marginal. Communication and instrumental purposes of learning English predominated the students’ answers, and intercultural communication may be considered by teachers as recommended or optional and restricted to a minimum.

### **6.2.3. Practical reasons**

It seems that there were some practical reasons that participants chose items from specific cultures. For example, they suggested certain cultures because they were interested in their arts, especially media, daily activities, sports, travel destinations, famous sightseeing spots, and national products, like brands and figures. It seems that the students’ high interest in Arabic countries was because a third of the students were from Arabic countries and/or that students have direct contact with these cultures through shared language, values, history, and geographical boundaries. The sociopolitical situations of some cultures could help students achieve their learning goals, such as the UK’s reputation of quality of high education and New Zealand’s relative affordability, etc. These examples might be considered as nuanced, context-specific examples, that is, restricted to the Saudi context. These practical reasons might be considered as proof of the importance of macro-level teaching, as was stressed by McGrath (2002), Holliday (1994), and Byram and Grundy (2002) who believed

that the “awareness of learners as social actors in specific relationships with the language they are learning, relationships which are determined by the sociopolitical and geopolitical circumstances in which they live” developed greater understanding of the varied nature of learners “as human beings with feelings and identities, which have to be taken into account by those who wish to help them to learn” (p. 193). Canagarajah (1993) and Hall (2012) stressed the importance of understanding the strong connection between the language class, which Hall considered as a sociocultural community, and the sociopolitical forces “The larger social, political, economic, and historical conditions” (Hall, 2012, p. 90), affecting these classes that in turn affected broader society.

#### **6.2.4. Individual differences**

It seems that students’ own personal culture affected their choice of cultural items, their sources, and the ways of presenting and teaching these items. The students differed in their preferred way of teaching and learning. This was because some students declared that they did not enjoy comparing, reflecting, discussing, exploring, and searching for cultural items because such actions were not their preferred way of learning. These students preferred the traditional method of using drills or teaching with the above methods as options. Students and their teachers agreed that such ways could create conflict in the class: they are time-consuming and require extra effort from both teachers and students due to inadequate analytical skills and varying proficiency levels of the students and teaching skills of the instructors. Each way has its pros and cons, and students’ interests should be considered by the teachers to achieve optimum outcomes. EFL textbooks need to be sensitive to the common practice of the teaching methodology in a specific teaching context although this may be difficult due to the multiplicity of contexts (McKay, 2003a; Melliti, 2013; Stapleton, 2000) to provide positive learning experiences to students. Gradual change of the norm of

teaching and learning is recommended (Brown, 2000) without a complete rejection of the traditional methods (Young, 2000).

Although the participants explained that including cultural items from different categories of culture and from different sources could satisfy their learning interests, they emphasized the difficulty of this task due to various personal interests. For example, the sensitivity of the teaching context, domain of study, varied learning goals, gender differences, varied standards of living, and personal characteristics of students and teachers all inform the selection of cultural items. The difficulty of the task of satisfying the different interests of the students might be due in part to the possibility of contradictory personal values, which might affect teachers' and their students' attitudes towards learning about specific items or cultures. For example, some teachers and students disagreed about the inclusion of dancing in their EFL textbook. Another example was that some of the participants showed negative attitudes towards some cultures and cultural items, for example the United States and the arts like music.

As stated in previous sections, it is impossible to find a cultural content that suits all students' interests, as confirmed by many researchers (Allwright, 1981; Tomlinson, 2003; Williams, 1983). Nonetheless, investigating students' interests would definitely provide a clearer picture of what might assist their learning. This might weaken the one-size-fits-all approach of some EFL textbooks entertained by commercial EFL textbooks provided for global market (Gray, 2010b, 2002).

#### **6.2.5. Secondary importance to language improvement**

The common opinion of some of the participants against teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks was that teaching the cultural content was of secondary importance to language accuracy. The holders of that belief considered teaching these items to be unnecessary because teaching of the cultural items could be- in their words- luxurious, a

waste of time, and only one aspect of language learning, as well as because students cannot be taught everything, and this issue is marginal compared with the general weak situation of teaching English in Saudi Arabia, compared to the focus being on language skills. As indicated earlier, the norm of teaching English is to focus on language skills in many teaching contexts (Gray, 2006). However, these beliefs of the teachers contradict those of some pioneers in this field who do not believe that there is a separation between language and culture such as Kramersch (1998) and Byram (1991).

Empirical studies showed the same tendency of EFL teachers to welcome teaching the cultural content but focus on language skills because of their importance to communication. For example, in Gray's (2006) study, the teachers ranked the aesthetic and sociological sense to be of low importance, although they admitted their role in the contextualization of language, but they stressed the importance of the pragmatic and semantic categories of culture because of their direct relevance to improving language. This is contrary to Adaskou et al. (1990), who rejected all the arguments for including items from these categories of culture, such as their role in intercultural communication, motivating the students, and assimilating the language course to the other courses in a school curriculum. This was because they found that communication is the main goal of teaching EFL in Morocco and that this goal by itself undermines the role of the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture, in their opinion.

#### **6.2.6. Dealing with sensitive, controversial topics**

Designing EFL textbooks is a complex matter and has a “formidable nature” (Harwood, 2010, p. 13). One of the issues is dealing with sensitive and controversial topics. The interviewed participants disagreed about the possibility of including elements involving sensitive and controversial topics. Some understood the counterproductivity of including these items. For example, T8, who lacked confidence in the competence and balanced minds

of the other teachers, said, “Some teachers might introduce these issues with the use of stereotypes, and they can teach their biases to their students”. Participants of both groups mentioned that the introduction of some sensitive topics could enhance negative stereotypes about other cultures and biases against them, and the discussion could veer away from its purpose. Thus, few were for applying the neutralization process (including culture-free content) when dealing with sensitive cultural items, for example, “the side effects of wine”. Others believed that learning about controversial topics in some depth could be better tackled outside classes with experts because they considered the value of these topics in engaging the students in classes and/or improving their language proficiency to be low. On the other hand, some teachers and students realised that the media and the Internet are likely to expose students to sensitive topics, regardless of whether Saudi EFL classes address these topics. Some of the participants were open to the inclusion values that contradict those of their own culture because this can play a role in preventing misunderstandings during intercultural communication. This was because “it is their culture”, as justified by S5, and S1 indicated that “this is their language; we should know their own way of talking”. Very few participants thought that recurring items such as swear words could be included in a careful way, for example, when a word is polysemous and one of its meanings is taboo. I believe that referring to this aspect of natural speech is better than the actual inclusion that could be more appropriate to the students, except the students asked for interpretation because taboo language is an underrepresented area in research. T2 summarized the overall attitude towards the way of selecting cultural items by stating that “the cultural items that do not contradict with the local cultural values.” This was because sensitive cultural items could deter students from learning English. Freebairn (2000) indicated that referring to a controversial issue can cause rejection of an EFL textbook, regardless of its strength, and a topic that is taboo in a particular context can be a normal topic in another, as with the case of eating pork in the



Muslim culture (as cited in Harwood, 2010). The current study proves that a topic could be a strictly controversial sensitive topic (such as women driving cars in Saudi Arabia), but it could change over time to be a normal topic (such as how the ban on women driving cars stopped being a sensitive topic in 2018).

As indicated earlier, researchers who referred to the issue of sensitive topics, such as Alfahadi (2012) and Meccawy (2010), showed a relatively positive attitude towards dealing with contradicting values as long as they were clearly presented in the context of the target culture. However, to the best of my knowledge, no empirical study has promoted the inclusion of contradicting values in the teaching context. Researchers and teachers always deal with this issue with caution. For example, Gray (2000) found that when the EFL teachers in Spain were faced with an unfamiliar element, they tried to either “censor” or adapt so as not to deter their students from learning. However, these topics are unavoidable in class (Gray, 2000; Kubota, 2014). For example, T1 was shocked at her student’s answer involving killing, when a student declared that Saddam Hussein was her idol because he killed Shiaa. Another example is that when T5 was faced with the issue of semi-nude pictures in dictionary, he did not recommend that dictionary, etc. It is an issue relevant to the experience of the teachers, as in the case of T5, who indicated that this incident happened when he was at the start of his teaching career. The issue of including contradicting values is also an obstacle for finding appropriate supporting materials, as indicated by some teachers. Moreover, it might be relevant to debate skills and the proficiency level of students and teachers. It also could be affected by the teachers’ management skills. For example, T7 explained that some topics, such as favourite football teams, can cause him to lose control of the class although students’ enthusiasm is not something bad; thus, any topic can cause conflict in class discussions.

The introduction of taboo language that is part of emotional language could be difficult, too, although it is recurring in spoken language. This issue could be dependent on the students' motivation, as stressed by some teachers. According to Liyanage et al. (2015), it is difficult to estimate students' motivation when dealing with the issue of taboo language. It seems that the Saudi secondary school teaching context might not be suitable for adopting the critical pedagogy approach that welcomes the discussion of controversial topics. Akbari (2008) recommended starting with the learners' experiences and stated that after developing their attitudes, controversial topics can be introduced.

Introducing controversial and sensitive topics could be dependent on the teachers' creativity. For example, T7 and T4 used their creativity to attract their students' attention to the issue of polysemy with some taboo words. In this way, they challenged the fact that ready-made published materials can threaten innovation in teaching (Bax, 1997). Some teachers held the belief that adapting the cultural content in a way that satisfies the students "is not their responsibility" because students can learn it better through other resources. According to most of the participants, these elements are not suitable to the formal education and conservativeness of society. They believe that they are "technicians" rather than "educationists", similar to attitudes in many EFL teaching contexts around the world, such as the EFL teachers in Spain in Gray (2000) study, who preferred the focus to be on the language skills and for the material to be free of values.

In fact, the examined EFL textbook series of this study does not include sensitive topics. According to Gray (2002), most EFL textbooks contain similar content with repeated types of topics. This is due to the fact that publishers provide the authors with guidelines that they are obliged to follow.

To summarize, sensitive topics are not suitable to the students' conservative society, their level of study, the context of formal education in general, the students' analytical skills,

and the teachers' and students' proficiency level and cultural competence. Dealing with these topics might be irrelevant to some of the students' learning goals and interests. The preparation and introduction of each topic and the time limit of the lesson are additional factors. Furthermore, the estimated productivity of these topics is unknown.

In fact, it seems that the teachers need a model to follow or specific training, regardless of their experience, when dealing with issues relevant to those discussed above. Generally, there should be an endeavour to make "teacher education programs encourage longer-term productive change" (Bax, 1997, p. 232) because the teacher is an important instrument of change (Khan, 2011). The researcher encouraged ensuring that students' have a positive learning experience without complete exclusion of contradicting values under some conditions as some teachers and students suggested. For example, these topics can be taught in a way that enables students to see through these topics a different cultural point of view (to reach cultural understanding), with a pedagogical teaching purpose that can expand the students' view of other cultures and help them understand the language in a proper way to avoid misunderstandings and communication breakdown.

#### **6.2.7. Challenges relevant to the teaching context**

The participants reported some obstacles in the Saudi EFL teaching context that might hinder the teachers from adopting the suggested ways of teaching the cultural content and raised concerns among the students about the efficiency of applying these methods in the Saudi context. The challenges related to each party are difficult to discuss as discrete because they are intertwined, for example, teachers' competence, proficiency level, cultural knowledge, teaching skills, motivation to adapt, education, and experience. Teachers' training is another example; there were some reported complaints about the training scheme and the compulsory introduction of new methods of assessment with no prior training. The

participants in Alfahadi's (2012) study were also dissatisfied with the insufficient training of Saudi EFL teachers.

Other factors related to the students' competence include analytical skills, proficiency, cultural knowledge, and motivation. This has led them to find other ways to pass the subject, as indicated by T7. In Alfahadi's (2012) study, a teacher indicated that English "has become a subject of "rote memorization" rather than "skillful learning" for Saudi EFL students.

Other challenges were related to the teaching environment; for example, administrative restrictions could hinder the use of cultural items, such as music, and the use of extra supporting materials that supplement the teaching in class. Additionally, the assessment system is an exam-based assessment of what is included in the EFL textbooks and classes. Furthermore, the all-pass policy allows the students to transfer to the next grade when they fail English but pass the Arabic and religion courses. Some interviewed teachers reported concerns about this strategy in Alfahadi's (2012) study. I believe this method needs to be adjusted to avoid creating a huge gap in the students' proficiency levels. In this way, students could graduate based on their actual level of proficiency. The teachers' and some of the students' answers referred to the affordability of the Internet and media that expose the students to the world and other cultures and concepts. However, classes are limited in terms of the possibility to use affordable technology to better teach some of the cultural items and the use of the Internet. Khan (2011) stressed the infrastructure of the school environment as an important factor affecting teaching English in Saudi Arabia. With equipped classes, teachers indicated that they could overcome other obstacles they face, such as the number of the students in classes and the limited lesson time compared to the extensive EFL curriculum. At the time of my data collection, the participants reported that they did not receive the complementary CD of the textbook. This might be a feature of the EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia because even Alfahadi (2012) reported that the textbook itself might not be

available or might be distributed 3 months after the start of the semester. Other barriers were the lack of English teachers, especially competent ones, and the teaching load, etc.

Khan (2011) indicated that the factors that affect English learning are varied, but “the issues which are directly related to pedagogy are of more importance than any other factors” (p. 1256). In this study, the participants criticised the method of imposing the piloting scheme of Traveller series before accrediting Traveller series as the chosen one for EFL courses in secondary schools. This was because their opinions were not considered. They preferred the Oxford series, but because of other reasons, such as the price, they stuck with the Traveller series. Another factor was the method of imposing these series, such as distributing different series in different schools in the same city. They criticised that these series were designed by non-locals, which some considered a weak point. Imposing change is counterproductive, especially when change does not coincide with the prior tentative plan and does not consider the opinions of teachers and their students.

Relevant studies (e.g., Alfahadi (2012) confirmed the claims made by the participants in this study. For example, although Alfahadi (2012) examined different series used before the series examined in this study, the participants in his study indicated that there is a gap between the expected outcomes of the curriculum compared to the reality of the students’ achievements, a point stressed by Faruk (2013). The dissatisfaction with the students’ engagement in the English course, which might echo with other subjects, was stressed by Ahmad and Shah (2014) and Faruk (2014). Other points criticised were the extensive content compared to the number of lessons and the fact that the teachers must strictly cover the curriculum, all units, regardless of the students’ achievement. This policy places the focus on the “excellent” students, while students’ differences are ignored because teachers want to follow the plan (Al-Mohanna, 2010, as cited in Alfahadi, 2012). Alfahadi (2012) explained that teachers' supervisors are obliged to make sure that the teachers are following the plan.

T7 claimed that his administration discourages him that the matter is a mere of “ink and papers” to fill and to accomplish his job. These points were reported in studies such as those of Albedaiwi (2014) and Alfahadi (2012), too. EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia needs to be re-evaluated to overcome the reported complaints. Improving the EFL teaching context is important to provide a solid ground for teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks.

### **6.2.8. Learning and teaching from other resources**

Some participants indicated that the textbook should not be the only way to learn and teach about culture. They suggested including cultural items from the textbook with the use of supporting materials in the class and learning from other resources outside the class. For most students, they wish to learn cultural items from authentic supplementary materials rather than using only their EFL textbook to assist in their learning. For example, they can read famous novels, listen to music, or watch movies and TV shows that can be used in role plays. Teachers also supported the use of short clips from movies, practice outside the class using mobile applications and online video games or searching for information by Googling it as teaching aids in class activities. The teachers explained that affordable technology and the Internet could facilitate the students’ learning of the cultural content because they can attract the students and engage them and because it could overcome the issue of the large number of the students and save the time during the lesson. However, Internet resources are not affordable in schools, nor are the classes equipped to present these materials.

Nevertheless, it seems that the role of affordable technology and Internet for teaching the cultural content to present audiovisual materials is a belief shared by teachers. For example, in Swe’s (2016) study, the teachers were less focused on written materials to teach about culture because they believed audiovisual materials “are more visual for students, thus helping them to understand more easily, encouraging motivation and gaining more attention in lessons” (p. 2). For many researchers, audiovisual materials could offer rich and varied

experience in the language learning/teaching environment (Mukundan, 2010; Tomlinson, 2010a). The participants provided examples of how the use of technology could help in the learning/teaching process, such as the use of mobile applications and social media outside of class to improve autonomous learning and intercultural communication. The teachers and learners also explained how technology supplemented their classes, such as enacting a scene from a movie, warming up with a short 20-minute video, and karaoke performance. According to Evans (2013), this could provoke movement, authentic data, and learners' production. Teachers and students provided some creative ideas, such as the use of rap music to improve listening skills due to the music's quick rhythm, video games to improve reading skills, online social media interaction, etc. Cooker (2010) also pointed to using authentic materials with innovation could reduce the difficulty of authentic materials.

However, some teachers stated that it is difficult to find appropriate extra resources that do not clash with the students' own culture. Liyanage et al. (2015) pointed to the prevalent of this issue in authentic materials. One of the teachers referred to technology illiteracy and was concerned about the lessons turning into technology teaching rather than language teaching. Grimm (2013) suspected the efficiency of integrating technology to teaching English and pointed to the difficulty of this task.

However, in some cases, the teachers might be forced to strictly follow their prescribed EFL textbook and not use extra materials. Furthermore, teachers confirmed that they had to strictly follow the book content due to administration directions, a point confirmed by Albedaiwi (2014) and Alfahadi (2012).

#### **6.2.9. Familiarity issue**

The participants' justifications of their answers and provided examples indicate that the familiarity with cultural items might be considered a facilitative factor for teaching and learning English when these items are included in a selective way, such as when the focus is

on comparing the similarities between the local culture and other cultures (e.g., being a kingdom, like Saudi Arabia, or shared values such as the conservativeness of local society). Another possible method is to focus on including cultural items that reflect the positive side of the other cultures, such as the positive historical impact of the United Kingdom after the Second World War (not the colonial history), the current positive political impact of the United States, or good role models of famous icons in the media. For example, Angelina Jolie assists refugees and Oprah Winfrey's struggles in life did not keep her from being successful. In this way, pedagogical purposes can be taught, and the students' cultural awareness can be increased by raising positive attitudes towards the students' own culture and the other world cultures.

Participants agreed on the effectiveness of maintaining a balance among the different sources of culture. Furthermore, including cultural items from the local culture plays a crucial role at every proficiency level, as emphasized by (Ali & Walker, 2014). Additionally, including the most common items from the various sources of culture helps to reduce preparation times, thus providing more time for the lesson. For example, providing examples from the distinctive semantic would provide more realistic and/or relevant cultural content to the students. Swe (2016) referred to the importance of adapting the cultural content by personalizing themes such as "food" and "cooking" by providing familiar examples such as how to cook biryani instead of roasting a turkey. The other condition for selecting cultural items was to focus on the method of teaching these items rather than the source or the quantity of the items, for example, choosing items relevant to the students' learning goals or exploiting the "universal concepts of human experience as reference points for the interpretation of unfamiliar data" (Alptekin, 1993, p. 142). Adaskou et al. (1990) emphasized that it is not necessarily the source of cultural items that can provide unfamiliar items but the



students' lack of experience with factors such as the culture of hotels, which might be a result of their less advantaged standard of living, for instance.

In fact, the unfamiliar items might need extra effort to be comprehended (Alptekin, 1993) and more preparation time, as opposed to familiar cultural items (from a specific culture, such as American popular culture, local culture, and other world culture). However, familiar items might not necessarily be motivating and thus counterproductive due to being less engaging, as indicated by some of the students when they mentioned that items from the local culture are boring and add nothing to their cultural knowledge. However, some teachers indicated that items from the local culture are discussed in other courses, such as cultural items from Islam. In Gray's (2006) study, some of the teachers underestimated the role of including cultural items from the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture in motivating the students. They explained that there is a convergence between the culture of Spain and the target culture of ENSs, especially that of the United Kingdom, in the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture due to some reasons such as the role of media, commerce, similarities in daily life, etc.

In conclusion, familiar cultural items can serve as bridges to reach understanding about unfamiliar items in order not to create "conflicts in the learner's "fit" as he or she acquires English" (Alptekin, 1993, p.141). This indicates that there is no excuse for omitting these items, and there are alternative ways to adapt these items, as discussed above. However, unfamiliar cultural items should serve a teaching purpose, such as presenting a challenge to the students, and a learning purpose, such as achieving a learning need or engaging students' interest.

#### **6.2.10. Concepts about language**

The participants preferred importing cultural items from the UK rather than from the US because the students and their teachers had some concepts regarding the ownership of the

English language, which were connected to their concepts of standard English. For example, they mostly agreed that the British standard of English is the point of origin for the English language, whereas other native English-speaking countries had English as an official language. This might be a fallacy because in the United Kingdom, other languages are spoken, such as Scottish-Gaelic and Welsh. Jiang (2010) stated that it is difficult “to define British English, because of its varieties” (p. 26). Furthermore, according to him, standard English is not a language but “a variety of language in print, education, radio, television and other public situations” (Jiang, 2010, p. 26). Most participants did not like including linguistic and suprasegmental features of ESL speakers, for example, their accent and vocabulary. They stated that ESL countries are just colonies and including linguistic items from their English could harm students’ acquisition of language. This depends on the students’ target language. In this way, they are still trapped by the fallacy of native speakers and the superiority of the native speaker model of language (as discussed in Chapter 2), and they underestimated the role of the outer circle of the English-language socio-linguistic and linguistic file suggested by Kachru (1992). Some students did not know that there are different standards of English that include Canadian and Australian standards. The British and American English standards are the common standards in ELT (Jiang, 2010). Although the students believe that English is a common language, they might never learn about the debate on the existence of international English, “a variety of English that is generally used and shared by people throughout the world.” (Jiang, 2010, p. 26), such as Chinese English, Indian English, Saudi English, etc. Nevertheless, international English is an arguable matter and an underrepresented area of research (see He & Li, 2009; Jenkins, 2000; Keys & Walker, 2002).

The participants’ concepts should not be completely rejected; for example, the topic of standards of English and the role of English as a common language could be included as a

topic in their EFL textbooks. However, these opinions are opposite to including cultural items from these countries because the participants mostly prefer including common cultural items from different countries with a focus on British, American, and local culture and with no clash with their Islamic beliefs. In this way, they might prefer what Jiang (2010) called “internationally shared culture”, “the variety of culture that the people of the world are sharing, and which have become a part of local culture” (p. 35). He used the example of tea, which is part of international culture and adapted by local cultures; for example, Chinese people never drink milk with tea, whereas people from many other cultures do.

The other concepts the participants held regarding the standards of English might be considered and examined carefully when designing EFL textbooks for a specific culture and taken into consideration when preparing for a lesson and teaching in class. For example, some of the students believed that the British standard is more formal and academic. However, others thought that it might not be favoured because of its relative difficulty related to spelling and accent. Other concepts related to the American standard were that the popularity of the American standard could be an obstacle when teaching a different standard in an EFL class due to accent variation and choices of words. One interviewed student indicated that she already had her own pragmatics when they do not affect understanding. In other words, some students understand that they are speaking a different language with different pragmatics, but they prefer to follow their own cultural communicative norms. However, others welcome using different pragmatics when using English, as reflected in their provided examples on the pragmatic sense. Moreover, there was no consensus on a standard because some preferred to strike a balance with items from different standards, but the focus should be on either the British and the American alone or both. As indicated above, participants did not prefer including any other features of international English, such as the natural interactions between EFL speakers with a native and/or ESL speaker. In addition,

other participants preferred to focus on one standard because they believe that when they learn about one standard of English, they will later learn about another.

### **6.3. Does the actual textbook used (imposed by the MOE), and the associated teaching, involve what the students and teachers want?**

#### **6.3.1. Cultural items & topics**

More than half of the examples provided on the open-ended items of the questionnaire from each group were from the sociological category, whereas the number of examples provided for the aesthetic category was roughly the same as the numbers for the other categories (the semantic and the pragmatic categories). Interestingly, in the study conducted by Lessard-Clouston (1996), the Chinese EFL teachers were taught about culture in an intensive summer program prior to being interviewed. Their answers on their interviews showed that the most commonly learned aspect of culture that they will teach to their middle school students would be the sociological aspect.

The examples provided on the open-ended items on each category of culture of the questionnaire focused on some specific areas. The participants suggested 19 themes (Literary works, arts, history, science, tourism, food, custom and traditions, Education, future goals, leisure activities, sports, social status, Religion: Islam, sensitive topics, systems, language, language in use, good citizenship, intercultural communication). It seems that the scientific, travelling, historical information as well as famous entities were the most frequent categories in the textbooks. This is part of the typical representation of culture in EFL textbooks (Ekawati & Hamdani, 2012). There is a prevalent result that the cultural items and topics related to those elements that were suggested by the participants rarely coincided with their inclusion in their EFL textbooks (see Section 5.1, p.212).

Similar to the outcome of this study, Meccawy (2010) found that most of the categories were quantitatively under-representative. However, the category of places/geography, followed by the categories of customs, traditions, and celebrations; and literature and famous people, were more representative than the other categories. This indicates that EFL textbooks differed on the representation of their included topics.

### **6.3.2. Cultural items & topics: Features of participants' interests**

It seems that the students were interested by both the material culture (surface culture), such as national products, and nonmaterial culture (deep culture), such as rules and systems. Hinkel (2001) indicated that surface and deep culture were both important for EFL learners (as cited in Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). However, most of the cultural items and topics were either not included in Traveller series, there was shallow representation of these items, or there was no representation in a way that interested the students (see Section 5.1, p.212).

Most of the participants indicated that the books include less varied and interesting topics and thus that the book series does not cover most of the students' learning goals. Some of the items were not suitable to the students' stage of study or their age. For example, one question in T1 was about past job experiences but taught to 16-year-olds. Although the book series does not cover all the students' purposes of learning English in an effective way, the books do include an activity about writing a CV and provide examples of people who speak different languages and are applying for a job in a hotel, although the students would like to write a CV for a job at an oil company. According to Gray (2002), the topics used in EFL textbooks are similar because publishers only allow the designers to write about a limited list of topics. However, it is an illusion to think that it is possible to find an EFL textbook that could contain all of the students' interests and needs due to the limited nature of EFL textbooks in doing so (Allwright, 1981; Tomlinson, 2003; Williams, 1983). Hence, adaptation is a possible solution.

Adapting the cultural content is a possible solution for both teachers and students to overcome these limitations, as suggested by many researchers including Hutchinson and Torres (1994), McGrath (2002), and Williams (1983). However, such might not be the best solution for Saudi EFL teachers, as administration restricted the adaptation of EFL textbooks and require the teachers to follow the book sequence (Albedaiwi, 2014; Alfahadi, 2012). According to the teachers, there was no or little attempt to adapt the cultural content because there were no implicit or explicit directions in the students' textbooks, by teachers' supervisors, or in the teacher guides. In fact, some teachers acknowledged that they do not strictly follow the lessons, which my observations confirmed. This also indicates that the teachers were not strictly following the textbook, which is common among teachers, as shown in other studies (e.g., Gray (2000).

In this way, some cultural items were purposely neglected and/or are rarely adapted by the teachers to meet the students' interests, as the participants declared in their interviews and observed in their classes. Gray (2000) indicated that the interviewed teachers in his study adopted these two techniques (censoring and adapting cultural items) when dealing with unfamiliar items. However, Saudi EFL teachers adopted these techniques when dealing with some cultural items because of the potential obstacles of discussing a specific element, such as disagreement, which can create conflict in class. Other items could disengage the students due to their inadequate cultural or linguistic competence and/or the load of preparing a lesson plan for an unfamiliar cultural item. However, some of the items were unnoticed by both teachers and students, especially those relevant to hidden beliefs, macro culture, as observed in one of the classes. Shaules (2007) indicated that these elements are the most challenging part of cultural learning (as cited in Gómez Rodríguez, 2015).

The other feature is that students were interested in cultural items that could be considered sensitive and/or controversial topics in their culture. Examples include elements

from the aesthetic category of culture, such as music and romance novels, and from the sociological sense of culture, such as going to cinema and dance. This finding indicates that there was room for some sensitive cultural items to be included in EFL textbooks when these items were relevant to their interests. Research conducted by Alfahadi (2012) and Meccawy (2010) that tackled the issue of including sensitive topics showed that addressing such subjects in Saudi EFL classes was not strictly rejected by the participants.

The topics and cultural items seemed to vary in their depth. For example, some items were discussed in considerable depth at some places, such as the topic of studying in a language course abroad, whereas other items are discussed in a superficial way in other places, including references to immigration issues or the Second World War. Some deep issues were introduced for pedagogical purposes, such as volunteering to save the environment and endangered animals, but these issues were not requested by the students, who preferred issues like drug use, or by their teachers, who wanted topics that enhance citizenship. The intensity of the cultural content should be based on how important the cultural item or topic is to the students' learning goals. Teachers can overcome this obstacle by adapting the cultural content with supplementation and omission where necessary.

It seems that the sociological category of culture was the one that most reflected the students' interests with respect to their instrumental goals of learning English. For example, the participants provided examples related to getting a scholarship, choosing a major, and hosting family, etc. However, there was an overall lack of nuanced examples for the semantic and pragmatic categories, which might suggest the importance of explicit teaching of elements related to these cultural elements to solve the problem. Teachers educators must equip the teachers with issues relevant to the cultural content of EFL textbooks (Gray, 2006; Jiang, 2010; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015).

It appears from Traveller series' evaluation phase that the cultural content of this series was not sufficient in informing the students with any of the categories of culture in an efficient way. This was due to several reasons, such as that Traveller series frequently deals with cultural items in a neutral way without any reference to a specific culture (e.g., the items from the sociological sense). It seems that dealing with cultural items in a neutral way featured all of the types of EFL textbook according to their cultural content. For example, Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) indicated that neutral topics were prevalent in the localised Iranian ELT textbooks, whereas there were few culturally neutral topics in the international ELT textbooks.

There was dissatisfaction regarding the representation of items from the aesthetic and sociological senses of culture in general, as appeared in the participants' interviews, because there was an avoidance of some items (e.g., music) that interested some of the students. This might result from the fact that the arts were included with caution in the Saudi teaching context as discussed above. The types of leisure activities discussed in the books were mostly irrelevant to the students' lives, unless the students encountered these experiences while living abroad, among other possibilities. In fact, some parts of the book series focused on oddness when providing examples on a familiar topic, such as strange sports, jobs, and cultures. These examples might be included for a specific purpose, like being common in the target culture—for example, bungee jumping is more common in Australia than in the United Kingdom. Yet, such topics do not reflect a real picture about the target culture (Gray, 2000). Another purpose for which the designers might have included such elements was because these topics might add a challenge, attract students' attention, or stimulate discussion. However, it seems that these examples are doing the opposite because they are irrelevant to the students' lives and thus are incomprehensible and disengage the students, as reported by some of the participants. Some participants declared that the



incomprehensible items do not encourage them to search for information about them. For example, T8 believed that the books contained some topics that need extra effort for the teachers to explain but do not offer any advantage to the students' studies, such as a topic about Iceland although this is very subjective to students' preferences. In fact, familiarity with cultural items is proportional and can vary from one student to another depending on various factors, such as the students' lifestyle, cultural background, and experiences encountering these items in life through various means like the media. Additionally, teachers' involvement can affect familiarity with cultural items, like using teaching aids like YouTube or a special teaching style. Besides, a process for adapting EFL textbooks with familiar items can be used to suit the learning purpose because these items could be omitted if they do not serve learning or a teaching goal. Although this may depend on the design of the textbook, some encourage that all units to be used.

Regarding the representation of cultural items from the pragmatic and semantic senses of culture, participants required extra information to expand their knowledge about cultural items. These appendices exist, but they might be ignored by both the teachers and the students (as they indicated in their interviews). Besides that, there was no possibility to search for some items in special websites, audiovisual materials, CDs, etc. It seems that a lack of accompanying supplementary materials would weaken the effectiveness of EFL textbooks as sources of information and serve as a tutor for both the students and their teachers (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Jiang, 2010).

Although no CD was attached, my examination indicated that Traveller series was based on the British standard of English and there was no representation of different British and/or American accents except the standard. Preisler (1999) indicated that English language teaching is mostly based on the British standard of English and Received Pronunciation (as cited in Gray, 2006). This may no longer be true. Another feature is that the examples

included from the pragmatic sense to improve language accuracy, rather than how the use of language could differ from one culture to another; Nguyen (2011) indicated that it seems some conversations include unrealistic examples. In addition to the inclusion of fake characters, with some referred to as A and B in conversations, which might raise authenticity matters. This might threaten authenticity and weaken the understanding of matters related to natural conversation. Cultural items from the pragmatic sense in Traveller series do not show the characteristic of effective pragmatic pedagogy raised by Murray (2012), who suggested designing instructional materials that provide EFL learners with options to select that represent some features of English as a global language of communication and not to be restricted by the standard British English in our evaluation. The book series must be supplemented with audiovisual conversations, which might help the students to understand other conversational items, such as facial expressions, and attract the students' attention, as emphasized by (Mukundan, 2010; Tomlinson, 2010a).

Conversations do not help in showing aspects of a specific culture that might indicate the development of the communicative competence of the students, rather than developing their intercultural communication. Gray (2006) indicated that the dominant paradigm in EFL aims to improve the communicative competence. Improving the grammatical competence was the most disliked feature of the cultural content and came at the expense of other language skills and the cultural items. Improving grammatical competence predominates EFL teaching in Saudi secondary schools. This problem is old in the Saudi EFL teaching context and might not be only a result of the selected book series because even the previous locally produced series had the same problem, as reported by Alfahadi (2012). It seems that improving the intercultural communicative competence was not a goal for the evaluated book series in this study.

Some of the elements related to intercultural communication were included in several

places but mostly not in a sufficient way. For example, less focus was placed on the students' wants with regard to the most frequent questions about Islam. The discussion questions do not use make the teachers mediators between the author and the students' opinions in a dialogic way. In this way, the discussion questions do not extend to discussions of deep thoughts. Indeed, limiting discussions on certain topics is a feature of EFL global textbooks (Gray, 2006). However, teachers need pay attention to the possibility of focusing on not only on improving linguistic competence but also intercultural competence via the activities of the book series, like discussion and role-plays (Jiang, 2010). The activities might not include good examples of "critical incident" activities that are focused on cultural aspects by critically examined an incident. These activities are recommended to enable the students to have successful intercultural communication and reach cultural understanding (Jiang, 2010).

However, Saudi EFL teachers purposely omitted some of these activities, like the discussion questions, as revealed in the participants' interviews and the observed classes. This was because some of the strategies to engage the students faced obstacles related to application. For example, discussions required the teachers to have classroom-management and debate-management skills, and their successful teaching depended on the students' debate and analytical skills. Although the learning of such skills may be an integral part of learning a language. One of the teachers justified this by the students' proficiency levels being too low for discussions, while another teacher cited the lesson's time limits.

The participants acknowledged that the series had a high level of difficulty due to its unrealistic proficiency level required, as compared to the current students' and teachers' levels of proficiency. However, this is not a reason for ignoring the cultural content and focusing on the language accuracy because the students' first language could be used in the students' EFL classes to improve the students ICC as suggested by Tomlinson et al. (2001).

Besides, teachers might lack knowledge of how to use these activities to teach language

along with culture or the experience to do so. In this way, teachers' education is key in informing the teachers about the hidden messages of the cultural content because "a methodology is only effective to the extent that teachers and students are willing to accept and implement it with good faith" (Hu, 2002, p. 102). The fact that the students and their teachers strongly supported the suggested ways of teaching the cultural content in their EFL textbooks and classes, as relevant to the communicative language teaching approach, like using discussions, reflections, and comparing, might suggest that these techniques are culturally appropriate in Saudi Arabia to a great extent, unlike in China, as discussed by Ellis (1996) and Hu (2002).

However, most of the interviewed participants did not prefer these techniques as the norm of teaching. In fact, the teaching norm for other school subjects is a traditional one, so it might be difficult for the students to accept such methods as the norm of teaching. Even in real practice, activities related to the communicative approach were rarely taught due to factors related to the teacher, students, or teaching environment, as discussed earlier. For example, the role-plays, as shown in the observed class were not suitable for the lesson duration or the large number of students.

The examined book series did not enhance cultural understanding. This was because the book series did not address issues related to biases, stereotypes, or generalizations, nor were they addressed by the teachers, in the other courses, and/or in noncurricular activities. These issues might vary widely from individual to individual, making them hard to deal with, and may be sensitive issues (Jiang, 2010). This adds to the difficulty of including this method in EFL textbooks.

Although most of the activities seemed to be suitable for both genders, the book series is biased against the presentation of women. For example, biases against women's representation. This may be because the book is meant to teach both genders and the society

is conservative, so this was a solution. Saudi women might understand this as being a commitment to conservative Saudi culture, but the fact that a lesson in the book series give examples on male scientists who had overcome a kind of disability from many cultures reflects that the designers did not notice the issue of gender bias and the teachers did not have awareness about this issue, nor could the students who attended the observed class provide examples about female scientists. Gray (2002) indicated that “sexism cannot always be avoided” (p. 109). As thus, Gray’s (2002) recommended discussing Sexism issues in the classroom.

The book designers did not include goal of improving intercultural communication in the outlines of the goals before each unit. They also restricted culture to a page at the end of each unit and a dedicated unit in some of the book series. These units represent materialistic culture rather than the deeper culture. According to Byram (1991), such EFL textbooks are the result of a belief in the separation between language and culture. Accordingly, the teachers would teach the pages as “supplementary” and “optional” (Byram, 1991, p. 17) when there is remaining time in the lesson.

The book series contained outdated items like a paragraph about having the World Cup in Qatar in 2020, which has changed. Recentness is integrated with the inclusion of correct information (Kitao & Kitao, 1997). However, the book series could be flexible and be updated in some places. The designers aimed to provide up-to-date cultural content, such as a discussion question on the types of media that interest the students the most. In this way, the lesson content could be updated to include social media.

Another point is that most of the topics were discussed from their past up to their current impact, However, there was no indication that recent printed and/or electronic resources were used, and no bibliography was present to check recentness, which is necessary according to Jiang (2010) as extra information. The participants disagreed among themselves

about the recentness of the cultural content. As a result, some students suggested that the books be updated annually to reduce the topics' monotony and flatness of the topics and that the curriculum be modified to be more interesting and updated. In Alfahadi (2012) study, the participants reported frustration about the outdated cultural items in the previous books series used for Saudi state secondary schools, and they wished that the cultural content would be updated annually. Making the cultural content up to date is a difficult matter (Graves, 2000). However, adaptation through a modernization process, as suggested by McGrath (2013), may partially contribute in resolving this issue. Nevertheless, EFL textbooks designers must make the cultural content as up to date as possible because culture is changing as long as societies are changing and "students need to be as up-to-date as possible so as to prevent problems arising from using English which reflects a dead or outdated culture" (Jiang, 2010, p. 78).

The semantic sense of culture was the lowest in examples and there was little, if any, indication of the different uses of words due to some cultural aspects. However, there was no adequate balance between the included cultural elements from the different categories of culture extracted from Traveller series. The current study did not use quantitative analysis to determine recurring cultural elements under the categories of Adaskou et al. (1990) framework to analyse the selected book series. Besides, this study used fields (categories) to evaluate whether Traveller series' cultural content matched the students' interests and judge whether the examples matched the categories from the books. Both were adopted from a qualitative perspective and numbers were used when necessary. Needless to say, the studies that used Adaskou et al. (1990) framework of culture to evaluate their selected materials either expand or shrink the scope of each category of culture to serve their own purposes, as discussed in chapter 3.

Among the studies that used quantitative analysis to evaluate the representation of the different senses of culture is Rajabi and Ketabi (2012), who concluded that the highest

frequency of cultural items was from the sociological sense, whereas the aesthetic and pragmatic senses received the lowest frequency in an evaluation of four EFL textbooks in Iran. Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017) investigated the representation of only the aesthetic and sociological senses because they believed that these two components are more “culturally laden” than the other senses in dialogues and reading passages of an international series of EFL textbooks and a local EFL textbooks series. They concluded that cultural items from the sociological sense were prevalent in both series. Unlike Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), who investigated the distribution of aesthetic and sociological elements in the reading passages and dialogues of a localised textbook series and an international EFL textbook series (that differed from the one evaluated by Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017) that was commonly used in Iran found that the aesthetic sense was more representative than the sociological sense in the international book series in comparison to the localised series. Rashidi and Meihami (2016) evaluated the cultural content in three different EFL textbook series that were used in the UK, India, and Iran to understand how these elements were distributed in the inner, outer, and expanding circles regarding L1, L2, international, and neutral cultures. The distribution of these elements was different according to the circle where these textbooks were used.

The current study supported the focus on Traveller series was on the pragmatic competence to improve the communicative competence, and that the sociological sense was predominant due to adopting the topical-based EFL textbook type. Moreover, it seems that special editions of global EFL textbooks lack the explicit teaching of intercultural competence improvement that made the communicative competence inadequate. Ahmad and Shah (2014) indicated that a special edition of an international EFL textbook taught at an English institution in a Saudi university lacked the cultural understanding element. Besides, the current study was similar to Meccawy (2010) result, who found that the two textbooks

used to teach general English university students in Saudi Arabia were not considered culture-learning in their EFL classes because their sole focus was on the improvement of the language skills that were largely grammatical in nature. It seems that the focus on the improvement of the linguistic skills, rather than the improvement of the intercultural communication, was a feature of EFL textbooks (Ahmad & Shah, 2014; Gray, 2006).

### **6.3.3. Source of cultural items**

The participants provided examples mostly from cultures around the world: far Asian cultures (e.g., those of Korea, China, and Japan), Arab countries (e.g., Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq) and European countries (e.g., Spain, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany, and Greece), Brazil, Turkey, and classical cultures. Then the target language cultures—basically, American culture more than British culture and, finally, their own culture—Saudi culture more than Islamic culture. It seems that the students had an interest in including cultural items from many cultures around the world that include both their own culture and the target culture. This indicates that they had positive attitudes towards many cultures around the world. Nevertheless, they provided many examples of neutral topics that differed in number across the categories of culture. These results might be an indication of their need of an EFL textbook such as what Gray (2002) called a “glocalised” EFL textbook (i.e., a special edition from the target culture’s international EFL textbook that also featured the use of neutral cultural items).

Moreover, the cultures suggested by the participants do not contradict their own macro-level, which suggests that a commitment to respect for the students’ teaching context, as recommended by many researchers including Holliday (1994) and McGrath (2002), was the opposite of the cultural items and topics that could include cultural items that support their cultural values for certain purposes (e.g., requesting a dish that does not contain wine in



a restaurant). Alfahadi (2012) found that Saudi EFL teachers were open to other cultures in the world, but only those that do not contradict the local culture.

Another remarkable result is that the students prefer the cultural items under all of the categories of culture to be from the target culture, their own culture, other world cultures, and a neutral source with no exception. This reflects the importance of all of the suggested sources of culture under all of the categories of culture towards achieving their learning goals. However, the distribution of these sources under the categories of culture differed in number. For example, neutral topics were prevalent in the sociological sense of culture. The different distribution of cultures under the categories of culture was reflected by the research results of Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017), and Rashidi and Meihami (2016).

In Adaskou et al. (1990) study, the teachers preferred the local culture aspect of EFL textbooks. They sought to restrict the target culture type to the minimum and to primarily focus on the pragmatic sense and, to a lesser extent, the semantic sense. They preferred a hybrid standard of English: The British and the American ones, but not the international English standard introduced by Kachru (1977). Alfahadi (2012) found that the majority of Saudi EFL teachers preferred a mixture of cultures with a focus on British culture and local culture, whereas the North American and culture-free types received the lowest preference, at and, respectively. It seems that EFL teachers globally perceive the United States and UK as the typical cultures. Other cultures played a limited role, as concluded by Sercu, García, and Castro (2004) when they investigated Spanish EFL teachers' perception of the countries in which English is spoken. Further, Jiang (2010) found that the Chinese EFL university students were mostly interested in Great Britain, the United States, China, and world cultures, respectively. Therefore, Jiang (2010) concluded that there is a need to include many cultures in EFL textbooks in China. It seems that these cultures suit their targets for learning English.

#### **6.3.4. Sources: Features of participants' interests**

Traveller series absolutely focused on the culture in the UK and United States because they were produced at a UK publishing house, as noted by many researchers. For example, Adaskou et al. (1990) and Gray (2006) asserted that this was a barrier to adopting different cultures in EFL textbooks. Traveller series also included all of the suggested sources provided by the participants and more, many cultural elements which was confirmed by the authors of Traveller series themselves. Topics were also discussed in a neutral way in many parts of each lesson. It seems that dealing with topics and cultural items in a neutral way, with no reference to a specific culture, is unquestionably a feature of EFL textbooks. This was confirmed in this study, which investigates a special edition of an EFL textbook series that is used in Saudi state schools. Part of Jiang's (2010) study investigated a locally published three-book series taught in universities of China. She found that although the prevalent culture was the American culture, neutral topics were included. Neutralizing EFL textbooks is one of the strategies that is used in both locally produced and international EFL textbooks in Iran, as claimed by Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015). Such a strategy was criticised by many researchers because it could result in language incompetence by reducing the authenticity of the materials and causing a breakdown in intercultural communication (Alptekin, 2002; Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Gray, 2006; Jiang, 2010).

It seems that there was less of a focus on the students' own culture compared to including items from the target culture or items from the other world cultures, though Traveller series was reviewed by local researchers besides the designers (as shown in the later editions of the investigated book series). This might be normal as the designer of Traveller series was not from the local culture. Although most of the activities within Traveller series included discussion questions that elicited the students' self-reflections on their own culture, that might be a technique used by the writers to overcome the obstacle of their lack of

knowledge regarding the students' local culture. It seems that this technique does not go well in application, as the participants of this study confirmed that these questions were mostly ignored. When Meccawy (2010) investigated two EFL textbooks that were special editions for the middle East that were taught in a Saudi university, she found that there was less of a focus on the Islamic and local culture of the students. It seems that it was a common outcome of the studies to evaluate the representation of the local culture in their selected EFL textbooks, which is an underrepresentation of the local culture in many teaching contexts throughout the world. For example, EFL textbooks used in different universities in Saudi Arabia as appeared in Ahmad and Shah (2014) and Meccawy (2010) studies; and EFL textbooks series, both locally and internationally produced for adults in language centres in Iran, as revealed in Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015). The students and their teachers were dissatisfied with regards to including the local culture: both Saudi and Islamic. It seems that the curriculum development unit for EFL textbooks were not successful in satisfying the students and/or their teachers with regards to the representation of the local culture to date, as confirmed by many studies that evaluated some of the Saudi EFL textbooks that were previously used for secondary schools. For example, Al-sowat (2012), and Alharbi (2015), as well as other researchers including as Al-Seghayer (2013), reported complaints about the dominance of the target culture in university-level EFL textbooks.

The other feature is that much of the culture in Traveller series includes shallow representation; for example, referring only to someone who visited a specific city in a sentence in an exercise. Such a prevalent feature of EFL textbooks forced Jiang (2010) to exclude these items in her evaluation of the selected book series. Strangely, some participants reported that a few of the topics were discussed in an unfamiliar context, which caused an alienating effect, disengagement, and added difficulty for the teachers when seeking to familiarise the students with the items from the selected culture. However, Alptekin and

Alptekin (1984) and Adaskou et al. (1990) indicated that the culture included in EFL textbooks might be as alienating as the neutral items, such as English pertaining to a hotel and an airport, because of the students' lack of experience with these social contexts.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the whole thesis and highlights the main findings. It lists some recommendations for further studies and for the process of designing and evaluating EFL textbooks, especially in the Saudi EFL-teaching context. Furthermore, it lists the limitations of the study.

### 7.1. Summary

The major claim of this study is that the cultural content of EFL textbooks need to be decided mainly by its consumers (teachers and their students) in contrast to the top-down process of designing curricula. A prior wants-analysis step sought to achieve this by understanding the students' wants, including their teachers' opinions, regarding how the cultural content of their EFL textbooks used in their English classes can be effective in achieving their English-learning goals. This stage was followed by an evaluative process assessing the current cultural content of EFL textbooks used in EFL classes of state secondary schools, as informed by the results collected from the instruments of the study.

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was adopted to achieve the purpose of the study. Five sequential data collection processes were administered, and each process was informed by the previous ones to triangulate and validate the obtained results. The collection of data started with the distribution of a semi-structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. It was designed with a descriptive framework consisting of three sections: preferred cultural items, sources of these items, and the way of presenting and teaching these items to understand the participants' opinions. The follow-up semi-structured interviews were then conducted with some of the respondents to justify their answers on the questionnaire. A separate unstructured observations task was conducted to understand the way in which the cultural content of the EFL textbooks was taught. After that, a checklist was designed to

conduct a close analysis of the EFL book series based on the participants' reported opinions for their preferred cultural content. A total of 169 subjects returned completed questionnaires. Twenty-nine of them participated in the interviews, and only two teachers participated in the follow-up observation of their EFL classes. Aside from this, the process of EFL textbook analysis and evaluation was applied to six students' Saudi secondary school EFL textbooks Traveller Series. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used. With regard to the quantitative phase, means were used to analyse the participants' answers on the 5-point Likert scale items of the questionnaire and inferential statistics were used to test the differences within and between the students' and their teachers' answers. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data received from the participants' answers on the interviews and the opened-ended questions on the questionnaires. Unstructured field notes were used to record the events observed in the EFL classes to compare the participants' opinions with their actual teaching of the cultural content in their EFL textbooks. The EFL textbooks were evaluated with the use of a checklist with in-depth analysis (close analysis of the books: Researcher view, the participants' opinions in the follow-up interviews, and a non-participant observation task) to understand whether the cultural content of the textbooks meet the students' favoured cultural content of their EFL textbooks. A summary of the results is presented under the main research questions as follows:

**RQ1: What do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia think should be present in their optimal cultural content of their EFL textbook and associated teaching?**

The results showed that the participants had a mostly positive attitude towards importing cultural items from the different categories of culture, which includes the pragmatic, semantic, sociological, and aesthetic categories, as adapted from Adaskou et al. (1990). The fact that the participants provided examples from all the categories confirmed that they have

interest in items from all categories. Both groups of participants considered the Islamic source to be quite important. Overall, the student respondents occupied neutral positions towards these sources of culture, and the teachers occupied somewhat lower ones. Neutral topics were prevalent, but the number of neutral topics differed across categories. The participants indicated that the source of culture is of secondary importance to the cultural item and the method of presenting and teaching these items is of primary importance. The overall means showed a high level of agreement with the suggested ways of presenting and teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks. However, during the interviews the participants disagreed amongst themselves about the possibility of applying the suggested ways for presenting and teaching the cultural content of EFL textbooks.

**RQ2: What reasons do secondary school students and their teachers in Saudi Arabia give for their preferences of the cultural content of textbooks and ways of teaching culture?**

The participants justified activating the cultural content with being able to help the students understand the language in an adequate way and achieve their learning goals. However, they had some concerns regarding the possibility of having an optimal cultural content for the students—for example, the students' individual differences and the familiarity issue accompany the cultural items. In fact, some participants held the belief that teaching cultural content is of secondary importance to improving the language. Also, they justified their choices of a specific culture using practical reasons and their concepts about language.

The participants referred to the counterproductivity of the suggested ways for teaching the cultural content when facing challenges related to applying these ways, such as challenges related to the teaching context, difficulty dealing with sensitive topics, and the issue of the need for learning from other resources. The evaluation phase showed that the book series

focused on improving language accuracy rather than improving intercultural communication. The teachers rarely opted to adapt the cultural content to meet the students' interests, as the participants declared in their interviews and observed in their classes. They purposely deactivated the tasks that had the potential to enhance the improvement of ICC, such as self-response questions. They do so because of the potential obstacles in discussing a specific element, such as disagreement, to avoid creating conflict in class. However, some of the items were unnoticed by both teachers and students, especially those relevant to deep culture as observed in one of the classes. For example, the issue of gender bias was prevalent in the book series as it lacked the representation of females. There were some inadequacies in the presentation of cultural content such as the inclusion of outdated items, the unrealistic choice of the proficiency level of the book series, and the fact that the book series is not supplemented. Sadly, the current EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia does not guarantee neither teachers' creativity in adapting the cultural content of EFL textbooks nor students' ability to try new ways or favoured ways of learning.

**RQ3: Does the actual textbook used (imposed by the MOE), and the associated teaching, involve what the students and teachers want?**

It seems that the students were interested in all the categories of culture. There is a prevalent result that the cultural items and topics which were suggested by the participants rarely coincided with their presentations in EFL textbooks and actual teaching. For example, most of the cultural items and topics were either not included in the book series, were shallowly presented, or were not taught in a way that interested the students. Although the topics included in the book series varied, they do not cover the students' learning goals.

The participants highly requested that a balance be maintained between the sources of culture and the inclusion of a successful selection of the most common, interesting items.



However, they focused both on the target culture (i.e., the United States or the United Kingdom) and their own culture with an adherence to Islamic norms when selecting cultural items. The book series included all of the suggested sources provided by the participants and more. The topics were also discussed in a neutral way in many parts of each lesson. However, there was less of a focus on the students' own culture compared to the inclusion of items from the target culture or items from the other world cultures.

Investigating the opinions of both students and teachers provided some hints about the extent to which teachers understand their students' interests and, thus, are able to modify the cultural content to satisfy these interests. The results showed a slight divergence between the students' and teachers' opinions, which could reflect that the latter group understands what might interest the students and what they need to learn in their EFL classes. Overall, teachers' and students' opinions did not exclude each other, but they were complementary when it came to providing an optimal cultural content that could satisfy the students' interests with regards to the cultural content of EFL textbooks.

To conclude, adapting the cultural content is a possible solution for both teachers and students to overcome their limitations. This highlights the importance of teachers' education and training in raising awareness about issues relevant to the cultural content of EFL textbooks.

## **7.2. Study limitations**

As detailed in the previous sections, the study's instruments and procedures had been piloted and revised by the researcher and supervisor at least once before conducting the main study to test the reliability of these instruments and the efficiency of the procedures. Besides this, parts of the thesis were presented via research groups and in conferences. This can be considered an approximate external audit technique to validate the results, as researchers

from different backgrounds provided feedback on the work (Creswell, 2008). The instruments and procedures were revised against ethical issues and approved by the university of Essex, my home institution, Saudi MOE officials, and gatekeepers in participants' schools. Each participant received an information sheet about the study and signed a consent form. Besides, seeking consent was necessary with some of the students' parents against conducting phone interviews via using their mobile numbers. The translation and clarity of the instructions and the items of the instruments were revised with the help of a colleague and by the participants in Pilot 1 and Pilot 2, a technique that was recommended by Dornyei (2007). Unfortunately, there was no possibility to have another observer to check whether the events had been 100% documented, nor was voice or video recording a possibility in either the interviews or the observations as discussed in Section: 3. 10, p. 130. However, as stated in the previous sections' commitment to the ethics of conducting a research enquiry, respecting the participants' consent to take part in the study is our priority.

The present study has some shortcomings, such as having a small sample size especially in the case of the interviews and the observation tasks, conducting the study in one city in the same region, and restricting the participants to state school students (private school students were not included). This would potentially restrict the ability to generalize the findings to a larger population. The study is additionally limited because it is confined to the evaluation and analysis of the cultural elements extracted from the written texts of Saudi English textbooks and to the analysis of only the student book. The study was also limited for not being able to conduct face-to-face interviews with all of the participants from both genders, especially with the male participants, as no access to their schools was allowed, due to cultural restrictions.

### 9.3. Recommendation for future studies

#### 9.3.1. General recommendations

Much remains to be investigated regarding the analysis and evaluation of cultural content in Saudi English textbooks. Some recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. Other research may have focused more on investigating the issues raised by the results of this study. For example,
  - a. The neutralization of the Saudi customized versions of global textbooks with regards to cultural items from the different senses of culture.
  - b. The possibility of introducing some contradictory cultural items to some conservative teaching contexts, such as music, alcohol, pork, etc., to satisfy the students' learning goals, like ordering from a restaurant and engaging in successful intercultural communication.
  - c. Solving issues related to teaching EFL in general, because it has its own impact on the ways to present and teach the cultural content.
2. Other research may be designed in a way that takes gender differences into consideration because this study did not tackle this issue.
3. A similar study could be conducted with a larger number of participants to yield more generalized findings especially regarding the follow-up interviews and non-participant observations.
4. Other research may be designed in a way that takes into consideration more variables to show the different wants of the students due to different English proficiency level, major, future goals, motivation, and so on.

5. Other research could investigate Saudi EFL students in private schools, different majors in universities, particularly their wants regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks.
6. Other research may investigate EFL students from different regions in Saudi Arabia regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbooks because the different regions may have cultural values, products, and different purposes for learning English.
7. Teachers' books may need further studies to articulate how these books guide the teachers in their teaching of cultural content.

### **9.3.2. Specific recommendations for the Saudi teaching context**

8. Given that the pilot phase for accrediting the proper book series to teach in the general state schools in Saudi Arabia was simply a non-random distribution of three different series either in the same city or around the kingdom, Saudi Arabia may benefit greatly from a national project involving collaboration between experts on EFL materials design and evaluation and EFL local teachers and the participation of students, as this study has recommended. The project could refer to other similar projects, such as the one conducted by the MOE in Namibia and the working project in Oman (see Tomlinson, 2010a).
9. Because data were collected in 2016 and culture is in a state of flux, there may be a need for funded projects to evaluate the selected EFL textbooks on an annual basis with rigorous data collection methods and analyses separate from the MOE to yield a more unbiased investigation.
10. Teachers admitted the need for their participation in the process of designing and evaluating the EFL textbooks being taught; it is recommended that teachers be trained to conduct action research. It must be part of teachers' education and training to share

in the process of evaluating EFL textbooks and adapting the cultural content of EFL textbooks in an effective way to meet their students' wants.

11. It seems that teachers ignored the cultural content and considered it as marginal, because course book design and evaluation and intercultural communication courses were not part of their education. The universities should implement courses in their plans for EFL teachers' education related to the topics of material design and evaluation and intercultural communication.
12. Teachers criticised the training sector and the continuous professional development programs provided by MOE. The training sector should be intense and informed by the results of recent research and seminal work in the field of applied linguistics regarding material design and evaluation with collaborative work with universities.
13. It seems that the problem of not tackling certain issues, such as religion, politics, and other controversial topics, was due to other factors, such as the major context. Conducting interdisciplinary studies might work better in improving the cultural content of EFL textbooks to overcome the sensitivities of a specific teaching context.
14. Understanding the students' preferences regarding the cultural content of their EFL textbook may demand an improvement of the EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia. There might be a need for an optional shift from the EFL to ESL study of English to overcome the challenges of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia, which can include lesson time limits, the large number of students, the varied purposes of learning English, and so on.
15. It is the proper time in the history of Saudi Arabia to revise the avoidance of female representation in EFL textbooks, because Saudi Arabia is witnessing a new dawn that enables women to be independent, and certain topics related to art, such as music, dance, and movies, in formal education in Saudi Arabia. This revision should reflect

the changes the country has been undergoing since 2018 and the growing work of two novel governmental Saudi institutions, the General Entertainment Authority and Ministry of Culture.

16. It is more proper to look for other ways to cultivate a positive impression of the Islamic culture, such as the most frequent questions about Islam not to follow only the typical way of connecting a topic to Islam by referring to related Quranic verses and prophet saying (Hadith).

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# APPENDICES

## 1. MRes (Pilot 1) Instruments

### A- Questionnaire:

#### Questionnaire on Saudi Learners of English Wants With Regards to Their English Textbooks Cultural Content

##### What is Culture?

According to Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990), for teaching a language it is helpful to distinguish between four kinds of cultures. As follows:

*The aesthetic sense* Culture with a capital C: the media, the cinema, music (whether serious or popular) and, above all, literature—...

*The sociological sense* Culture with a small c: the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions...

*The semantic sense* the conceptual system embodied in the language... conditioning all our perceptions and our thought processes. Many semantic areas (e.g., food, clothes, institutions) are culturally distinctive... On the other hand, some more general conceptual areas... time and space relations, emotional states, colours, lexical hyponymy...

*The pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) sense* the background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication:

—the ability to use appropriate exponents of the various communicative functions;

—the ability to use appropriate intonation patterns;

—the ability to conform to norms of politeness, where different from the

learners' culture, including taboo avoidance;

—awareness of conventions governing interpersonal relations—questions of status, obligation, licence, where different from the learners' culture;

—finally, and above all, familiarity with the main rhetorical conventions in different written genres e.g., different types of letters and messages, form-filling, advertisements. (p.3-4)

### Instructions:

On the lines of the definition of culture provided above. Please...

- 1- Circle the number on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important with regard to the statements from (1-5), (7-11), (13-17).
- 2- Elaborate more:
  - On section (A) on statement No. 6.
  - On section (B) on statements No.12.
  - On section (C) on statement No. 18.

Statements	LEAST IMPORTANT		Neutral	MOST IMPORTANT	
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>A. I want my English course-book to include cultural elements from...</b>					
1. the aesthetic sense.					
2. the sociological cultural sense.					
3.the distinctive conceptual semantic sense.					
4. the general conceptual semantic sense.					
5.the pragmatic sense					
6.include other cultural elements. For example, .....					

.....					
<b>B. I want the cultural elements from 1-5 to...</b>					
7.provide me with cultural information on UK and/ or USA as typical or only culture of English-speaking countries.					
8.provide me with cultural information on the major English- speaking countries. For example, Austria, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland.					
9.provide me with cultural information on the countries that use English as a second language. For example, India, Singapore, Philippine, etc.					
10. reflect on my own culture.					
11.reflect on the world cultures.					
12.provide me with cultural information on or reflect on ..... .....					
<b>C. I want the cultural elements from 1-5 to be used in my English textbooks in a way that (helps to)...</b>					
13.avoid sensitive topics or sensitive cultural topics in my own culture. For example, religions, terrorism, and politics, etc.					
14. adopt the view of international understanding and avoid the inclusion of negative stereotypes and other biases towards the cultures different to my own culture.					
15.to compare my own culture and the English culture.					
16.in my possible future visits to an English-speaking country or in my contacts with English native speakers.					
17.the other courses I learn. For example, computer, physics, or geography, etc.					
18-others, ..... .....					

NB\*\*\*If you would like to express yourself more about any item of the questionnaire do not hesitate to contact me to be interviewed.

Thank you so much for your **cooperation** 😊

## **B- Interviews**

Go back to the questionnaire (section A- B-C) filled by the participant. Then, ask the participant to reflect on her answers by mentioning some reasons behind his or her choices and providing some examples. Regarding section C, ask the participant whether she thinks that the points on this section are included in their Saudi English textbook?

## **C- The Checklist Used to Evaluate the Cultural Content of Saudi English Textbooks**

### **The Checklist Content**

#### **Section A: answer with (Yes/No):**

#### **The books included**

1. elements from the aesthetic sense of culture in the books.
2. elements from the socio-cultural sense in the books: for example, social media such as Twitter or Facebook, education, transportation, tourism, and scientists from different disciplines.
3. elements of distinctive conceptual semantic cultural elements in the books. For example, technical vocabulary used in electronic games.
4. elements from the general cultural conceptual semantic sense in the books: for example, common vocabulary used in hotels, restaurants, and airports.
5. cultural elements concerned with the appropriate use of speech in its communicative functions in the books. For example, pragmatic routines in short conversation, elements from slang language, and informal uses of language.

#### **Section B:**

6. The country from where the cultural elements in the books was adopted.

Country		Country	
a	USA.	h	Ancient civilization.
b	UK.	i	Arab countries.
c	Major native English-speaking countries.	j	Gulf countries.
d	Countries that speak English as a second language.	k	China.
e	European countries.	l	Japan.
f	Saudi Arabia.	m	Items from a country in the World not mentioned above.
g	Islamic civilization.		

**Section C: Answer with (Yes) or (No):**

7. The cultural content in the English books avoid the implementation of sensitive topics or sensitive cultural topics in student's own culture.
8. The cultural content in the English books can help the student to adopt an international perspective and to avoid the inclusion of negative stereotypes and other biases against cultures different from his or her own.
9. The cultural content in English books in a way that would make the student able to compare his or her own culture and the English native-speaking cultures.
10. The cultural content in English books could facilitates future visits or possible contact with English native speakers.
11. The cultural content in English books would help students in their other courses.



12. The cultural content in English books would help the students to avoid situations that could cause misunderstandings in their cross- cultural communication.
13. The cultural content in the English books would help students to create a positive impression of Islamic culture for others.
14. The cultural content in the English books could help the students to achieve high scores on the international English proficiency tests.

**2. Observation Protocol (Field notes): Pilot 2**

**Field notes for non-participant observation**

- a- Date\ Day: \_\_\_\_\_
- b- Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
- c- Unit: \_\_\_\_\_
- d- Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_
- e- School: \_\_\_\_\_

a- Does the lesson include cultural items from the senses of culture? Put ( ×/√)  
 b- What are they?

- 1- Aesthetic:-----
- 2- Sociological:-----
- 3- Semantic: distinctive:-----
- 4- Semantic: general:-----
- 5- Pragmatic:-----

c- What are the sources of these cultural items? Circle from the options listed below:  
 d- Did the teacher used extra materials or use extra tasks : (Yes/ No)

<p><u>Cultures:</u></p> <p>UK, USA, KSA, Islamic, Other ENS countries, SLE speakers, World cultures</p> <p><u>Others:</u> -----                  -----                  -----                  -----</p>	<p><u>Extras:</u></p> <p>YouTube videos, short movies, tasks-----                  -----                  -----                  -----</p>
--	--

e- How does the teacher teach the cultural content in this English lesson? (Yes/ No).  
 f- Comment on each point:

- The teacher:
  - 1- uses updated, familiar, relevant topics (Yes/ No)-----  
 -----  
 -----
  - 2- avoids sensitive topics (Yes/ No) -----  
 -----



### 3. Main Study- Pilot 2: Background Questionnaire

#### 3.1. Students: Background Questionnaire

- 1) Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex: Please circle – MALE - FEMALE
3. Town /City: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your grade in your English course this year: please mark the correct answer.  
\_\_Fail Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Very good \_\_Excellent
6. What are your reasons for studying English?

---

---

### 3.2. Teachers: Background Questionnaire

- 1- Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2- Sex: Please circle – MALE - FEMALE
- 3- Town/city: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4- Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5- qualification:
  - Degree \_\_\_\_\_ awarded institution \_\_\_\_\_
  - Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 6- Your experience in teaching English:
  - Years \_\_\_\_\_
- 7- Job title: Please circle- teacher - supervisor

## 4. Main study & Pilot 2: Questionnaire

### 4.1. Questionnaire

#### A questionnaire on EFL Secondary School Students' Interests With Regards to Their EFL Textbooks' Cultural Content

**Dear participant:** this questionnaire allows you to express your opinion about your interests with regard to the cultural content of your English textbook. This questionnaire consists of four sections. Please attempt all the sections.

#### What is Culture?

Culture has many definitions. In this study, it is defined according to Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990). They claimed that when teaching a language, it is helpful to distinguish between four senses of culture. These are the aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic senses (p.3-4): cultural information about the arts, way of life, and how the words and their concepts relate to a particular way of life for any given group of Native English speakers, as well as appropriate usage of language in different contexts. (Gray, 2010, p.34-35).

#### Section A:

##### *Instructions*

**This section aims to understand how important these cultural items are to satisfy your interests.**

- 1- Please,** mark a number in the columns beside the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important, 3 being neutral and 5 being the most important.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
<b>D- I think the cultural elements of my English textbook need to include cultural elements from ...</b>	Not Important	Least Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important
1. The aesthetic cultural sense of English culture (information about the arts regarding native speakers of English). For example, literature, poetry, media, theatre, cinema, and music.					
2. The sociological cultural sense of English culture (cultural information about the everyday life of native English speakers). For example, the nature of home life, work, customs, social relations, and leisure activities like dancing.					
3. The distinctive semantic cultural sense of English culture (how words refer to a particular group of a specific culture). For example, food, clothes, and institutions are culturally distinctive in their relationship to a particular way of life for native English speakers, just as Oxford and Cambridge University are British institutions and not distinctive cultural facets of American culture.					
4. The general conceptual semantic cultural sense of English culture (how words and their concepts shared by a specific culture and perceived differently by another). For example, words and their concepts might be perceived differently by a particular group of people. For example, to a biologist, a cell is the smallest part of a living creature, while for a lawyer it is part of a prison. Also, different English-speaking cultures have different words for the same entity, for example 'car' in British English may become automobile in American English. There are also words like 'candy,' and 'sweet' that have different meanings, as well as concepts that have					

different words, such as pavement and sidewalk.					
5. The pragmatic sense of English culture (the cultural elements of English culture that are concerned with the appropriate use of speech in specific communicative functions or conversational situations. For example, the appropriate expressions for thanking, complaining, apologizing, the degrees of formality, and politeness courtesy issues when different from the learners' culture, including taboo avoidance. The pragmatic sense also includes the rhetorical conventions in different written genres, for example, different types of letters and advertisements.					

### **Section B:**

#### *Instructions*

**This section aims to understand the importance you attach to the inclusion of cultural items included in statements (1-5) from different countries: English native culture only, your own culture and/or other cultures mentioned in statements (6-12).**

- 1- Please, mark the number in the right columns on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important, 3 being neutral and 5 being the most important with regard to the statements from (6-12).
- 2- Provide some examples on statement No.12.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
<b>A. I think the cultural content of my English Textbook need to be imported from the ...</b>	Not Importa	Least Importa	Neutral	Importa	Most Importa
6. UK					
7. USA					
8. Other major English- speaking countries. For example, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland (Regarding Eire: as Southern Ireland;					



Northern Ireland is part of the UK).					
9. The countries that use English as a second language. For example, India, Singapore, the Philippines, etc.					
10. My own culture. i.e., Saudi Arabia.					
11. Islamic civilization.					
12. Other world cultures.					
- Please specify, I prefer world cultures such as.....					

### Section C:

#### *Instructions*

**This section aims to understand what topics or cultural items you are interested in and would be helpful in learning English effectively.**

- 1- Please, follow the example I provided you with. \*
- 2- Provide some examples of cultural items and topics and indicate the country or culture of this item.

<b>E- Can you provide some examples for topics or cultural items from (1-5) you are interested in to be included in your English textbook and from where to be imported if possible?</b>	
<b>Examples of cultural items or topics</b>	<b>Source culture</b>
* social media such as Twitter or Facebook.	*USA, Saudi Arabia
*scientists from different disciplines	*All cultures around the world
*technical vocabulary used in electronic games	*US
*Pragmatic uses: idioms, and slang language.	*UK

**Section D:*****Instructions***

Express your opinion on the following statements concerned with the representation of cultural content in your English textbook, or how the cultural elements in your English textbook should be taught.

- 1- Mark **ONLY ONE** of the terms on the right columns (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) beside statement (13-25).
- 2- Give some examples of other ways of treating the cultural content of the students' English textbook on item No. 25.

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can motivate me by the inclusion of updated, and familiar cultural items within relevant topics to my own interests.					
14- The cultural content of my English textbook should avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics in my own culture. For example, religions, terrorism, recent public social or political events like 2030 vision and disabilities.					
15- The cultural content of my English textbook should avoid the inclusion of some topics from the English culture that contradict with my culture as taboo language, drinking alcohol, eating pork, etc.					
16- The cultural content of my English textbook should adopt a view of cultural understanding and avoid the inclusion of negative stereotypes and					

other biases towards different cultures.					
17- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that allow me to compare my own culture with English culture, reflect on, discuss, explore and research some cultural items of English culture.					
18- The cultural content of my English textbooks should be taught in a way that allows me to compare my own culture with other cultures, reflect on, discuss, explore and search some cultural items of other cultures rather than English culture.					
19- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can help me in my possible future visits to an English-speaking country or in my contacts with English native speakers.					
20- The cultural content of my English textbooks should be taught in a way that can help me in my possible future visits to countries that use English as a lingua franca or in my contacts with people who speak a different language from my own via English.					
21- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can help me in my other courses I learn, like computers, physics, or geography, etc.					
22- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can help me in avoiding situations that could cause misunderstandings in my cross-cultural communication by developing my intercultural communication skills and supporting my cultural awareness.					
23- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can help me in creating a positive impression of the Islamic culture for others.					
24- The cultural content of my English textbook should be taught in a way that can help me in achieving high scores on the international English proficiency tests.					

- The cultural content of my English textbooks should be taught in a way that can help me in (please, specify)

.....

.....

.....

Thank you so much for your **cooperation** 😊

NB\*\*\*If you would like to participate in the follow up interview for this study, do not hesitate to contact me to be interviewed.

**Adam\_al\_adam@hotmail.com- Maryam**

First name: .....

Class: .....

Section: Art/ Scientific.

Tel No.: .....

E-mail.....

School: .....

## 4.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

### A questionnaire on EFL Secondary School Students' Interests With Regards to Their EFL Textbooks' Cultural Content

**Dear participant:** this questionnaire allows you to express your opinion about your students' interests with regard to the cultural content of their English textbook. This questionnaire consists of four sections. Please attempt all the sections.

#### What is Culture?

Culture has many definitions. In this study, it is defined according to Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990). They claimed that when teaching a language, it is helpful to distinguish between four senses of culture. These are the aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic senses (p.3-4): cultural information about the arts, way of life, and how the words and their concepts relate to a particular way of life for any given group of Native English speakers, as well as appropriate usage of language in different contexts. (Gray, 2010, p.34-35).

#### Section A:

##### *Instructions*

**This section aims to understand how important these cultural items are to satisfy your students' interests.**

- 1- **Please**, mark a number in the columns beside the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important, 3 being neutral and 5 being the most important.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
<b>A- I think the cultural elements of English textbook need to include cultural elements from ...</b>	Important Not	Least Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important
1. The aesthetic cultural sense of English culture (information about the arts regarding native speakers of English). For example, literature, poetry, media, theatre, cinema, and music.					
2. The sociological cultural sense of English culture (cultural information about the everyday life of native English speakers). For example, the nature of home life, work, customs, social relations, and leisure activities like dancing.					
3. The distinctive semantic cultural sense of English culture (how words refer to a particular group of a specific culture). For example, food, clothes, and institutions are culturally distinctive in their relationship to a particular way of life for native English speakers, just as Oxford and Cambridge University are British institutions and not distinctive cultural facets of American culture.					
4. The general conceptual semantic cultural sense of English culture (how words and their concepts shared by a specific culture and perceived differently by another). For example, words and their concepts might be perceived differently by a particular group of people. For example, to a biologist, a cell is the smallest part of a living creature, while for a lawyer it is part of a prison. Also, different English-speaking cultures have different words for the same entity, for example 'car' in British English may become automobile in American English. There are also words like 'candy,' and 'sweet' that have different meanings, as well as concepts that have different words, such as pavement and sidewalk.					
5. The pragmatic sense of English culture (the cultural elements of English culture that are					

concerned with the appropriate use of speech in specific communicative functions or conversational situations. For example, the appropriate expressions for thanking, complaining, apologizing, the degrees of formality, and politeness courtesy issues when different from the learners' culture, including taboo avoidance. The pragmatic sense also includes the rhetorical conventions in different written genres, for example, different types of letters and advertisements.					
--	--	--	--	--	--

**Section B:***Instructions*

**This section aims to understand the importance you attach to the inclusion of cultural items included in statements (1-5) from different countries: English native culture only, your students' own culture and/or other cultures mentioned in statements (6-12).**

- 1- **Please**, mark the number in the right columns on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important, 3 being neutral and 5 being the most important with regard to the statements from (6-12).
- 2- Provide some examples on statement No.12.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
<b>B. I think the cultural content of English Textbook need to be imported from the ...</b>	Importa Not	Importa Least	Neutral	Importa	Importa Most
6. UK					
7. USA					
8. Other major English- speaking countries. For example, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland (Regarding Eire: as Southern Ireland; Northern Ireland is part of the UK).					
9. The countries that use English as a second language. For example, India, Singapore, the Philippines, etc.					

10. My own culture. i.e., Saudi Arabia.					
11. Islamic civilization.					
12. Other world cultures.					
- Please specify, I prefer world cultures such as.....					

### **Section C:**

#### ***Instructions***

**This section aims to understand what topics or cultural items your students' are interested in and would be helpful in learning English effectively.**

1. Please, follow the example I provided you with. \*
2. Provide some examples of cultural items and topics and indicate the country or culture of this item.

<b>F- Can you provide some examples for topics or cultural items from (1-5) your students' are interested in to be included in their English textbook and from where these items to be imported if possible?</b>	
<b>Examples of cultural items or topics</b>	<b>Source culture</b>
* social media such as Twitter or Facebook.	*USA, Saudi Arabia
*scientists from different disciplines	*All cultures around the world
*technical vocabulary used in electronic games	*US
*Pragmatic uses: idioms, and slang language.	*UK



**Section D:*****Instructions***

Express your opinion on the following statements concerned with the representation of cultural content in English textbook, or how the cultural elements in English textbook should be taught to satisfy your students' interests.

- 1- Mark **ONLY ONE** of the terms on the right columns (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) beside statement (13-25).
- 2- Give some examples of other ways of treating the cultural content of the students' English textbook on item No. 25.

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can motivate my students by the inclusion of updated, and familiar cultural items within relevant topics to my own interests.					
14- The cultural content of English textbook should avoid the inclusion of sensitive or controversial cultural topics in my students' own culture. For example, religions, terrorism, recent public social or political events like 2030 vision and disabilities.					
15- The cultural content of English textbook should avoid the inclusion of some topics from the English culture that contradict with my students' own culture as taboo language, drinking alcohol, eating pork, etc.					
16- The cultural content of English textbook should adopt a view of cultural understanding and avoid the					

inclusion of negative stereotypes and other biases towards different cultures.					
17- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that allow my students to compare their own culture with English culture, reflect on, discuss, explore and research some cultural items of English culture.					
18- The cultural content of English textbooks should be taught in a way that allows my students to compare their own culture with other cultures, reflect on, discuss, explore and search some cultural items of other cultures rather than English culture.					
19- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can help my students in their possible future visits to an English-speaking country or in their contacts with English native speakers.					
20- The cultural content of English textbooks should be taught in a way that can help my students in their possible future visits to countries that use English as a lingua franca or in their contacts with people who speak a different language from their own via English.					
21- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can help my students in their other courses they learn, like computers, physics, or geography, etc.					
22- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can help my students in avoiding situations that could cause misunderstandings in their cross-cultural communication by developing their intercultural communication skills and supporting their cultural awareness.					
23- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can help my students in creating a positive impression of the Islamic culture for others.					
24- The cultural content of English textbook should be taught in a way that can help my students in achieving high scores on their					

international English proficiency tests.					
- The cultural content of English textbooks should be taught in a way that can help my students in (please, specify) ..... ..... .....					

Thank you so much for your **cooperation** ☺

NB\*\*\*If you would like to participate in the follow up interview for this study, do not hesitate to contact me to be interviewed.  
**Adam\_al\_adam@hotmail.com- Maryam**

First name: .....  
Tel No.: .....  
E-mail.....  
School: .....

### **5. Semi-Structured Interview Scale**

- 1) Go back to the questionnaire (section A- B-C-D) filled by the participant. Then, ask the participant to reflect on his/her answers by mentioning some reasons behind his or her choices and providing some examples. Regarding section D, ask the participant whether he or she thinks that the points on this section are included if not how can we achieve these points in a Saudi English textbook?
  
- 2) Any other comments related to the points discussed or answered in the questionnaires.

## 6. The Checklist

### Section 1: Cultural items and topics

A- How and to what extent are the participants' categories represented?

(Researcher view via close analysis process)

Literary works/ arts/ history/ science/ tourism/ food/ custom and traditions/ Education/ future goals/ leisure activities/ sports/ social status/  
Religion: Islam/ sensitive topics/ systems/ language/ language in use/ citizenship/ intercultural communication.

B- How do you evaluate the representation of the different senses of culture (aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic senses) from Adaskou et al.'s (1990) definition from your close analysis of the book series by referring to your answer in question 1? (Researcher view via close analysis process & follow-up interviews).

### Section 2: Sources of cultural items

A: Mark the categories of the sources with (√) or (×) according to their availability in the book series and how frequent each major category was. (Researcher view via close analysis process & follow-up interviews).

<b>World culture</b>	Europe	Far Asia	Brazil	Africa	Turkey	Arab Countries	Classical Cultures
<b>Neutral</b>							
<b>Target culture</b>	UK	US	Other ENS	ESL			
<b>Local culture</b>	Saudi	Islamic					

B- How do you evaluate the sources of the book series including, if any, the neutralization process by referring to your answer in question 2: A?

(Researcher's view via close analysis process & follow-up interviews).

Section 3: Ways to present cultural items from EFL textbooks and the actual teaching of the cultural content in English class:


- How do you evaluate the presentation of the cultural content and actual teaching?  
(Researcher's view via close analysis process & follow-up interviews from a-h; observation only: i)
- a- Topics: varied, up to date, relevant to the student's life
- b- Cultural understanding
- c- Use of discussion, reflection, and comparison methods
- d- Avoiding situations of misunderstanding
- e- Positive impression of Islam
- f- Travelling
- g- Relating to other courses
- h- International tests
- i- Teaching the cultural content: - Stick to the book content. - Use extra materials, and what types? (Observation only)

## 7. Description of the categories on the checklist

The description of the categories to analyse the cultural content of secondary school Saudi EFL textbooks was as follows:

- 1- **Literary works:** Novels- stories-poetry- biographies- magazines- plays.
- 2- **Arts:** Cartoons- exhibitions and museums- crafts and potteries- movies-TV series and programs- dancing- social media- photography- drawing- music.
- 3- **History:** World Wars- victories of the Islamic empire- Islamic empires- history of KSA- history of classical cultures.
- 4- **Science:** health- space- technology- innovations- advancement in science in countries- biology and plants
- 5- **Tourism:** sight- seeing- travelling tips- favorite destinations.
- 6- **Food:** different cuisines- restaurants
- 7- **Custom and traditions:** festivals- habits
- 8- **Education:** formal/ informal education- study abroad.
- 9- **Future goals:** preparation for finding a job- making a family
- 10- **leisure activities:** video games- shopping- using social media- watching TV- fashion- gym.
- 11- **Sports:** football match-karate- table tennis- swimming- mountain climbing.
- 12- **Social status:** marriage- standard of living
- 13- **Religion- Islam:** Islamic rituals, prohibitions, balanced view about others- most frequent asked questions- Qur'anic verses- image of Islam in the media.
- 14- **Sensitive topics:** Women driving cars- ailments: HIV- breast cancer- illegal drugs- Taboo language.
- 15- **Systems:** traffic- juridical system- army.
- 16- **Citizenship:** important current topics in Saudi: Saudi 2030 vision- Saudi operations in Yemen.
- 17- **language:** Proper nouns- loan words- English standards- and dialects.
- 18- **Language in use:** Degree of formality in languages: formal Vs informal language (slang, accent, idioms)- implied meaning, speech acts, Manner in conversation: politeness, gestures, use of humour, and accents.
- 19- **Intercultural communication:** stereotypes, biases and racism.

## 8. Ethical Approval

 University of Essex

August 5, 2015

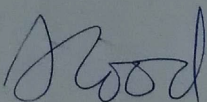
To whom it may concern,

This is to confirm that Maryam Rabah R Alrashidi (██████████) is a PhD student (Registration number: ██████████) in her second year at the language and linguistics department of the university of Essex. She is a sponsored student by the Saudi Cultural Bureau (No. ██████████). Her topic is 'Towards an appropriate Cultural content of EFL Textbooks: The case of Saudi Secondary School EFL textbooks'. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks according to the Saudi students' needs and interests.

Her request for collecting data is approved and she is ready to collect data. She is in need to collect data at Saudi secondary schools. She is expected to spend a maximum of two months to distribute questionnaires, and conduct a follow-up interviews and a non-participant observation (only the female participants). The informants of the study are third year Saudi Secondary school students, and/or preparatory year students at the university, Saudi English teachers who teach English to secondary school students or teach English to preparatory year students and/or supervisors both females and males. The minimum number of participants is 40 participants in each group. The expected start date is 18/9/2016 and the expected end date is 18/11/2016.

NB: Her approved proposal and her instruments of study are attached.

Sincerely,






Dr. Julian Good  
██████████

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التاريخ : ٢٢ / ٣ / ١٤٣٨ هـ  
المشروعات : -



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التعليم

٢٨٠

الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية  
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

PD

القيمة: المواطنة - الإنجاز - العدل - العمل بروح الفريق - التنمية الذاتية - المسؤولية الاجتماعية	الرسالة: تقديم خدمات تدريبية وتعليمية ذات جودة عالية وفق معايير عالمية بمشاركة مجتمعية	الرؤية: الريادة لبناء جيل مبدع
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### إلى من يهمه الأمر

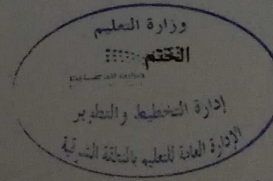
الاسم:	مريم بنت رباح راشد الرشيد
السجل المدني:	[REDACTED]
الجهة التي يعمل / يدرس بها:	طالبة الدراسات العليا لمرحلة الدكتوراه بجامعة اسكس بالمملكة المتحدة
الهاتف:	[REDACTED]
عنوان الدراسة:	(نحو محتوى ثقافي مناسب لكتب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية: دراسة تحليلية للكتب المدرسية للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية الخاصة بالطلاب السعوديين للمرحلة الثانوية)
أداة الدراسة:	استبانة و مقابلة
العينة:	مدرسي/ مشرفات - معلمي/ معلمات - طلاب/ طالبات (المرحلة الثانوية)

تفيد الإدارة العامة للتعليم بالمنطقة الشرقية بأن المذكورة/ مريم بنت رباح بن راشد الرشيد ، قد أتمت إجراءات تسهيل مهمة الباحث لدى إدارة التخطيط والتطوير. وبناءً على طلبها أعطيت هذه الإفادة.

مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

نعيمة بنت سالم السعدي

[Signature]



[Signature]

## **INTRODUCTION:**

I am in the second year of my PhD research, which aims to gain some insights into the appropriate cultural content of Saudi English Textbooks in order for you to achieve your English learning goals. I hope to do this by exploring your needs and what you are interested in regarding the cultural elements that you think should be included in your English textbooks.

You may answer in English or Arabic, and please feel free to ask for help. There are two questionnaires attached. Please attempt to answer all parts with all the items included.

### **Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form**

**Project:** Towards an Appropriate Cultural Content of EFL Textbooks: The Case of Saudi Secondary School EFL Textbooks.

**Dear Participant,**

You are invited to participate in a PhD study. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The researcher is preparing her PhD in the department of Language and Linguistics at Essex University. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the cultural content of Saudi EFL textbooks according to the Saudi students' needs and interests.

Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate, or to withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire that will take 15- 20 minutes, either in person or via the links below:

Students:

**<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/StuQMai>**

Teachers:

**<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TeachQM>**

If you provide a telephone number or your email address, you may also be asked to participate in a short audio-recorded retrospective interview lasting 20-30 minutes, and/or to be observed in class.

The work will be for academic purposes only. The information obtained from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings and conferences. Your anonymity and confidentiality are assured, and no identifying information will be used when presenting the results. Should direct quotes be used, these will not be identified by name in order to ensure confidentiality. If you are willing to participate in this research study, please sign the attached form and return it to the researcher by hand. Keep a copy for your records as verification of your participation.

**Informed consent form**

I have read and understood the information on the form and thereby consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand my responses are completely confidential.

E-mail : .....

Mobile number: .....

Date: .....Signature:.....

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature, purpose, potential benefits, and risks associated with participating in this research study. I have answered any questions that have been asked and have witnessed the above signature.

**Researcher's e-mail:**

**Date: .....Researcher's signature:**

## 9. Open-Ended Items: Completion Rate

Appendix:9-A: Table 1

*Open-ended Questions Response rate for Teachers*

Questionnaire Section	No. of respondent	Response Rate
Examples on world cultures	13	28.89 %
Examples on topics and the cultures of the suggested topics	23	51.11%
Examples on the treatment of the cultural items	26	57.78%

Appendix:9-B: Table 2

*Open-ended Items Response Rate for Students*

Open-ended Item	No. of Respondent	Response Rate
Learning purposes	143	94.70%
Examples on world cultures	56	37.09 %
Examples on topics and the cultures of the suggested topics	93	61.59 %
Examples on the treatment of the cultural items	83	54.97

## 10. Samples

Please contact me at adam\_al\_adam@hotmail.com if you need the entire transcripts or if you require any further clarification.

### 10.1. Students' Interviews Sample

#### Interview S3

#### **CULTURAL ELEMENTS:**

##### *Item No.1: Aesthetic C*

50% I support the inclusion of the arts in my book if I will benefit from but if it contradicts with my own values I do not think it will be beneficial.

##### *Item No.2: Sociological C*

(4) it will benefit me when it does not contain items that contradicts with my own values

##### *Item No.3: Distinctive semantic C*

(4) it will be beneficial to learn them with a certain amount

##### *Item No.4: General semantic C*

(4) I think the best is to be provided with everything. I think it is better to have more items from the British standard of English.

##### *Item No. 5: Pragmatic C*

(4) I prefer also to speak in these situations in my own way even in my language. If this person understands me when I translate these items in his own language, why I do not have to talk to them in my own way. Because they have to know that I am connected to my own culture and I can spread my own culture and I respect my own culture and their own culture.

#### **SOURCES OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS**

##### *Item No.6: UK*

(5) I prefer the British English because it is the source of English unlike the American because it has more languages than English.

##### *Item No.7: USA*

(5) the American English is more popular, and people used more frequently than the British English.

##### *Item No.8: Other ENS countries*

(5) because it is interesting to know what they have or what they are different with a combination of cultural items of all of these countries is important.

***Item No.9: ESL speaking countries***

(2) it is of less important. I think these items are not going to be interesting.

***Item No.10: Islamic Culture***

(5) surely, I have to learn about my own culture in English.

***Item No.11: Saudi Culture***

(5) when people come to study in our country they have to learn about us. We export oil this is what people know about us. So, it has to teach more about us. And when one of us went to English native speaking countries as a student she will be able to spread our culture.

***Item No. 12: World Cultures***

(5) yes, it is important specially the Asian countries.

***Item No. C: EX. Topics***

Speaks about the culture of English briefly what are the rules exactly. Modifying accent, improving writing in a simple way or in brief, how to write neat and organized paragraph. Know pronunciation and vocabulary. Make- up, mobile, the general and popular interests of our youth. Girls in restaurants do not know how to order they say ‘*Wahid* burger’

**TREATMENT OF CULTURE IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AND ENGLISH CLASSES**

***Item No.13: Motivation and Topics***

(4) Few topics are updated

***Item No.14: Sensitive Topics: Saudi Culture***

(4) To add the vision of 2030, to benefit our country and economy.

***Item No.15: Sensitive Topics: Western Culture***

(5) I do not like to include these items- this might enlighten their minds.

***Item No.16: Cultural Understanding: biases and stereotypes avoidance***

(4) Yes, these are interesting topics

***Item No.17: CIC-CLA: Saudi Culture Vs. NESs Culture***

(4) the book contains few topics that can develop this area. It is mostly grammar and no conversation.

***Item No.18: CIC-CLA: Saudi Culture Vs. World NNEs Culture***

(5) Similarly, the book contains few topics that can develop this area. It is mostly grammar and no conversation.

***Item No.19: Future Visits: NESs Cs & contact with NESs.***

(5) lessons as if you open an Arabic book how to help yourself.

***Item No.20: Future Visits: NNEs Cs & contact with Ss of ESL or EFL.***

(5) Similarly, the book contains few topics that can develop this area. It is mostly grammar and no conversation.

***Item No.21: Other courses***

(5) Yes, I would like the book to help me in the other items.

***Item No.22: Avoidance of the situations that might cause misunderstanding in ICC.***

(5) It has to be activated

***Item No. 23: Positive Impression IC***

(5) there is nothing about religion, but I do not think it should be mentioned in the curriculum no more or less.

***Item No.24: International E Proficiency Tests***

(5) even the teachers do not mention or introduced these tests. I do not even know STEP.

***WEAKNESSES & STRENGTHS:***

I do not think that it has a good cultural content it does not include beneficial topics like how to be healthy or how to pronounce the words correctly or to improve your accent.

I do not think that the cultural content of the book helps me I feel that I am weak in English I hope that they improve our books although I think that the teacher and her way of teaching is more important 70% of the matter depends on my teacher.

I hope the book to be improved to understand English with no language institution and spending money.

They destroy language, it depends on the teacher. They change the teacher my previous teacher was better. Now, we do not have role-play

The cultural content of the book is good 6\10 because it is improved, I am more enthusiastic more to force the teacher to teach me this cultural content in a perfect way.

I like it- the grammar is few- it does not provide us with a complete explanation of its format. At the end of the book, a complete explanation of the rule and its simplification.

I hope to add more items like translation

- 1- The workbook is so good and help me more than the main book, I can search in google.
- 2- I need CD, sight, a translation of the book when I do not know what the translation of the book is.
- 3- Conversation from the first year of secondary school, now we do not have conversations.
- 4- Focus on airport – a story followed with questions- simple grammar
- 5- CD, courses or application in iPhone
- 6- I like to add more items like discussion questions, translated curriculum. I do not have a problem with searching.

***DIFFICULTIES, FOR TEACHING THE CULTURAL CONTENT:***

No response.

***SUGGESTIONS:***

I hope to add more items like translation

- 7- The workbook is so good and help me more than the main book, I can search in google.
- 8- I need CD, sight, a translation of the book when I do not know what the translation of the book is.
- 9- Conversation from the first year of secondary school, now we do not have conversations.
- 10- Focus on airport – a story followed with questions- simple grammar
- 11- CD, courses or application in iPhone
- 12- I like to add more items like discussion questions, translated curriculum. I do not have a problem with searching.



## 10.2. Teachers' Interviews Sample

### Interview T1

#### **CULTURAL ELEMENTS:**

##### ***Item No.1: Aesthetic C***

1-Not important. They have to be associated with other cultures.

##### ***Item No.2: Sociological C***

2-Less important. Because they are in a construction level. The practical items only from the other cultures. Real life situations. Even if you have items that they are contradicted with my own culture. They have to be aware of.

##### ***Item No.3: Distinctive semantic C***

4- if the culture they have is very important, more common, like London malls to improve and assist the students' level. Especially girls. Because it is connected to their interests.

##### ***Item No.4: General semantic C***

4- general vocabulary, academic one. Because it has general meanings. Other meanings are more suitable to a specific major. These are later.

##### ***Item No. 5: Pragmatic C***

5- the word become small village- chatting social media. They should know how to communicate.

#### **SOURCES OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS**

##### ***Item No.6: UK***

4- original language- it is supposed to be from the source of language. Mainly UK.

##### ***Item No.7: USA***

4- because America is supposed to be a mixed- culture. I cannot deny its important. the problem of the girls that they use the American accent because of movies, media. Sometimes I have a clash with them they consider that it is pronounced in one way.

##### ***Item No.8: Other ENS countries***

1-It is not as important as the UK. Australia is colony. How to prepare a cake, cooking. Things that they do every day, shopping. Why we do not say that? The influence of American because they are affected by the American. This is a problem. Informal language of Americans. Travelling.

##### ***Item No.9: ESL speaking countries***

1-They might become their teachers. Colonies.

***Item No.10: Islamic Culture***

5- they have to interchange their culture to others. They do not know how to describe their own country attractions.

***Item No.11: Saudi Culture***

5- I am with it in a simplistic way in order not to have debates in the class. It is a special culture. To know how to describe not to argue we are not Islamic scientists or specialists. (Maryam: this is a good point as students are unable to express themselves to others). For a value goal, or religious one, patriotic one, how they can relate their culture to their lesson. How to connect between the student culture and English. How to improve your society. Like warm winter campaign, poor people.

We talk about food and the verse of wasting money, I explain this to the girls. I connect it to religion, not a religious goal. Discuss this

***Item No. 12: World Cultures***

2-It is more connected with the type of the lesson. For example, Chinese attractions. If the place is new – a better choice of places to make the students more stimulated.

***Item No. C: EX. Topics***

How to use menu in a restaurant, how to cook, practical situations not theoretical one. Something they do in their real life. How to deal with real life situations. How to deal with appointments in hospitals. How to book a flight. It is supposed to be in class. May be in secondary school.

**TREATMENT OF CULTURE IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AND ENGLISH CLASSES**

***Item No.13: Motivation and Topics***

5-We do not use English in everyday life. Even that our formal language is not great in our daily life. We do not focus in English; it is just a foreign language. Arabic slang language or Saudi colloquial language is more common. The book is not as much it is expected to be updated. Since we do not use it every day. We have to practice every day. Even with foreigners with our language.

***Item No.14: Sensitive Topics: Saudi Culture***

5-Not every student has the boldness to speak. Stories of successful people with disabilities. Voluntary campaigns to help your society as a project. For example, I have a campaign that the girls have to write a message information for foreign labours who work with low salary. creative students have ideas to support poor people. The negative side, with open discussions about religions as you might know we are not of the same group in our country. I will tell you a story, I asked the girls to describe the most person you admire, it was my mistake I might

have to ask them to describe one of your family or your friends not to be prescribed with the book. The students become more open to talk but they go further, I was happy that they become more motivated to talk. However, the shocking one is the one who said that Saddam Hussain is my idol why do you admire? he is a good leader, wise, firm, killed the most *Shiaa*, lots of students were against her. I told them that I am really sorry for what happened to them suppose that you were one of them. this is a language of ignorant. You are a new generation and you have to accept others as your religion advise you to be. So, some harms might occur.

***Item No.15: Sensitive Topics: Western Culture***

2-People and students think that everything is acceptable in the west. It is important to know the prohibited items of a specific culture before we connect with others. English language unifies all people to help our children. But of course, there is a negative side. I do not think that the swear language are ok. We have to understand other cultures' taboos as well. The reason for its prohibition in our culture and that they are allowed in the other countries.

***Item No.16: Cultural Understanding: biases and stereotypes avoidance***

The pictures in the book are not realistic. It is impossible that it is unbiased. It does not contain negative stereotypes.

***Item No.17: CIC-CLA: Saudi Culture Vs. NESs Culture***

5- it exists but not activated by most teachers but in few items. It depends on the teacher level of English and even the students' level of English. I hope that these items are implemented in a general way. I might discuss the content or the discussion questions in the scientific department not the art department. They do not know how to speak English fluently. So, they omit this part, they ignore these items. For example, writing are skills.

***Item No.18: CIC-CLA: Saudi Culture Vs. World NNEs Culture***

50% each teacher has her own way of teaching, some of them are not committed with the book, so that they change and modify, and I might be committed sometimes and in other I cannot because of the time limits. The book has a defect, a lot of grammatical rules which is not enough for the period of time, lots of details. Lots of lessons. It is supposed to be of less quantity and the focus is on the quality, for quality and productivity. Third, there is a focus on the grammatical rules in the first term that are repeated in the next term. They have to be divided. they add details to them in the next term.

***Item No.19: Future Visits: NESs Cs & contact with NESs.***

5-The book does not contain such situations. They even are not enough.

***Item No.20: Future Visits: NNEs Cs & contact with Ss of ESL or EFL.***

5- The book does not contain such situations. They even are not enough.

***Item No.21: Other courses***

4-It is not a speciality of an English teacher; it is too early for students to have a major. Too early for academic idioms.

***Item No.22: Avoidance of the situations that might cause misunderstanding in ICC.***

4-No time, we are suffering, I hope that the number of grammatical rules or their details to be shrunken in each book. Less than what is in the books.

***Item No. 23: Positive Impression IC***

50%. No answer

***Item No.24: International E Proficiency Tests***

50%. No answer

***WEAKNESSES & STRENGTHS:***

Listening side is weak in practice, we do not have lab for listening.

It is not practical book, and a great number of lessons.40 students in class, there is no way to have groups, correcting papers for students as a feedback, listening becomes a number of tests.

Writing paragraphs, I cannot do them weekly or monthly. May be twice in a month. It is a big class, speaking is by participation. They distribute books with no CDs.

***DIFFICULTIES, FOR TEACHING THE CULTURAL CONTENT:***

Topics of the book, writing exercise is twice in the unit, we cannot correct the paper for each student. To minimise writing lessons, the number of students 40, the number of lessons is high, why it is not of less amount and with more quality. There is a new policy now and not suitable for the book just arrived,

The final exam, two topics one from the book, the other is free writing. There is no time to train students. They add listening comprehension with the final, this is new. Before it was before the exam, this one is more ideal.

In each Moodle, practical lessons which match the students' interests like cooking, how to book, how to order from restaurants.

The way of testing is not good right now it is divided into the following

People now would like to study by courses, not the normal terms.

Oral short test- 10

Month test, short, theoretical (reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar)- 10

Scientific reports and practical experiments, (projects) – explain a lesson)- 5 we agree with other teachers to be an explanation of a lesson.

Observation, participation, and class interaction- 5

Homework and tasks performance- 5

Course portfolio

Final written exam

Final practical\oral exam

Attendance

We do it in our own way with no pre-given or agreed criteria

Task 1: Present a lesson, vocabulary, speaking

Task 2: Warm winter, they have to do something like breast cancer campaign in English.

***SUGGESTIONS:***

No answer.

### 10.3. Field notes for non-participant observation Sample

**Date\ Day:** Thursday\15\12\2016

**Teacher:** OT1 **School:** 1<sup>st</sup> in Aldahran.

**Unit:** 5 (Thinking Back) **Lesson:** d

**Book:** Traveller (1) **Time:** 10 am

<b>Cultural items</b>	
<b>Aesthetic:</b>	Poets, novelist, and artist, books
<b>Sociological:</b>	Inventors, Architect, Geographer,
<b>Semantic: distinctive:</b>	Name of institution, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, the Tabula Rogerianna, Volta Prize
<b>Semantic: general:</b>	N\A
<b>Pragmatic:</b>	N\A
<b>Sources of these cultural items</b>	
<b><u>Countries:</u></b> UK, USA, KSA, Islamic, Other ENS countries, SLE speakers, World cultures	<b><u>Extra Materials:</u></b> YouTube videos, short movies, tasks
Around the world, Italy  Islamic culture, Al-Idrisi, Alma'arri.  USA	No extra material and no elaboration outside the book. Pair work
<b>How does the teacher treat the cultural items in this English lesson? The teacher uses</b>	
<b>1- Topics: Updated, familiar, relevant</b>	
The title of the lesson is about fame, it provides examples from history, some of those famous people are not actually well- known to most of the students. The	

topic (fame) is interesting. There is no open discussion for famous people you know.
<b>2- Sensitive topics:</b>
Disability, loss of sight, inability to read, rheumatic fevers,
<b>3- Point of view: Stereotypes, biases Vs. understanding</b>
A kind of but not to this purpose, I mean disability topic is a positive point that although these scientists suffered from disability they overcome this point. The teacher is thankful to activate this point. The passage ignorance of the presence of women is a kind of bias.
<b>4- comparing, discussing, critical thinking, exploring and searching:</b>
Not for this purpose
<b>5- Traveling and communicating:</b>
N/A
<b>6- Other courses link</b>
Catalonia Spain, rheumatic fevers, smallpox, scientist names, and artists.
<b>7- Misunderstanding avoidance</b>
N/A
<b>8- Positive impression</b>
The examples about the two mentioned figures are good examples but the teacher did not pay the students' attention to this very fact.
<b>9- Standard International English tests</b>
The listening passage can help but it was written
<b>Parts of the lesson compared to the teacher acts:</b>
<b>1 Vocabulary:</b>
The teacher did not elaborate on the famous people names except Sherlock Holmes.  The exercise needs the students to guess the answers then listen to the track and answer. However, the teacher starts with the recording.
<b>2 Read:</b>

The writer designed the exercise to start with the names of famous people on the pictures provided then answer whether they are familiar with or not. I think to make the cultural elements easier to be understood and that the students not to be distracted with the obstacle of not knowing them. And to exchange some cultural information. The teacher was not committed to the book again. The students have to read the paragraph first and then do the matching exercise. After that, they have to listen to the paragraph and correct their answers. This might be to develop both skills reading and listening. Another point is that, where is the presence of females?! Don't they have any achievements. Where are the female scientists!

### **3 GRAMMAR**

The teacher tried to bring two girls to answer the questions in a dialogue. However, in the time of observing. I did not understand the purpose of the exercise except when I read it. It is about can form in the past. However, it was important to provide more examples to make sure that the students understand the grammatical rule. The book provided a reference to the appendix for more details. But I do not remember that the teacher paid the students attention.

### **4 Practice**

Fill the dialogue exercise is a good technique for students to practice grammatical rule but it can be done as a speaking practice exercise.

### **5 GRAMMAR**

New grammatical rule. the teacher explains the rule orally. The book provided a reference to the appendix for more details. But I do not remember that the teacher paid the students attention.

### **6 Practice**

Fill the dialogue exercise is a good technique for students to practice grammatical rule but it can be done as a speaking practice exercise.

### **7 Speak**

I think that two students do this exercise once. Their voices were not louder enough to be heard to their classmates.

### **8 Write**

The teacher neglects the writing exercise to answer some questions in the workbook. I think the exercise is suitable for the students.

### **The actual lesson procedures:**



- She starts with a revision (warming up technique), she told the girls that your book is one of the best books and the best curriculum I have ever seen in all the periods of education in Saudi Arabia. She justified that by saying that it contains the basics of language and you will need it in university she told the girls to take care of their book of English.
- Maryam's popping thought: (as a teacher she can support the girls with other references as in our current time internet has this version of the book and many other sources for continuous learning) +(problems of the lesson appeared in her class: the class was boring in some parts it appeared on the students' body posture, 40 minutes are not enough, changing lessons and the personal circumstances of the teacher as she told me.
- I think for the phrase (thinking back is the title of the whole unit) she used a card as a teaching aid\ she used cards to explain or paste the words on the board but these cards contain the words only.
- She said that for the concept of the word gossip your good deeds are going to be reduced as an Islamic remark.
- She asked a question to attract the students' attention in order to introduce the lesson. Would you like to be famous? Why? The students raise their hands but without discussion or quick short answers.
- She used CD.
- The exercise from the book and is presented on the board by the use of a projector.
- She asked the girls is there any Arabic poet. students answer this question with Gazi Alqusaibi and Ahmed Shawqi.
- There are some movies about Sherlock Holmes and Abdullah Joma'h (this is new to me he might be a Saudi writer) Nizar Qabani, Najeeb Mahfooth,
- The most famous poets and book (one of the students has made this poster and show it or hand it to the teacher) about an author called Darweesh. This proves to me that the teacher prepared to my presence.
- Leonardo Deviancy and Moralise smile (it was pronounced as in Arabic with /a/ at the end of the word.
- She elaborates on the topic, by commenting on the poster of Moralise but very quickly.
- Next mammy.
- The book implements some words that are not English. It was a written reading passage accompanied with a recording and it is designed as an exercise.
- She commented on the reading passage by stating that although those scientists have disabilities they overcome their disability.
- The room was dark because she was using the projector, but she uses the cards on the board.
- The word rogeriania was difficult to be pronounced (tabula rogeriana) it is a map because he was a scientist in geography. No scientist was a female.
- She returned to Alma'ary who is an Arabic scientist, but she pronounces him as an English person, she does not pay the students' attention to this fact. The pronunciation of the non- English names or Arabic names are difficult. She does not search about them.
- There was a question in the exam that was not mentioned.
- Making right or wrong exercise was on the passage.
- Is it interesting to read about them? yes

- Do you have an example about the scientists? Bill gate – Oprah Winfry- Walt Disney- he has no imagination, the name of the man. People who was failure.
- She puts a paper on the wall and told the girls to read it in any time.
- Write your name either in Arabic or in English- you can write in French.
- She introduces the grammatical rule with a discussion:
- Could you write your name 4 years ago?
- Could you drive a car?
- **There was no time to separate between the skills of the lesson. Or from one skill to another.**
- Anything in bold focus on it while you study, she stated. (I think she starts to be fatigue and to lose her power and to rush out).
- There was no connection between the grammatical rule and the reading passage or the vocabulary introduced.
- It is definitely the shortage of time.
- She advised the girls: teach yourself the secrets or keys of the grammatical rules. Then, she reads the example and point to the grammatical rule.
- Who can describe your friend? Adjectives.
- It should be a screen not projector and the PowerPoint slides have to be more movable or interactive.
- She becomes tired from explanation (Adj- Adv memorize them) she rushes in explanation.
- She asked a girl why you answered with easily. I mean she has corrected the girl response. Or provide a feedback.
- Put the homework in your file first it is to the students, the time of lesson now is over, but she does not finish from answering the questions of the homework with the girls.
- Finally, write what is on board. The vocabulary of round up is within your reach- I do not need point 2 or 3.
- There is no homework at home as she answered the questions too quickly.

#### 10.4. Close Analysis of EFL Textbooks Sample: A close Analysis of Traveller (1)

P.4	Hello	
	1- A- what's your name? listen and read	(-) audio-lingual method, however, no CD has been distributed.
	There is no context for greeting	
	individual task	(+) real pictures imported from LC
	2- B- greeting and saying good bye: listen and read. There are small boxes with alternatives, e.g., so-so.	
	A- Individual task	
	Short conversation	(+)
	Several alternatives in small boxes	(+)
	No indication for the formality issue/ Informality issue	
	An indication of the difference between gender in title. As Mr, Mrs, miss.	
	Arabic names	
	B- Pair work	
P.5	3- countries and nationalities	
	3 (a) Individual task	
	Countries from all over the world	US/UKWC/LC/OENS
	(b) talk in pairs	
	4- Numbers: A- listen and repeat	
	Individual task	
	B+C talk in pairs	
P6	5- A- Objects in classroom: (listen and repeat)	
	B- Talk in pairs about objects, (here and there)	
	6- listen and repeat (classroom language) note about imperative and affirmative sentence. PC	
P7	Unit 1: Me, Myself and I	
P8	1A: Pleasure to meet you	

	<p>Discussion questions with the whole class</p> <p>What are your favourite things?</p> <p>Do you work in summer?</p> <p>What kind of person are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DLC/ PE/PO.</li> <li>- Working at summer might not be suitable to the students' age or gender.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Outline of the unit or the goals should be achieved at the end of the unit.</p>	<p>No point indicates an improvement of intercultural communication skill.</p> <p>In this module, you will learn...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To introduce yourself and others.</li> <li>2. To exchange basic personal information (job, address, etc).</li> <li>3. To talk about your possessions.</li> <li>4. To talk about ability.</li> <li>5. To tell the time.</li> <li>6. To describe your personality.</li> <li>7. To write about yourself.</li> </ol>
	<p>1- Read.</p> <p>A- Look at the pictures. Where do you think they are? Listen, read, then check your answers.</p> <p>The picture showed two teenagers are talking one is supposed to be an Arabic opposite to the picture that is not about someone called Emad, he looks of other nationality.</p> <p>John asking Emad to spell his name, and about his address, and that the coach is from Kuwait.</p> <p>The address is airport street.</p>	<p>It seems that this is not a real conversation because in what context this could be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking to spell your name and about your address never happened in an informal conversation. This could be for requesting a service or filling application via phone not face to face conversation.</li> </ul>
	<p>B- Read again and answer the following questions.</p> <p>Note about how to say your address in correctly. (this is important in a country like UK for taxi because in our country we mostly follow the old method way)</p>	<p>Football SC</p>

P.9	2- Grammar: The verb be Read the examples. What do you notice about the formation of the negative and question form of verb Be? Grammar reference p.128.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interlocutors are A and B</li> <li>- Use of a variety of names (Arabic, English, may be Italian names)</li> <li>- Use of short conversation.</li> <li>- An inductive approach/ grammar in context because the exercise is linked to the lesson before.</li> </ul>
	3- Practice: complete the dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interlocutors are A and B</li> <li>- Use of a variety of names (Arabic, English, may be Italian names)</li> <li>- Use of short conversation.</li> </ul>
	4- A- Listen and repeat the alphabet. b- Now spell your name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to whom ?!it is not clear.</li> </ul>
	5- Listen and Complete the form. The pioneer high school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can help in international tests.</li> <li>- Individual task.</li> <li>- The name of the school is not real.</li> </ul>
	6- Speak talk in pairs and exchange personal information and complete the table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a task. It looks like a puzzle.</li> </ul>
P.10	1b. My favourites	
	1- Vocabulary: Listen and repeat. which of the things below do you have and what colour are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile phone an old item with buttons.</li> <li>- No indication of the brand.</li> </ul>
	2- Read A- Look at the words below and put them in order of preference. Do you think men and women prefer different things? Gadgets B- Listen read and check your answers. A survey. C- Read again and complete the sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a connection between the section of the lessons.</li> <li>- Implementation of variety of names.</li> </ul>
P11	3- Grammar: these / those – plurals A- Complete the table. B- Possessive adjectives. Match what are the words in bold followed by? C- Possessive case. Match the phrases with the pictures. Grammar reference P.128.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of a variety of names.</li> <li>- Connection to the first unit.</li> </ul>
	4- Practice. Circle the correct words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short conversation. (A+B).</li> <li>- Use of a variety of names.</li> </ul>
	5- Speak. Game. Talk in pairs. Student A go to page 120, Student B go to page 123.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>

	<p>SA: ask and answer questions to find four differences in the picture.</p> <p>SB: ask and answer questions to find four differences in the picture.</p> <p>Is Adam's car black in your picture?</p>	
P12	1C- I can do it. <b>The units have titles</b>	-
	1. Vocabulary: match then listen and check your answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The pictures are from different nationalities. The Saudi is the secretary and sales person.</li> <li>- Some of the pictures look like fake photoshop.</li> </ul>
	<p>2. Read. Look at the pictures what do you think the dialogues are about? Listen, read, and find out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Musa Ahmed, part time photographer job, 18, go to school, work every day in the afternoon.</li> <li>- Ameer Kareem. The job of a salesperson. Welcome to the <b>Carsales</b>. Leave your CV. How many languages do you speak.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The pictures of the persons are not a depiction of their nationality.</li> <li>- No mention of the proper nouns of the car sales.</li> <li>- The qualifications are not a depiction of what companies required for these jobs.</li> </ul>
P13	3. Grammar: the verb can. Read the examples. How do we form the negative and question form of the verb can? Grammar reference P.128.	- French – Chinese- Spanish. Pizza. WC.
	<p>4. A- Complete the dialogues with can and the words in brackets. Give short answers where possible.</p> <p>b- Read again and decide what <b>Musa/ no indication of the origin of the name CA</b> and Karim can and can't do. Put a √ and an ×.</p>	-
	5. Speak: <b>talk in pairs</b> . Read the advertisement bellow. Imagine that you work for lifetek international and that you are looking for a new architect. Each of you has interviewed an applicant for the job. SA go to P.120, SB go to	- Looks like a game. Or problem- solving method.

	P.123. discuss and decide who the best person for the job is.	
	6. <b>Write.</b> Read the advertisements below and imagine that you are applying for one of these part-time jobs. Answer the questions and say what you can and can't do. Doctor, hair dresser, French teacher.	-
P14	1D- What time?	-
	1- Vocabulary: a- match then listen and check your answers. b- Match the adjectives with the pictures. Then listen and check your answers.	- In B, the first cartoonish picture of females with no indication of age
	2- Read. A- listen, read and match the dialogues 1-3 with the pictures a-c.	- The use of Hey, and Erm. PC. - Blue street. - Sami does not look an Arab.
	B. Read again and answer the questions choose a, b, and c.	- Game.
	3- Pronunciation: Listen and repeat. Notice the pronunciation and rhythm.	- Audio-
	4- Listen: Listen to two friends talking and complete the sentences. Choose a or b.	- No text.
	5- Speak. <b>Talk in pairs.</b> Make plans for today or tomorrow. Use some of the phrases in the box. Sounds good, meet you there.	-
P16	1e- People I know.	-
	1. Vocabulary. Look at the pictures and find opposite adjectives. Then listen and check your answers. Use some of the adjectives to describe yourself. - <b>Tip- write down new words in your notebook. Together with the English word. Write the translation in your language and an example sentence.</b>	- Use of first language to improve English. - Up-to-date as emoji nowadays are used for communication.
P17	2. Read. a. Look at the people in Ali's photo album below. What can you tell about them? Read and match the photos with the texts. Then listen and check your answers.	- Use of emoji. - No use of proper names for institutions. E.g., sports centre, university. - No discussion questions but questions to locate information.

	b. read again and answer the questions.	
	3. Speak. - Complete the form below and present yourself to your partner or to the class.	- Game.
	4. Write - Punctuations - Capital letters. A- Read the email below and add punctuations and capitals. What's up PC B- Write a paragraph about a new classmate so that you can introduce the person to a friend of yours.	- A model for writing. - French/ Paris. WC/ mr. petit in French means a little person. There is a cultural aspect here CA. - Use of informal language as sports freak. PC. - A real Saudi picture.
P18-19	1 Round-up	-
	1- Vocabulary A- Circle the correct words. B- Complete the table 2- Grammar C- Choose D- Complete the dialogue. Give short answers where possible. E- Complete the dialogues. 3- Communication F- Complete the dialogues. Choose a or b. G- Complete the dialogues with the phrases a-d. H- Answer the questions. 4- Listen Listen to three dialogues and choose a or b. 5- Speak Talk in pairs. Use the prompts in the table below and ask student B questions. Complete the table and decide which job from the ones in the box he/she is suitable for according to his/her answers. Student B: answer Student A questions.	- Use of polite expressions in conversations as thanks. PC. - Chinese, French. WC. - Oxford. UK. - I am not sure of the use of CV in this lesson and previous lesson. - Speak- similar to a game or a questionnaire filling.
	6- Self- assessment: Read the following and tick the appropriate boxes.	- No mention to improvement to any intercultural communication skill.
P20	Culture page A- Read the title of the text. Do you know anything about names and surnames? Listen, read, and compare your answers. The history behind a name.	- Great! - However, they could mention that the use of abbreviated names and in some other culture as Chinese they have a Christian name. - Reference to LC.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What names means: tells about the personality of people, and the history of their family.</li> <li>- Arabio.</li> <li>- European: Davidson, the son of David.</li> <li>- USA: Davis.</li> <li>- Scotland and Ireland: MacDonald the son of Donald. Or Mc.</li> <li>- In Ireland: O' Brien. The son of Brien.</li> </ul> <p>B- Read again and answer the questions.</p>	
P21	<p>Unit 2: Day by Day 2a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What's your daily routine like? What do you do when you're with your friends?</li> <li>- What sort of free-time activities do you like?</li> <li>- <a href="#">DLC/ CA/ PE/PO</a></li> </ul>	<p>Same as unit 1</p> <p>In this module you will learn ..</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To talk about your <a href="#">daily routine</a>.</li> <li>2. The days of the week.</li> <li>3. To talk about <a href="#">your job</a>.</li> <li>4. To make arrangements for a day out.</li> <li>5. To talk about <a href="#">free time activities</a>.</li> <li>6. To talk about your likes and dislikes.</li> <li>7. To say how often you do things.</li> <li>8. To write about your working habits.</li> <li>9. To write about how you and people your age spends their free time.</li> </ol>
	<p>1- Vocabulary:</p> <p>A- Listen and repeat. Which of the following do you do every day?</p> <p>B- Write the days of the week. Write 1-7 then listen and check your answers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">May be cooking, doing the washing- up, studying, Hoover are familiar.</a> <a href="#">However, the choices could be chosen from by a female or a male.</a></li> </ul>
P22	<p>2- Read:</p> <p>A- Look at the picture in the magazine Article. What do think the man daily routine is like? Listen, read and find out. Title: <a href="#">A helping hand</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tip: before you read try to predict what the text is about with the help of the title and the pictures.</li> </ul> <p>B- Read again and write T for true and F for false.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ahmed Alnaser, Mr. Alsaad house, go to the park.</li> <li>- University student. Goes home at about 8 pm and then he studies.</li> <li>- <a href="#">This is a fake model. Taking care of an old person not a relative.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">The use of Mr. Al-Saad as a family name is a kind of biased.</a></li> </ul>
P23	<p>3- Grammar:</p> <p>Present simple, (affirmative/negative): Prepositions of time.</p>	-

	Same way of Unit 1  4- Practice: complete	
	5- Pronunciation: A- listen and repeat. What the difference between a, b, and c. B- Now tick the sound you hear.	- As a game.
	6- Speak: A- Complete the chart below to indicate which activities you do. Then talk in pairs as in the example and note down your friend answers. B- Report your partner's answers to the class.	-
	7- Write a few sentences using the information from activity 6, comparing your daily routines.	-
P24+25	1- Vocabulary+ 2- Read + 3- Grammar: present simple questions+ 5- listen. Same. Hotel- hospital- newspaper office.	- EARM - Hamid: Through those doors is the cafeteria. Omar: when do we have a lunch break? - Hamid: Are you hungry already? Omar: No, it's just. Hamid: I 'm only joking. Lunch is from 1:30 till 2:30. - Daily news. - Variety of jobs from the low paid to the highest paid. With a variety of nationalities. The Saudi was the reporter. - No listening text just a drill. - One fake photoshop pictures.
P25	6=Speak: survey: talk in pairs. A- Imagine that you are doing a survey on teenagers' summer jobs. Interview student B and complete the form. Then ask student B questions about a friend. B- Student B: answer student A's questions about your summer job. If you don't have one, imagine that you do. Then answer the questions about a friend of yours.	- Culture of research. - Looks like a game.

P25	7= Writing: write a paragraph about your summer job and a friend's summer job. Use the prompts in the previous activities.	- This might be not suitable to the students' age.
P26	2c- At your leisure 1- Vocabulary: same 2- Read: same	- Male pictures. - Use of Urghhh! To indicate resentful. <b>Although a use of swear word is an alternative in such a context.</b> - Salma: what about going shopping? - Faten: I don't know. I 'd like to go for a coffee today. I don't have money to go shopping. Salma: Come on! Oh Look! these shoes are amazing! I'd like to try them on.
P27	3. Grammar: Would like+ want to. 4- practice: complete. 5- listen: listen to a man answering questions for a survey and complete the form. 6- talk in pairs. <b>Make plans for today.</b>	- Task-based activity.
P28-29	2d- techno world. 1- Vocabulary. SMS message, emails. 2- Grammar: adverb of frequency. 3- Speaking: talk in pairs. 4- Read, do the quiz. <b>Culture of research</b> 5- Pronunciation: the falling and rising intonation. 6- Speak: <b>complete the chart below with information about yourself. Then talk in pairs. Ask and answer questions.</b>	- Smart phone. 4- How often do you send <b>SMS messages?</b> - <b>Do you watch downloaded TV programmes on your portable multimedia player? Up-to- date</b> - How often do you check your emails? - Do you play video games? - What's your idea of a good day out? A-shopping then dinner at a restaurant. B-Coffee at a café then a walk in the park. C- A visit to a friend's house to play computer games. Your score is (looks like a game/it is a task-based activity).  - Speak: a task- based activity. - Surf the net, go shopping, play video games. They are familiar items and suitable to their age.
P30-31	2e- at the gym 1- Vocabulary	- Male sports and pictures. No females or reference to

	<p>2- Read: Salman Malik Champion.</p> <p>3- Listen. Basketball, football and at the sports centre.</p> <p>4- Speak: <b>Class survey.</b> A- Talk in group of five. Look at the table below. In turn, ask each other questions to find out what people your age do in their free time. Play sports, have coffee, watch TV, go restaurants. B- <b>Report your group answers</b> to the class. <b>DLC/PO/PE/CA</b></p> <p>5- Write: Word order: in English, we always put the subject of a sentence before the verb and the object after the verb. A- make sentences by putting the words in the correct order. B- A local magazine AC is doing a survey on how people spend their free time. Write a paragraph about how you and people your age spends their free time. Use ideas from activity <b>DLC/CA/PO/PE.</b></p>	<p>their interest in sports. It is a kind of biased. And the pictures ignore the LC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Culture of research.</li> <li>- CA difference between English and other languages.</li> </ul>
P32-33	<p>Round- up: same</p> <p>TV AC/ Football/ basketball / karate/ SC</p> <p>French/ WC- Italian restaurant- WC</p> <p>Speak: talk in pairs about your likes and dislikes. Use the given ideas at free time: park, mall, gym/ and at home: housework, friends, computer.</p> <p>Write a paragraph about your partner's likes and dislikes.</p> <p><b>DLC/ PE/PO/CA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grand hotel.</li> </ul>
34	<p>Cross- curricular page: Information technology: Spamming and phishing. <b>UP-TO-DATE/ internet /valuable lesson / it raises the</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fax machine.</li> <li>- Poem: day by day go to page 126. Stupid poem: I've never read a poem like this. There are no poetic artistic words. It is in the</li> </ul>

	<p>students' awareness the matter of phishing in internet.</p>	<p>form of exercise. Circle the correct words then listen and check your answers. This an insult to poets and a humiliation to poetry and this art. It disdains the mentality of the students. I understand now why they state that it is a childish way.</p>
35	<p>Unit 3: Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you consider to be big changes in your life?</li> <li>- Do you enjoy changes? Or not?</li> <li>- What would you like to change about your life?</li> </ul> <p>It might be beyond the students' age/ CA/ PE/PO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this module you will learn ..</li> <li>1. To talk about your family.</li> <li>2. To talk about things that are happening now.</li> <li>3. To talk about temporary situations.</li> <li>4. To talk about future arrangements.</li> <li>5. To write an informal letter giving your news.</li> <li>6. To talk about furniture, appliances and rooms.</li> <li>7. To express possession.</li> <li>8. To describe your neighbourhood/ town/ city.</li> <li>9. To talk about the weather and seasons.</li> <li>10. To write an email describing your neighbourhood/ house/ flat.</li> <li>11. To identify the location of objects.</li> </ul>
P36-37	<p>3a- life changes.</p> <p>1- Vocabulary 2- Read 3- Grammar: Present progressive. 4- practice.5-Speak: guessing game: who is it go to page 119. 6- write: a paragraph giving your news to complete the email below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bosley street. DSC</li> <li>- The wedding in Swindon.</li> <li>- My aunt and my uncle from Australia. OENS</li> <li>- Mother- in law CA.</li> <li>- China. WC.</li> <li>- Learn French/ Spanish/Italian.</li> </ul>
P38-39	<p>3b- let's move it. 1- Vocabulary: Which of the items below do you have in your home? DLC/ PO/ CA</p> <p>2- Read.</p> <p>3-grammar: possessive pronoun. 4- practice: magazine AC. 5- listen: dad informal. 6- speak: talk in pairs. go to p. 119.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3D plan of our house: a special computer program to rearrange the furniture in different rooms. Up-to-date. (FI- life style).</li> <li>- There can be some Arabic furniture.</li> </ul>

P40-41	<p>3C- Around the town</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: <a href="#">match</a>. Then <a href="#">listen and check</a>. 2- Read: a text about Monterial 's underground city. 3- Grammar. There is /There are. 4- Practice. <a href="#">Thanks: polite PC</a> 5- Listen. 6- speak. <a href="#">Talk in pairs</a>. About your neighbourhood/town/city as in the example below. <a href="#">DLC/ PE/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Montreal underground city. OENS</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">La ville Souterrain</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Heera street. DSC</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Corniche street. DSC</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Space needle/ Pike place.</a></li> </ul>
P42-43	<p>3d- Rain or Shine.</p> <p>1- Vocabulary Same as above/ what's the weather like? 2- Read: listen and read. Mtch the texts 1-3 with the weather symbols a-c. 3- Grammar. Present Simple Vs. Present progressive. 4- Practice: have lunch at Fabricio's <a href="#">DSC</a> 5- Pronunciation. 6- listen: <a href="#">Milan: WC</a> 7- Speak. <a href="#">Talk in pairs</a>. Discuss the weather in the four different seasons and the weather today. <a href="#">DLC/PE/CA</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Two separate contexts with different characters. Qassim and unknown English native speaker.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Ameen Salman and relation to Qassim, may be Indian as illustrated by the picture.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Use of some spoken words: Any good/ a bit down.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Pronunciation: notice the syllable that is stressed. CA as Scottish.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Watching the news/ documentary AC.</a></li> </ul>
P44-45	<p>3e- Home Sweet Home</p> <p>Vocabulary: <a href="#">S</a> 2- Read: a house on wheels 3- Pronunciation: 4- speak. <a href="#">Talk in pairs</a>: about where you live? 5- write.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Read the text quickly and choose the best title a, b, or c. (could help in IELTS)</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Write an email to a friend or a family member telling him/her about your neighbourhood and your house/ flat. <a href="#">DLC/CA/PE</a></a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Write: Set phrases for letters or emails. Use of a variety of expressions that could be both formal and less formal.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Pronunciation: listen and repeat some sounds as /V/</a></li> </ul>
P45-47	<p>Round- up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">England/ France/ Wembley/ UK/WC.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Abha/ LC.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Football match Man Utd/ Chelsea /.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Thanks PC.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Speak: talk in pairs: Student A imagine you have moved to the new house in the picture below.</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Use of dad/ hi. PC</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Write an email to a friend giving him/her your news about your new house/ flat.</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">DLC/ CA/ PE.</a></li> </ul>

	<p>Look at the picture and answer Student B's questions. Student B: Look at the picture and ask Student A questions about his/her new house. Ask about: number of rooms/ balcony/ furniture in the house/ buildings in the neighbourhood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The house could be in US. Because of the balcony on the road.</li> </ul>	
P48	Tornado Alley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- US: Texas/ Oklahoma., etc</li> <li>- What people used to do at the season of Tornadoes.</li> </ul>
P49	<p>Unit 4: Feeling good</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what do you do to stay healthy?</li> <li>- do you follow a specific type of diet? If yes, what is it?</li> <li>- do you eat out?</li> <li>- what do you do for exercise?</li> </ul> <p>DLC/ CA/ PE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this module, you will learn</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To give and take an order at a restaurant.</li> <li>2. To ask and answer about quantity.</li> <li>3. To talk about food preferences.</li> <li>4. To talk and write about your eating habits.</li> <li>5. To express opinion.</li> <li>6. To ask for and give advice.</li> <li>7. To talk about ailments.</li> <li>8. To write a paragraph giving advice.</li> </ol>
P50-51	<p>4a- what's on the menu?</p> <p>1- Vocabulary 2- Read 3- Grammar. Countable and uncountable nouns: some/ any/ no. 4- Practice. 5- Listen. 6- speak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Variety of food but do not really belong to a specific culture. No name of dishes, it might be only vegetarian pizza, and lasagne.</li> <li>- Use of please but nothing about thank you.</li> <li>- Steve and Hamza, Steve is looking at the menu.</li> <li>- Hamza is rude in my opinion, he has never used the word please. When the waiter said sorry he might say its ok never mind.</li> <li>- Dad/ erm. PC</li> <li>- Speak: Role-plays. Talk in group of three. P. 51, imagine you work at Tom's restaurant. Take student B's and C's order. While B's and C's need to order. They can use some suggested phrases, for example, Yes, please/ No, thank you.</li> <li>- Stupid picture as if it is a buffet. They don't need a waiter to order. They should be at the same</li> </ul>

		restaurant. It looks like a wedding not a restaurant.
P52-53	<p>4b- Eat Right</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: listen and repeat which of the following do you like. 2- Read</p> <p>3- Grammar. How much/how many. 4- Practice. 5- Listen. 6- speak. Talk in pairs 7- write.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Read:</b> A rainbow on your plate.</li> <li>- <b>Write:</b> How healthy is your diet? Look at the questions below and write a paragraph about your eating habits. <b>DLC/ CA/ PO.</b></li> </ul>
P54-55	<p>4c- Helping Others</p> <p>1- Vocabulary 2- Read: Would you like to become a member of this organization? Why /why not?</p> <p>3- Grammar. Objects: personal pronouns 4- Practice. 5- pronunciation 6- Listen: painting: AC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Become a volunteer and live Nepali culture for 10 days. May be biased because poverty in UK. Read the <b>flyer.</b></li> <li>- Get involved Volunteer organization.</li> <li>- Orphans/Orphanages.</li> <li>- The prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) 'I and the guardian of the orphan will be in heaven like that,' indicating his forefinger and middle finger.</li> <li>- What do you know about this organization? (Charity committee for orphans 'care). Islamic culture.</li> <li>- Mum. PC</li> </ul>
P56-57	<p>4d- Healthy body, and healthy mind.</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: complete the bubbles with the words in the box. Then listen and check your answers</p> <p>2- Read: Hmmm. PC</p> <p>3- Grammar. The verb should</p> <p>4- Practice. 5- pronunciation</p> <p>6- Speak: <b>Role- play: doctor Vs. patient. Talk in pairs.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking to a doctor. No type of job or who is Mr. Hill.</li> </ul>
P58-59	<p>4e Get in shape</p> <p>1- Vocabulary 2- Read: keep fit, stay fit.</p> <p>2- Listen: football/ sports centre SC 4- Speak: <b>talk in pairs:</b> read about Andy's problem below and discuss what he should/ should not do. 5- Write: Linking words 6- Listen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Power plate (R).</li> <li>- Tae bo. A good idea is to do aerobics and learn <b>marital arts</b> moves. Like tae kwon do or boxing at the same time.</li> <li>- A: Circle the correct words: <b>Kick boxing is like Thai boxing. 1) So/ But in Thai boxing you can kick below the belt. sensitive</b></li> <li>- Write: a short paragraph giving advice to Andy n activity 4.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trendy clothes.</li> <li>- Ailments. Nothing about the use of words in a context. For example, what is the informal use of this words.</li> <li>- No grammar: weird.</li> </ul>
60-61	<p><b>Round up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chocolate/ rash/ flu.</li> <li>- Grammar: No, thanks! / pizza.</li> <li>- Communication: mushroom soup/ hmm. PC.</li> </ul> <p>-Speak: Look at the pictures, read the situations and talk in pairs.</p> <p>Student A: You are at a restaurant with student B, and you want to decide what to order. Discuss.</p> <p>Student B: You are at a restaurant with student A and you want to decide what to order. Discuss.</p> <p>- Student A: You don't feel very well, and you are at home. Student B is visiting you. Student B: Student A is ill so you decide to visit him/her and help him/her out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could be misunderstood.</li> <li>- Self- assessment: express an opinion, offer something, accept and refuse an offer, order food, take an order. PC.</li> <li>- What was the benefit of looking at the pictures? English native speakers biased.</li> <li>- Write: you want to keep fit and you are thinking of taking up a sport or joining a gym. Write an e- mail to a friend asking for advice.</li> </ul>
62	Cross- Curricular page: Home- economics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthy smoothies' recipes. In this digital age, you know what smoothie is but 10 years ago it would be strange.</li> </ul>
63	<p><b>Unit 5: Thinking back.</b></p> <p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was your life different ten years ago? Why?</li> <li>- What is your earliest memory?</li> <li>- Is there anything that you would like to forget?</li> <li>- Things could be emotional. It seems that it is not suitable to their age, they are 16 years old.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this module: you will learn <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To talk about your past life/ experiences.</li> <li>2. To talk about embarrassing moments.</li> <li>3. To talk about your old school/ primary school.</li> <li>4. To talk and write about past holidays.</li> <li>5. To talk and write about famous people.</li> <li>6. To express ability in the past.</li> <li>7. To talk about talents and abilities.</li> <li>8. To narrate a story.</li> <li>9. To write about a story.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
P64-65	<p>5a. How embarrassing!</p> <p>1- Read: Red in the face. 2- Grammar: Past Simple- Affirmative- Negative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mahmud: do not look Mahmud.</li> <li>- No picture for Carl. Teenagers laughing at him he was flying from the treadmill.</li> </ul>

	<p>3- Practice. Restaurant/Paris. 4- Pronunciation. / t/, /d/ sounds 5- Listen: listen to two people talking about their embarrassing moments and choose the correct picture, a or b. <b>No text.</b> 6- Speak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second appearance of females.</li> <li>- <b>Speak:</b> talk in pairs about a day out. DLC/CA/PO</li> </ul>
P66-67	<p>5b- 1- Vocabulary: Match the collocations with the pictures. Then listen and check your answers. <b>Take an Art course.</b> 2- Read: Kyle and Jim in a place (from the picture is a supermarket) talking about <b>the school reunion! The class of 1996!</b> 3- Grammar: Past - Simple questions. 4- Practice: 5- Pronunciation. 6- Listen: to Lina and Noor talking about their exam results and answer questions. 7- Speak: <b>Talk in pairs.</b> Use the prompts in the box to ask each other questions about your school days. <b>PO/CA/FL.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information technology (IT). Use of abbreviations to refer to <b>PC.</b></li> <li>- Islamic studies/ Business and managements.</li> <li>- Suva the capital of Fiji. <b>WC.</b></li> <li>- A PE teacher.</li> <li>- The first picture with one person the second picture with another. There is no reason for doing so.</li> <li>- Columbia university/ Harvard. <b>US</b></li> <li>- They did not talk about the name of the school or the university that they would like to study in. only whether you would like to go to university or not?</li> </ul>
P68-69	<p>5c- How was your holiday? 1- Vocabulary: match the holiday activities with the pictures. Then listen and check your answers. Which of these activities do you do when you go on holiday? 2- Read: <b>Listen and read</b> two people are doing Skiing. 3- Grammar: Past Simple of the verb Be. 3- Practice: Paris/ museum/ 4- Speak: <b>talk in pairs.</b> Ask and answer questions about your last year's holiday. Use the prompts below. 5- Write: <b>write a paragraph about last year's holiday.</b> Use ideas from activity 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Horse riding, the rider looks an Arab.</li> <li>- Camping: real Saudi Camp. Authentic picture.</li> <li>- <b>Lucas and Ikram sit beside each other. Not appropriate. You came last year with Tony? Next year Lucas suggested to go to a tropical Island and do water sports with Ikram. What is the relation between them! Saudi mind</b></li> <li>- Paris.</li> <li>- Speak: Where/ you/ be last summer? <b>LC/PO/CA</b></li> <li>- Where/ you/ stay/?</li> </ul>
P70-71	<p>5d- Fame: 1- Vocabulary: Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. / Picasso painted Guernica/ Tinder spark is one of Alma'arri's <b>Islamic C</b> collections of poetry. / Sir Arthur Conan Doyle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Japan. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Born in UK.</li> <li>- Volta prize. Died in Canada. <b>OENS</b></li> <li>- She can speak about the negative side of being famous.</li> <li>- Alma'arri. Great philosopher, poet, and writer. He was born in</li> </ul>

	<p>famous detective Sherlock Holmes. <b>AC</b></p> <p>2- Read: They made it! About famous people and their achievements. They had some disabilities and they overcome their disability.</p> <p>3- Grammar: the verb could. 4- Practice: 5- Adjectives/ Adverbs of manner. 6- Practice. <b>Japanese/ Japan</b>7-Speak: information gap activity. <b>Talk in pairs.</b> 8- Write: use the information from activity 7 about Alexzander Graham Bell and write a short biography about him.</p>	<p>Syria travelled to the centre of Baghdad. He could not see and the reason for that. <b>IC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muhammad Al-Idrisi. <b>IC</b> Famous geographer and Egyptologist. His work the 'Tabula Rogeriana'. People can see the entire Eurasian continent on this map. / the northern part of the African continent. Travelled to North Africa and <b>Spain</b>. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Einstein- Could not talk until the age of four. He could not read until the age of nine. He failed the entrance Exam to the <b>Swiss Federal Institute of Technology</b>.</li> <li>- Gaudi- Born in <b>Catalonia Spain</b>. <b>WC</b> An architect, his famous work is Casa Batlo. He was suffering from rheumatic fever, this made him so close to nature.</li> <li>- <b>Unfortunately, No representation of women.</b></li> </ul>
P72-73	<p>5e- A story to tell</p> <p>1- <b>Vocabulary:</b> look, listen, read and guess what the words in bold mean. <b>Burglary, security guard.</b> 2- <b>Read:</b> Chapter1: Who am I? mystery story with suspense. 3- <b>Listen:</b> listen to the continuation of the story on page 72. Who Mr. Minter talking to? 4- <b>Speak:</b> talk in pairs. Imagine that you were at one of the places below and something strange happened. Ask and answer the questions using the prompts and the words given. 5- <b>Write:</b> A story. Use of Adverbs. B- Use one of the pictures in 4- Speak and write a story.</p> <p><b>USE OF TASK BASED ACTIVITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Morning mate! <b>PC</b></li> <li>- Unknown story, no mention to the novel title. <b>AC</b></li> <li>- Where/ be/ you/?</li> </ul>
P74-75	<p><b>Round-up:</b> <b>Japanese WC</b></p> <p>Speak: Imagine that you went out with your cousin yesterday. Tell Sb about it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could help in IELTS.</li> <li>- They tell the students to imagine. This is a good technique in IELTS because they have to lie.</li> </ul>

	<p>Sb: Sa went with his/her cousin yesterday and you want to know all about it. (where they went).</p> <p>Write: an email to a friend of yours giving him/ her your news about the day you spent with your cousins. Use the ideas you discussed in the speaking activity.</p>	<p>Even if they did not experience anything.</p>
P76	<p>Culture page: The Saudi Vs. the British Education system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- King Saud University and KAUST among the best in the world. LC</li> <li>- Oxford and Cambridge. UK</li> <li>- Valuable information about British Education system.</li> <li>- GCSE exams and A- levels. FI</li> </ul>
P77	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Unit 6: Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What kind of events do you attend?</li> <li>- Do you celebrate important events in your life with other people?</li> <li>- How do you celebrate important events in your life?</li> <li>- DLC/PO/CA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this module you will learn ..</li> <li>- To talk about future arrangements.</li> <li>- To write an email giving information.</li> <li>- To make requests and respond to them.</li> <li>- To express obligation</li> <li>- To describe an event.</li> <li>- To make suggestions.</li> <li>- To talk about animals</li> <li>- To wish people well in different situations.</li> <li>- To invite someone in an event.</li> <li>- To accept and refuse an invitation.</li> <li>- To write an email of invitation.</li> </ul>
P78-79	<p>6a- Don't miss it!</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: year months. 2- Read: A <span style="background-color: yellow;">book</span> Come to this Year's Teachers' Day. A scrabble ® contest. Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February. 3- Grammar: Future going to. 4- Practice. 5- Speak: look at the poster in 2 and decide which of the activities you are going to take part in. then answer B's questions about your plans for next Tuesday. Use the prompts. DLC 6- Write: an email to a friend giving him/her</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salah and Murad are talking about Teacher's day. I am not sure where they are. It is strange that this could happen in Saudi. Good that they consider this as a day because in Saudi they do not officially celebrate except in two days a year.</li> </ul>

	information about the Teachers' Day event and telling him/her about the activities you are going to attend. Use the information in 5. <b>CA/PO</b>	
P80-81	<p>6b- Can you do me a favour?</p> <p>1- <b>Vocabulary:</b> listen to the pairs of sentences. 2- Read: A conversation between Hamid and Salman. Hamid is asking Salman many favours in a phone call. 3- Grammar: Can, could, would, may for requests. 4- Practice. Go shopping/sorry/camera. 5- Pronunciation: intonation. 6- Listen: to a conversation. What's the relationship between the two men? 7- Speak: <b>talk in pairs.</b> make requests and respond to them. Use the prompts. <b>PC</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I see both people in separate pictures although they are in a mobile phone call.</li> <li>- There is no use of thank you or please.</li> <li>- Omar is from another nationality as shown in the picture.</li> <li>- Hamid is a famous football player and Salman is his PA. I am afraid we are fully booked.</li> <li>- I am sorry I can't. <b>PC</b></li> <li>- Dad.</li> </ul>
P82-83	<p>6c- Protect nature.</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: Camel. <b>LC.</b></p> <p>2- Read: Clive and Peter are discussing some issues about animals' rights in a library. 3- Grammar: Let's, how about, why don't we/you? 4- practice. 5- Pronunciation: short vowel sounds. 6- Speak: <b>talk in small groups.</b> Look at the picture. Imagine that you and your friends want to do something to save the river and the fish. Discuss and make suggestions using the prompts as in the example. No writing tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good choice of animals. They look familiar.</li> <li>- Leaflets about stopping animals' cruelty.</li> <li>- World Animal Day.</li> <li>- Animal testing/ Animal cruelty.</li> <li>- Wear leather jackets.</li> <li>- Why don't you join me? Good idea! Thanks! <b>PC</b></li> <li>- Vegetarian restaurant.</li> <li>- We don't have rivers in Saudi. So the task should be modified to sea.</li> </ul>
P84-85	<p>6d- Let's celebrate!</p> <p>1- Read: Eid Al- Adha: The festival of Sacrifice. 2- Vocabulary. Paris/Eiffel Tower <b>WC</b> 3- Grammar: Compounds of some, any, no, every. 4- Practice. 5- Listen: no text. Listen to part of a <b>radio</b> show. A reporter is talking about a race.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eid Mubarak, the hajj, <b>IC/</b> Saud Arabia, Makkah. <b>LC.</b></li> <li>- Muslims.</li> <li>- Paris, Eiffel tower. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Listen: Part of a radio <b>AC</b> show, a reporter is talking about a race. Complete the <b>flyer AC</b> below. World Ironman Championship. Kailua- Kona. <b>WC.</b></li> </ul>

	Complete the <b>flyer</b> below. <b>AC/SC</b> 6- Speak: <b>talk in pairs</b> . Discuss an event that takes place in your city/ town. <b>LC/CA</b> .	
P86-87	<p>6e- Special days</p> <p>1- <b>Vocabulary:</b> match the phrases a-d with the pictures 1-4. Then listen and check your answers. Happy Eid, Congratulations, have a nice trip, Get well soon.</p> <p>2- Read: an email/ invitation/ refusing an invitation. 3- listen. No text. Dan is inviting his friends to his place after the graduation ceremony and match the names with the sentences. 4- Speak and Write. Set phrase to invite and accept or refuse an invitation. <b>A- Role play: talk in group of three.</b> Use the expressions from above. SA: Invite two of your friends. SB: refuse and give a reason. SC: Accept and ask him/her questions to find out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- B- Write an email to a friend inviting him/her to an event on a holiday.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hi everyone! Waiting for a reply,</li> <li>- Mum. <b>PC</b></li> <li>- But I am sorry! I can't make it</li> <li>- <b>Board games.</b></li> <li>- Sorry again! <b>PC</b></li> <li>- The window looks old. A picture of a laptop.</li> <li>- Thank you for inviting me to your place! I'd love to come! <b>PC</b></li> <li>- See you later! <b>PC</b></li> <li>- A get-together after.</li> <li>- A variety of phrases that could be used to perform the speech acts. Ways to refuse politely. <b>PC</b></li> </ul>
P88-89	<b>Round- up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Zoo, £ <b>UK</b>, Dammam. <b>LC</b></li> <li>- Speak: Write: thank your friend and say good bye. <b>PC</b></li> <li>- Pizza. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Poetry, <b>AC</b>.</li> <li>- <b>Speak:</b> talk in pairs. Use the ideas below and make up a conversation.</li> <li>- <b>Write:</b> Look at a friend's e-mail below and write an email to reply. In your e-mail you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Thank your friend.</b></li> <li>- Say that you can't go.</li> <li>- Give an excuse</li> <li>- Suggest going somewhere with this person next weekend.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
P90	Cross- curricular page: Science Animals in danger. Extinct or endangered species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Arabian Oryx, lives in Saudi Arabia, Middle East.</li> <li>- Barbary lions. There were Barbary lions in <b>the tower of London/UK</b> from the</li> </ul>

		<p>13<sup>th</sup> century until 1835 when zoo keeper moved them to <a href="#">London Zoo</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whalers hunt them. Blue whale.</li> <li>- Charles Darwin Research Station on the island of Santa Cruz. <a href="#">US</a> Lonesome Jones, giant tortoise. He is the last Pinta island tortoise in the world.</li> <li>- Thylacine, or Tasmanian Tiger or Wolf. Australia. <a href="#">OENS</a></li> <li>- Dodos liv in Mauritius.</li> <li>- Poem: do me a favour go to page 127. Same as the previous poem. <a href="#">AC</a></li> <li>- This text could help in <a href="#">IELTS</a>.</li> </ul>
P91	Unit 7: One of a kind	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- do you enjoy visiting places?</li> <li>- What characteristics make someone unique? <a href="#">PO/ CA</a></li> <li>- In this module, you will learn       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To talk about prices.</li> <li>2. To express preference.</li> <li>3. To talk about clothes.</li> <li>4. To ask for and give an opinion.</li> <li>5. To use language related to shopping.</li> <li>6. To identify and describe objects.</li> <li>7. To talk about sizes.</li> <li>8. To make comparisons.</li> <li>9. To ask for and give directions.</li> <li>10. To read a map.</li> <li>11. To talk and write about places in a city/ town.</li> <li>12. To describe people physical appearance/personality.</li> <li>13. To write a description of a person.</li> <li>14. To distinguish between British and American English.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
P92-93	<p>7a- A perfect fit:          1- Vocabulary: 2- Read: what do you think the dialogue is about? A conversation between a shop- assistant and a man/ Read again. Which pyjamas do they buy? 3-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary: Abaya, Thobe, Sandals. Fashion. Familiar items.</li> <li>- Pound-pence UK/ euros-cents WC/ Riyal- Halala. LC</li> <li>- Thank you very much! <a href="#">PC</a></li> </ul>

	Grammar: one/ones- too/ enough. 4- Practice. 5- Pronunciation: notice the stressed words and how the stress affects the meaning. 6- Speak: role-play: imagine: shop assistance and a customer, items and colours with prices in riyals.	
P94-95	7b- Good looks 1- Vocabulary. 2- Read: life time friendships/ Read the title of the article and look at the pictures. What do you think the text is about? 3- Grammar: Comparative forms. 4- practice. 5- speak. Compare between two men's pictures using the given adjectives: talk in pairs. look at the pictures of the two men below and take turns to compare them using some of the adjectives in the box. 6- Write. About their adjectives in 5. A few sentences to compare the men above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real pictures of small girls. Their names are not Saudis. / fake photoshop of a Saudi young man.</li> <li>- A familiar universal topic.</li> <li>- Play games/ read books typical English culture.</li> <li>- Chubby/ overweight.</li> <li>- Two Saudi men but they don't look Saudi. Fake photoshop.</li> </ul>
P96-97	7c- Getting there 1- Vocabulary: match the pictures with the phrases. Then listen and check your answers. 2- Read: Different ways to get around. 3- Grammar: Superlative forms. 4- Practice. 5- Listen: to three people calling a radio phone-in programme and match the names with the means of transport. There is one extra means of transport which you do not need to use. B- listen again and match the names with the phrases. There is one extra phrase which you do not need to use. 6- Speak: talk in pairs. Discuss the following. which means of transport do you usually use? Why? / which means of transport do you like? and don't like why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Underground- tram. FI</li> <li>- Ethan: Buraydah/ Camel riding. Not real trip and astonished visitor. The snake attacked his camel.</li> <li>- Segway PT: a kind of machine to move with two wheels- state US, Daniel visiting his cousin.</li> <li>- Neil visited Thailand. It is a banded country to travel.</li> <li>- It was worth every penny. UK. PC</li> <li>- A radio form program. AC/SC</li> <li>- Car Free Day.</li> <li>- No writing task.</li> </ul>



P98-99	<p>7d- Worth Visiting</p> <p>1- Read. What kind of information would someone ask at the top of the Empire State Building? Listen, read and compare your answers. At the entrance.../ At the top...2- Vocabulary. 3- Listen. 4- Speak. Talk in pairs, look at the map above and complete it with names of different places to visit. SB is visiting your city but he does not know where to go. Suggest places and give him/ her directions. Use the phrases in the box. SB ask SA for suggestions and directions / it is similar to a game. 5- <b>Write:</b> below is part of a letter you have received from a friend who wants to visit your town/ city for a weekend. Write a reply telling him/her about a place to visit and giving him/ her directions. Answer the questions below. <a href="#">DLC/CA/PO.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empire State building.</li> <li>- There's no coatroom here.</li> <li>- Thanks a lot/ you are welcome.</li> <li>- Go straight to the ticket purchase line.</li> <li>- Central Park the fifth Avenue going towards Harlem.</li> <li>- Macy's the world largest store. Thanks a lot!</li> <li>- Broadway.</li> <li>- British words: line-elevator- store- awesome. British</li> <li>- American words: brilliant-shop- queue- lift.</li> <li>- Willow Road, Hazel Road, Hail Road, maple Road, Blue street, Elm street, Ash Road.</li> <li>- It's pretty awesome.</li> </ul>
P100-101	<p>7e- What a character!</p> <p>1- Read. Personal Heroes/ 2- Listen. Use a dictionary to know the words. 3- Pronunciation: long vowels. 4- <b>Speak:</b> think of someone you admire and present this person to the class. Answer the questions below. Use some of the words in the box. / <b>CA/ underlying beliefs.</b> 5- Write: paragraphing. Write a description of somebody you know. Two paragraphs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uncle Ahmed: firefighter, Ali.</li> <li>- <b>Very authentic pictures about a Saudi firefighter, and a school. But what is the benefit from the picture.</b></li> <li>- Adil is the brother of Sami-born deaf/ special school. / Deep issue/ sensitive topic.</li> </ul>
P102-103	<p>Round-up</p> <p>6-Speak: Discuss in pairs and complete the sentences below. How well do you know your classmates? 6- Write: Choose two people, two persons, two books, and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excuse me/ museum.</li> <li>- Thank you very much.</li> <li>- Euro. WC.</li> <li>- Thanks. <b>PC.</b></li> </ul>

	write a paragraph comparing them?	
P104	<p>Culture page: Driving around: driving laws.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>LC:</b> you have to wear your seat belt at all times. This has been enforced in 2018.</li> <li>- In Saudi, you have to be 18 to drive a car or ride a motorbike, <b>(this is not accurate)</b></li> <li>- The last sentence / so, be extra careful if traveling from Saudi Arabia to the UK or another country. Driving laws could be very different.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A comparison: similarities Vs. differences between UK and Saudi Arabia. Arabian Automobile Association (AAA). UK Automobile Association (AA).</li> </ul>
P105	<p><b>Unit 8: Adventure</b> <b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you enjoy doing adventurous things?</li> <li>- How do they make you feel?</li> <li>- Would you like more adventure in your life?</li> <li>- <b>CA/PO.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this module, you will learn. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To talk about experiences, you have had.</li> <li>2. To make questionnaires about experiences.</li> <li>3. To report commands and requests.</li> <li>4. To talk about different countries.</li> <li>5. To write information about a country.</li> <li>6. To write an email to a friend giving your news.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
P106-107	<p>8a- I dare you!</p> <p>1- Vocabulary: desert, island, cave, mountain, lake. Match. then listen and check. Can you name any famous geographical features? <b>DSC</b>2- Read: Are you adventurous enough? Quiz: discuss your results of the quiz. <b>Culture of research/ game/ analysing your character</b> 3- Grammar: Present perfect Simple. / 4- Practice. 5- Speak: <b>talk in pairs</b>, use the ideas below and your own <b>to make a questionnaire for your partner</b>. Then ask and answer questions. Write: use your partner's answers and write a few sentences about him/ her.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Looks familiar.</li> <li>- Quiz.</li> <li>- Egypt/ Pyramids. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Horse.</li> <li>- Tyre/tire.</li> <li>- Pretty bad.</li> </ul>
P108-109	<p>8b- That's life!</p> <p>1- Vocabulary. Listen and repeat. <b>Have any of these</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women animation picture covered.</li> </ul>

	<p>things ever happened to you? DLC/CA/PO 2- Read: Look at the pictures. What do you think happened to the man? Listen, read and check your answers? 3- Grammar: present perfect simple Vs. Past simple. 4- Practice. 5- pronunciation: the sound /h/. 6- Listen: 7- Speak: Choose one of the misfortunes from the box and answer student B's questions. SB: ask SA question to find out about her/ his misfortune. Use the prompts in the box.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Missing a meeting / and never missing a meeting. CA.</li> <li>- Show up/ pretty bad/ No! How unlucky!</li> <li>- Go to the museum/ AC.</li> <li>- Losing a credit card/ all you do is call the credit card company.</li> <li>- Ride a camel.</li> <li>- Pasta.</li> <li>- Listen: I hope they talk about the misfortune across cultures.</li> </ul>
P110-111	<p>8c- All Abroad 1- Vocabulary. Listen and repeat. Have you ever used the items shown in the pictures? 2- Read. 'Sailing instructor looks like a pirate'. / look at the picture. Who do you think the man is? Listen, read and find out. 3- Grammar: Reported Speech (Commands/ requests) 4- Practice: 5- listen: complete the form. Could help in IELTS/ it is a task. 6- Speak: imagine that you are one of the people below and think of five commands and requests they might say. Sailing instructor/ the conversation has provided a background knowledge/ gym instructor/ teacher/ boss/ doctor. Then tell SB who has to report them to the class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Here is the whistle. Phhhh!</li> <li>- Don't blow it. Besides, it's bad luck to blow a whistle on a boat.</li> <li>- Larry and Tom on a boat. It seems that they learn sailing. Port means left/ Starboard means right. Larry: why can't we just say left and right. Tom: This is what sailors say.</li> <li>- Tips for sailing/ wear your life jackets at all times, but don't use the whistle. It's for emergencies only.</li> <li>- 'Sailors speak differently'.</li> <li>- 'use your compass'. Said James.</li> <li>- 'Get me a glass of water, please' said Mr Kent to his grandson.</li> <li>- Please pay attention, Carol!' said the teacher.</li> <li>- Saying please is consider a weakness when it is requested by the teacher. Because we have different pragmatics.</li> </ul>
P112-113	<p>8d- Exciting places 1- Vocabulary. Listen and repeat. Then talk about your country. DLC/PO2/CA- Read: All About Peru WC B- Read again and complete the fact file below. Peru. 3- Pronunciation 4- Listen: there is no text 5- Speak: Information Gap Activity. 6- Write. Use the information from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peru/ South America. Lima, Arequipa.</li> <li>- Official language of Peru is Spanish.</li> <li>- The Andes: the highest mountain in the Peruvian Andes. Huascaran.</li> <li>- Llamas: Animal- camel family.</li> <li>- Describing Llamas as clever and gentle animals.</li> <li>- The Inca trail- Urubamba river. Machu Picchu, most</li> </ul>

	<p>activity 5 to write about one of the countries. Egypt/Morocco.</p>	<p>popular Peru tourist attractions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lake Titicaca, 42 artificial islands, Uros. Bolivia,</li> <li>- Nazca desert, home to some mysterious geometrical shapes, Nasca line.</li> <li>- The Peruvian Amazon. The second largest jungle in the world.</li> <li>- In the listening activity: How much do you know about South America? Geographical information about cities in South America.</li> <li>- The pictures fail to show the beauty of Peru. <b>Nothing about cultural habits.</b></li> <li>- Egypt- Gebel Katarina- River- Nile/ Morocco- Jebel Toubkal- river- draa.</li> </ul>
	<p>8e- Action Sports. 1- Vocabulary: Listen and repeat: Have you ever tried any of the activities below? Which one would you like to try? 2- Read: The Brochure quickly and match the headings with the paragraphs. Then listen, read and check your answers: Extreme Summer Camp. 3- Write: Using tenses/ avoiding repetitions. Imagine that you are at the Extreme Summer Camp for your holiday. Write an e-mail to your friend telling him/her about it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CPR</li> <li>- Surfing- white-water rafting/ bungee jumping/ rock- climbing. Water skiing/ hand-gliding/ diving. Scuba- diving.</li> </ul>
	<p>Round-up Vocabulary: B. Complete the words in the box: According to the dictionary, port means left in sailing. Speak: <b>Group survey.</b> Talk in groups of four. Use the prompts in the table and ask each other questions. Note down the answers in the table. B. Report your answers to the class. Write: about five things you've always wanted to do but never have. <b>CA/DLC/PE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mount Fuji. / Brazil. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Amazon rain forest. / Beijing China/ Italian food. <b>WC</b></li> <li>- Antarctica/ Egypt- Pyramids/ <b>WC</b></li> </ul>
118	<p>Cross- curricular: Ice Hockey: (PE= Gym)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Played on ice- rink- History: Montreal. In USA, a game between Yale</li> </ul>

	<p>History: NHL is the largest organization for the sport in the US and Canada, and hockey is the official winter sport of Canada. OENS</p> <p>NHL is the 1</p> <p>The game:</p> <p>Rules:</p>	<p>university and John Hopkins university. official winter sports of Canada. National Hockey league (NHL).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Puck,</li> <li>- Poem 'wonderful world' / AC.</li> </ul>
P119	Appendixes	-
119-125	Pair work activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It looks like a game 3a.</li> <li>- 3b looks like problem-solving.</li> <li>- 1b a puzzle.</li> <li>- 1c a task / interviewing Ameer Abdullah.</li> <li>- 4b: making a salad/ problem solving.</li> <li>- 5d Gap filling/ task.</li> <li>- 7a role play/ shop assistant.</li> <li>- Task/ gap- filling.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
P126-127	Poems AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four poems</li> <li>- First, Day by day. Circle the correct words, listen and check your answers.</li> <li>- Saturday and Sunday / they are days off.</li> <li>- Second, Feeling Good. Complete the words in the box. / going to the gym.</li> <li>- Third, Do me a favour. Circle the correct words. / borrowing a bike/ car request. / give me a call.</li> <li>- Fourth, Wonderful World/complete with the words in the box. Suggestions for travelling to overcome boredom (to Africa / Pyramids and temples/ Europe/ America. / Antarctica) WC</li> </ul>
P128-135	Grammar reference	-
P136	Learning tips	- Nothing about culture/ intercultural communication.
P137	Irregular verbs	-
P1138	British and American English Spelling/ grammar and usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 69 words and phrases</li> <li>- + differences in spelling</li> </ul>
P139-144	Word list	-

## 11. The interviewed participants' answers on the Questionnaire

### Section 1: The degree of importance of implementing cultural items from the broad senses of culture in language teaching

#### Item No.1: Aesthetic Category

Group	participants																		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	3	3	3	5	2	2	1	4	2	2	2	5	4	3	5	3	5	4	3.22
Teachers	1	4	3	2	4	3	5	3	4	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.46
Total																			3.34

#### Item No.2: Sociological Category

Group	participants																		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	5	5	1	4	4	2	3	5	3	5	3	3.61
Teachers	2	4	1	4	4	4	1	3	4	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.27
Total																			3.44

#### Item No.3: Distinctive Semantic Category

Group	participants																		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	4	4	5	5	2	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	2	4.22
Teachers	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.45
Total																			4.34

#### Item No.4: General Semantic Category

Group	participants																		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	4	4	5	5	5	1	3	4	2	5	5	2	4	5	4	3	3	3.83
Teachers	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.45
Total																			4.14

**Item No.5: Pragmatic Category**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	2	4	4	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4.33
Teachers	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.64
Total																			4.49

**Section 2: Sources of cultural Items****Item No.6: UK culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	4	2	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	2	5	5	4	3	3	4.11
Teachers	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.91
Total																			3.51

**Item No.7: US culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	3	4	5	4	4	3	1	3	5	3	4	4	1	5	4	5	5	3	3.67
Teachers	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.91
Total																			3.29

**Item No.8: Other English Native speaking cultures**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	3	5	5	5	3	3	1	2	4	1	3	4	1	3	3	4	3	3	3.11
Teachers	1	1	3	3	3	1	5	2	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.64
Total																			2.88

**Item No.9: ESL Speaking cultures**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	3	3	2	5	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	5	5	1	2	2	1	1	2.33
Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.45
Total																			1.89

**Item No.10: Local Culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	2	5	4	4	2	1	1	4	3	1	3.33
Teachers	5	1	5	5	2	1	3	5	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.36
Total																			3.35

**Item No.11: Islamic Culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	2	5	4	1	5	2	2	2	5	1	4	2	2	2	4	5	5	3.22
Teachers	5	1	4	5	2	1	1	1	2	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.64
Total																			2.93

**Item No.12: Other World Cultures**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	2	5	5	5	3	4	1	3	1	3	3	5	5	3	1	1	2	1	3
Teachers	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.73
Total																			2.37

**Item No.13: Topics**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	4.5
Teachers	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.73
Total																			4.61

**Item No.15: Sensitive topics from the target culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	5	5	4	1	2	3	1	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	5	5	3.72
Teachers	2	5	4	5	2	5	5	5	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.09
Total																			3.91



**Item No.14: Sensitive topics from the local culture**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	2	3	4	5	5	5	2	4	3	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	4	4.11
Teachers	5	5	1	4	1	5	1	4	4	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.36
Total																			3.74

**Item No.16: Cultural Understanding**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	5	4	4	4	4	3.72
Teachers	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	1	4	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.27
Total																			3.99

**Item No.17: Communicative Tasks 1:**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	4	5	4	4	5	5	3	2	4	3	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3.72
Teachers	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
Total																			4.13

**Item No.18: Communicative Tasks 2:**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	4	3	5	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3.82
Teachers	3	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.27
Total																			4.05

**Item No.19: Future Visits1**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.72
Teachers	5	5	5	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
Total																			4.63

**Item No.20: Future Visits 2**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4.72
Teachers	5	5	5	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
Total																			4.59

**Item No.21: Other Courses**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	4	4	4	1	3	2	1	3.94
Teachers	4	5	4	4	2	4	5	5	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.09
Total																			4.02

**Item No.22: Avoidance of the situations that could cause misunderstanding**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	3	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4.56
Teachers	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.45
Total																			4.51

**Item No.23: Positive impression**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	2	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.67
Teachers	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.73
Total																			4.70

**Item No.24: International English Proficiency tests**

Group	participants																		T
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Students	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4.61
Teachers	3	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.55
Total																			4.58

## 12. Open- Ended Items Full List

### 12.1. Cultural items and Topics

Table 12.1:

*Aesthetic Category: Codes and examples*

Code	Topics and cultural items from the aesthetic category	Students Frequency	Teachers Frequency
		42	4
<b>Literary works:</b>	famous and/or contemporary novels e.g. <i>Twilight</i> , and famous novels based on love stories. (from interviews: only students: 3).		
<b>Students 15 examples</b>			
<b>Teachers 2 examples</b>	English literature to improve the speaking and writing skills of the students.	3	3
	Inspiring stories of successful people, KSA, such as Gandhi, and Prince Sultan bin Solomon.	7	0
	Biographies, such as the life of the prophet or his companions.	2	0
	Poetry from the UK, US, KSA, Arabic, old literature.	2	0
	Magazines	1	0
<b>Arts</b>	Cartoons, and animation from Japan, Walt Disney (From interviews: only teachers: 2)		
<b>Teachers 1 examples</b>	Museum, Old crafts, handcrafts from India, crafts, potteries	4	0
<b>Students 27 examples</b>	Theater: famous plays from the UK and USA.	1	0
	Cinema: Movies from the USA, Egypt, and India.	8	1
	TV programs from Egypt, the USA, Lebanon, and Gulf countries, WWF, news, etc. Famous hosts.	1	0
	TV series from Egypt, the USA <i>Game of Thrones</i> , Syria, Lebanon, Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, and South Korea. (famous actors and actresses from interviews).	2	0
	Social media: Twitter, Snap Chat, and You Tube and famous accounts of its users. (From interviews both teachers: 3 and students: 12)		

Dancing from Egypt and/or ND: WC.	4	0
Photography	2	0
Drawing	1	0
Music: Playing musical instruments such as the southern Saudi <i>Alzir</i> , songs, and song lyrics from the USA and Egypt.  (From interviews: only students): Rap from the American culture (2) and use of karaoke. (3); famous singers (3).	4	0

Table 12.2:

*Sociological Category: Codes and examples.*

Code	N	Topics and cultural items from the sociological category	Students Frequency 191	Teachers Frequency 52
History	Students: 13	World wars.	0	1
	Teachers: 3	From interviews: empires like the British empire, and colonies. (Teachers: 1), <i>Almasmak</i> victory (Teacher: 1)		
		The victories of the Islamic Empire.	6	2
		The Uthmanic Empire and its development (2); the Ommiad country (2).	4	0
		The history of KSA, petrol.	2	0
	Roman culture, and Greek culture like Macedonian Alexander.	2	0	
Science	Students: 33  Teachers: 6	Types of skin complexion (2), symptoms of diseases, breast cancer (teacher: 1), clinics (2), diet (2), the side effects of diet (3), medical terms (1), tips for a healthy body like walking (2), the names of medical cures (1).	13	1

		<p>New topics such as science (e.g., space (2), (teachers: 1) and scientific experiments (2)) and technology (5), (teachers:1) (e.g., the general components of electronic devices from Japan (1)).</p> <p>From Interviews: (teachers: 1) Nano technology, and robots.</p>	10	2
		Scientists and their innovations.	6	1
		The development of Japan and the steps of their success.	3	1
		Biology and Planets. And in interviews	1	0
Tourism	Students: 13 Teachers: 5	<p>Important places such as famous buildings, ruins, airports, and hospitals.</p> <p>From interviews: such as (teachers: 1) <i>Madaen Saleh</i> in Saudi Arabia, (Students: 3) Eiffel Tower, Tower of Pisa; etc.</p>	9	3
		<p>Providing helpful information about traveling to respect the rules of others, city organization, weather, and nature of the suggested places.</p> <p>From interviews: For example, (teachers: 3) visa emigration rules, and official vacations; airport required procedures, travel advice and tips as what you should take in your suitcase, booking a hotel room or service, suggesting Apps and websites that help with travelling; reading the map of bus, etc</p>	4	3
A selection of the students' favourite travel destinations as Dubai; purposes of travelling as studying abroad. (from interviews: Teachers: 2).				
Food	Students: 12 Teachers: 5	<p>What other cultures are famous for such as tea, spices, rice, and kinds of food.</p>	8	3
		Cooking and recipes from all over the world.	2	1
		Famous cuisines around the world including types of restaurants, cafés, canteens menus.	2	1
Custom and tradition	Students 17 Teachers: 4	Cultural festivals such as <i>Eid</i> , traditional clothes, and dancing traditions, unfamiliar customs.	17	4

		From interviews: (Teachers: 3) Beneficial habits in other cultures for example, respecting time and punctuality, walking, and appreciation of work.		
Education	Students: 12 Teachers: 5	Introduction to international proficiency tests and ways to prepare for these tests.	3	2
		Informal education: Using social media in continual learning: Online chatting courses via Skype, YouTube channels, video game chatting, or, to proceed to the next stage, Google and Twitter.	6	2
		Formal education Secondary school and university there, teaching, choosing a major, or majoring English, research (teachers:1).  From interviews: Implementing the research culture like answering questionnaires (teachers: 1 and students: 1).	3	1
Computer, chemistry, connection to other subjects that teach about the local culture as the Islamic subjects, Arabic subjects, etc.				
Scholarships and studying abroad, living with a host family				
Future goals	Students: 4 Teachers: 5	Self-improvement: Increasing intelligence (students: 2), improving skills (students: 2), how to be more friendly, writing a CV, use of e-mail, from interviews:( students: 3) shopping online.	4	5
	Students: 4 Teachers: 5	Responsibility and maturity like finding a job (teachers: 5) Working while studying (2), what you should do when you become a father (2).  From interviews: (teachers: 3) jobs available in Saudi Arabia that needs an adequate knowledge of English as oil companies, job interviews, job applications. From interviews: (Students: 2): first aids, what should you do in fire, suffocating, etc.	4	5
Leisure Activities	Students 23 Teachers: 6	Video games, the game called the Godfather (13), video game competitions (teachers:4), makeup for girls (3) (teachers: 2), teenagers' fashion trends (3), shopping (3).  From interviews: (students: 6):New hacks, using social media: Snapchat, Instagram; watching TV series; Games: Video games, the game called the Godfather, video game competitions; fashion trends: make-up, dancing; cars; smart phones applications, sports building	23	6

		muscles in a gym, watching/playing football; daily life: hanging out with friends, shopping, inviting friends; listening to music, etc.		
Sports	Students: 39 Teachers: 2	Olympics in Africa (4), Greece. Football teams (18) (teachers:2), such as in Brazil and KSA, generally. Football for girls (4). Riding horses in KSA (2). Basketball (2), such as the NBA. The folly ball (1), table tennis (2), swimming (2), mountain climbing (1), karate (3) in KSA or ND: WC.	39	2
Social status	Students: 2 Teachers: 2	Family relations: Marriage.  From interviews: (teachers:2): Social conditions: poverty.	2	2
Religion: Islam	Students: 5 Teachers: 1	Religion: Performing religious practices, such as prayers in Islam, religious terms in other religions that are like Islam, dealing with other religions in the world in a balanced way.  From interviews: (Teachers: 2) Quranic verses, judgment day signs, some prophecies, frequent asked questions about Islam, wudu, Salah, etc. From interviews: (Teachers: 1): Prohibited acts in Islam: avoidance of <i>interest</i> in current bank accounts. From interviews: (Teachers: 2): Prohibited food and drinks in Islam: The side effects of wine, ordering meat with avoidance of pork in a restaurant; why we say <i>burger</i> or <i>beef burger</i> instead of <i>hamburger</i> . Prohibited food by law such as chewing gums in Malaysia	5	1
Sensitive topics	Students: 2	Politics: The country's kings and the 2030 vision of Saudi Arabia.	2	0
	Teachers: 1	Women driving cars	0	1
From interviews: (students: 4) sensitive use of language, the frequent use of swear words in media; abbreviated words that can be used instead of swearing words. For example, the N word.				
From interviews: (students: 2) Diseases: addiction, HIV				
From interviews: (students: 2) Illegal products: side effects of drugs				
Systems	Students: 12 Teachers: 2	Crimes (2), traffic violations (2), accident rates (2) (teachers:2), organizing traffic (2), military (1), police training (1), and safety systems (2) in the USA, India, Egypt, China, and Jordan.	12	2

		From interviews: (Teachers: 2): Institution structure: Such as court system; (Students: 2) penalties.		
Good Citizenship		From interviews: (Teachers: 3) ; enhancement of citizenship, 2030 Saudi vision the operations in Yemen, terrorism issues, e.g., image of Islam developed due to several terrorist attacks, handicapped, killing Shia in mosques, volunteering.		



Table 12.3:

*The General Semantic Category: codes and examples*

Codes	Topics and cultural items from the Distinctive semantic category	Students Frequency 6	Teachers Frequency 2
Language	<p>Word relations:</p> <p>Polysemy and synonymy: terms like diseases and names that have more than one meaning (1), Common abbreviated words that can be used with bad connotations (1). swear words different usage.</p>	2	0
	<p>Language relations: The inclusion of similar meanings or use of Arabic slang language in English (2), differences between standards of English (2). (Teachers 2) and (students' interviews: 2) Arabic <i>yelnjy</i>' and <i>'warag enab</i>'; Borrowed words used differently in other languages or has the same meaning. e.g., computer, from interviews: (students: 2) <i>'bona bete</i>' from French; coinage of new words from English. For example, (students: 2) <i>'condaisha</i>' in Arabic slang language is air conditioner in English.</p>	4	2
	<p>language and culture relation: From interviews: (Teachers: 3): an introduction to facts about language and its relation to the culture of society as the debate concerning the native speaker 'ownership of English language'.</p> <p>(3 teachers) Westernization, Americanization, globalization.</p>		
	<p>From interviews: The impact of type of job on the vocabulary use (teachers: 2). e.g., knowing technical words in other majors (teachers: 2).</p>		

Table 12.4:

*The Distinctive Semantic Category: codes and examples*

Codes	Topics and cultural items from the Distinctive semantic category	Students Frequency	Teachers Frequency
Language: Proper nouns	Places: Such as sacred Muslim places (3), buildings such as hotels (2), ruins (3), and institutions such as universities (2).	10	0
	Figures: Scientists (5 students/ 1 teachers), Muslim historical characters (2).  From interviews: Famous historical figures (teachers:2; students: 3), Besides, the famous sports players (students: 4), famous video gamers (students: 3).	7	1
	Products: Brands (4), dishes (2), and cars (3).  From interviews: Both teachers and students: watches, chocolate and national products (students and teachers: 2).	9	0

Table 12.5:

*The Pragmatics category: codes and examples*

Codes	Topics and cultural items from the pragmatics category	Students Frequency 41	Teachers Frequency 13
Degree of formality in languages from ENSs, USA  Students: 27  Teachers: 4	Colloquial language in everyday conversations (9) as performed in accents (6).  From interviews: the different standards of English due the different cultural context; dialects. (both teachers: 6 and students: 12)	15	0
	Slang for teenagers in school life (secondary and university students) (4).	4	0
	Idiomatic expressions and proverbs.	3	2
	Formal language in conversation and writing (only teachers).	5	2
Behavior in conversation  Students: 14  Teachers: 9	Speech acts: Greeting, ordering at a restaurant or cafe, thanking, requesting help in hospitals.  From interviews: (teachers: 2) Invitations in the target culture, and apology.	3	4
	Appropriate manner in conversation: Their manner, gestures and differences from us (2 students/ teachers 2), behavior (1 students), politeness (2 students/ 2 teachers). This can be from Japan (teachers). How to behave while eating (table manners) (1 teachers).	5	5
	Use of humor, such as jokes.	2	0
	How to state an opinion, ways of agreeing and disagreeing.	2	0
	Inferring the intended meaning in conversation.	2	0
Intercultural communication	From interviews: (teachers:3): cultural shock, intercultural communication, e.g., stereotypes, and racism.		

## 12.2. Representing and teaching the cultural content

### 12.2.1. Students

Table 12.6:

*A Summary of the Students' Suggested Ways of Representing the Cultural Content in EFL textbook and teaching class: open-ended items and follow-up interviews.*

#### **The cultural content should help the students by...**

Implementing cultural items from the pragmatic cultural sense to improve their communicative skills in conversation.

Ensuring continuous practice after class, lifelong learning, such as using YouTube.

Developing the students' skills, especially speaking via short conversations, choosing real life situations (e.g., restaurants, hospitals, and school life), teaching commonly used vocabulary, and not focusing on grammar drills.

Using task-based activities that can make the students move and do things, for example, presentations, role-plays based on criticizing things or topics, descriptions.

Using affordable technology to understand accents of ENSs and cultural topics, such as YouTube and movies.

Giving the students a choice to do activities about their favorite cultural items from their favorite cultures and providing extra activities to gain more marks.

Not going through cultural information in detail if it hinders their understanding or clashes with their own cultural values.

Representing the students in their EFL textbook by reflecting their local and Islamic culture.

Using humorous and funny topics and humor as a teaching technique.

Achieving their purposes of learning English (e.g., their instrumental future such as university, trade, shop, scholarship, job interviews, and traveling, or integrative goals such as chatting with friends online and contacting famous figures via social media).

Developing the students' intercultural communicative skills, for example, increasing cultural knowledge.

### 12.2.2. Teachers

Table 12.7:

*A Summary of Teachers' Suggested Ways of Representing the Cultural Content in EFL textbook and teaching class: open-ended items and follow-up interviews*

**The cultural content should help the students by...**

Expressing themselves in a balanced way, such as answering questions about their religion, dealing with **the bad image of the students' culture created by the media** by enhancing the idea of being an ambassador of their religion for others and **having a moderate Muslim character**.

Preparing the students for their future career and university.

Improving their research skills.

Enhancing the principles of cultural understanding, such as respecting other cultures and religions, dealing with differences between other cultures and **their culture with an open mind**, and expressing themselves in their intercultural communication by expressing who they are, their family, and/or their cultural background in a friendly and balanced way.

Ensuring practice within and after class by encouraging the students to use the language, such as a day for English activity.

Presenting realistic cultural content by having cultural items that can be useful in the students' daily life.

Not presenting complicated cultural items that can hinder understanding and **takes time in preparation**.

Developing a sense of pride for being a Muslim Arab, expressing themselves and their culture.

Developing the students' linguistic knowledge and their speaking and writing skills.

Improving language skills by	Improving Intercultural communication by
<p>Implementing cultural items from the pragmatic cultural sense to improve their communicative skills in conversation.</p> <p>Developing the students' skills, such as writing with a focus on speaking via short conversations, choosing real life situations (e.g., restaurants, hospitals, and school life); Presenting realistic cultural content by having cultural items that can be useful in the students' daily life.</p> <p>Implementing commonly used vocabulary useful for daily life situations inside the country and abroad.</p>	<p>Expressing themselves in a balanced way, such as answering questions about their religion, dealing with the bad image of the Saudi culture created by the media by enhancing the idea of being an ambassador of their religion for others by models of moderate Muslim characters</p> <p>Enhancing the principles of cultural understanding, such as respecting other cultures and religions, dealing with differences between other cultures and their culture with an open mind, and expressing themselves in their intercultural communication by expressing who they are, their family, and/or their cultural background in a friendly and balanced way.</p>
Practice	Requirements
<p>Ensuring continuous practice after class, such as using YouTube, a day for English activity.</p> <p>Using task-based activities that can make the students move and do things, for example, presentations, role-plays based on criticizing things or topics, descriptions.</p> <p>Giving the students a choice to do activities about their favorite cultural items from their favorite cultures and providing extra activities to gain more marks.</p>	<p>Not focusing on grammar drills.</p> <p>Not presenting complicated cultural items that can hinder understanding.</p> <p>Not going through cultural information in detail if it hinders their understanding or clashes with their own cultural values.</p>
Teaching	<p>Representing the students in their EFL textbook by reflecting their local or Islamic culture to develop a sense of pride for being a Muslim Arab, expressing themselves and their culture.</p>
<p>Using affordable technology to understand accents of ENSs and cultural topics, such as YouTube and movies.</p> <p>Using humor as a teaching technique by introducing funny topics.</p>	Learning Goals
	<p>Achieving their purposes of learning English (e.g., their instrumental goals such as preparing the students for their future career and university such as trade, shop, scholarship, job interviews, improving research skills and traveling, or integrative goals such as chatting with friends online and contacting famous figures via social media).</p>

13.1. Figure. A Summary of the Participants' Suggested Ways of representing and teaching the Cultural Content

### 13. Examples on Checklists for evaluating and analysing the cultural content of EFL textbooks

#### 13.1 Gray's (2006) checklist for evaluating the cultural content, p.85

Elements of content	Representational repertoire
<p><i>Language systems</i></p> <p>Grammar</p> <p>Lexis</p> <p>Phonology</p>	<p>What type of syllabus does the coursebook follow? What purposes/contexts of use (if any) does this presuppose?</p> <p>Which varieties of English are represented? (British, North American etc.) Are there any representations of L2 varieties of English? How are they represented? Is the grammar of spoken English distinguished from written grammar?</p> <p>Which lexical fields are taught? What purpose does the lexis serve?</p> <p>Is there a model of pronunciation? Which aspects of pronunciation are addressed (e.g. segmental/ suprasegmental features)? Is phonological variation represented?</p> <p>What role does the accompanying artwork play with regard to the above?</p> <p>General comments</p>
<p><i>Skills content</i></p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Speaking</p> <p>Writing</p>	<p>What topics are addressed? Who are the characters? (real/fictional, sex, age, ethnicity, job) What locations are used? Which text types are used? What is the source of texts? What is the point of view? What types of exercise are included?</p> <p>Same as for reading skill</p> <p>What topics do students talk about? What type of activities are used to practise speaking (e.g. role play)? Which aspects of pragmatics are addressed?</p> <p>Which genres are practiced (e.g. letter of complaint)? Are formal/informal registers addressed?</p> <p>What role does the accompanying artwork play with regard to the above?</p> <p>General comments</p>

**Table 3.2 Descriptive framework**

### 13.2. Littlejohn's (1992) checklist (as cited in Gray, 2006, p. 272)

#### Appendix 1 Littlejohn's (1992) framework

Process	Product
<u>Levels of inference</u>	<u>Related aspects of the material</u>
	<i>Realisation</i>
Level 1: 'What is there'	Place of the learner's materials in set Published form of learner's materials Subdivision of learner's materials Subdivisions of sections in subsections Continuity Route Access
	<i>Design</i>
Level 2: 'What is required of users'	Subject matter and focus Types of teaching/learning activities Participation: who does what with whom
Level 3 'What is implied'	Aims Principles of selection Principles of sequencing Teacher roles Learner roles (classroom) " " (in learning) Role of materials as a whole



### 13.3. Sercu's (2000) checklist (cited in Gray, 2006, p. 273)

#### Appendix 2 Sercu's (2000) framework

I	Location			
	1.1 Title of book			
	1.2 Page			
	1.3 Unit			
	1.4 Subsection			
	1.5 Number assigned on the page			
II	Characters			
	1.1 Age of characters			
	1.2 Gender of characters			
	1.3 Situation of interaction			
III	Cultural dimensions represented			
	Culture(s) addressed/	micro level	macro level	international and
	Dimensions of culture addressed			intercultural issues
	Own culture	x	x	x
	Foreign culture	x	x	x
IV	Countries represented			
V	Intercultural contacts			
	5.1 Type of intercultural contact			
	5.2 Type of background for intercultural contact			
	5.3 Type of intercultural situation			
VI	Didactic approach			
	6.1 Point of view of authors			
	6.1.1 Multiperspectivity – monoperspectivity			
	6.1.2 Qualitative direction of point of view			
	6.2 Text-types used			
	6.2.1 Text-types			
	6.2.2 Visuals			
	6.3 Task types			
	6.3.1 Educational potential of tasks			
	6.3.2 Main objective of tasks			
	6.3.3 Level of co-operation required			
	6.3.4 Other task characteristics			
	- address pupils' prior knowledge about the foreign culture			
	- address pupils' attitude to the foreign culture			
	- address pupils' own cultural frame of reference			
VII	Space			

### 13.4. Risager's (1991) checklist (cited in Gray, 2006, p. 66)

1. The micro level – phenomena of social and cultural anthropology:
  - a. the social and geographical definition of characters
  - b. material environment
  - c. situations of interaction
  - d. interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems.
  
2. The macro level – social, political, and historical matters:
  - e. broad social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economic, political etc.)
  - f. broad sociopolitical problems (unemployment, pollution etc.)
  - g. historical background.
  
3. International and intercultural issues:
  - h. comparisons between the foreign country and the pupil's own
  - i. mutual representations, images, stereotypes
  - j. mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict.
  
4. Point of view and style of the author(s).

**Fig. 3.3 Risager's (1991: 182-183) framework for describing cultural content**

### 13.5. Byram's (1993) checklist (cited in Gray, 2006, p. 68)

- social identity and social groups  
(ethnic minorities, social class, regional identity)
- social interaction  
(conventions of behaviour at differing levels of familiarity, as outsider and insider)
- belief and behaviour  
(taken-for-granted actions within a social group, moral and religious beliefs, daily routines)
- social and political institutions  
(state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government)
- socialisation and the life-cycle  
(families, schools, employment, rites of passage, divergent practices in different social groups, national auto-stereotypes of expectations)
- national history  
(historical and contemporary events which are significant in the constitution of the nation and its identity)
- national geography  
(geographical factors seen as being significant, national boundaries and changes to them)
- stereotypes and national identity  
(notions of what is typical, origins of these notions, symbols of national stereotypes)

**Fig. 3.4 Byram's (1993) minimum cultural content for coursebooks**

## 14.Traveller 1 description

### *Traveller 1 (Mitchell- Marileni Malkogianni, 2016-2017, p.1-2)*

<i>Traveller 1 (Mitchell- Marileni Malkogianni, 2016-2017, p.1-2)</i>						
<b>Hello</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Greetings			Pair work		Greeting and saying goodbye
	Names					Introducing oneself
	Countries and nationalities					Exchanging basic personal information
	Numbers (0-100)					Identifying objects
	Classroom objects					Understanding Classroom language
	Classroom language					Asking about one's health
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>					<b>Listening</b>
Colours	A magazine article: Favourite things	A short dialogue (understanding personal information)	Pair work	Sentences about one's abilities	Introducing oneself and others	
Personal items	Describing of people	A short dialogue (understanding specific information)	Game: Spot the differences	A paragraph about oneself giving personal information Developing skills: Punctuation and capital letters	Exchanging basic personal information	
Jobs	Culture page:	Three short dialogues (understanding specific information)	Presenting oneself		Identifying objects and colours	
Adjectives					Spelling	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The alphabet</li> <li>- intonation</li> </ul>			

	Telling time	The history behind a name				Describing people (personality)
						Expressing possession
						Expressing ability
Unit 2: Day by day	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Everyday activities	A magazine article: A helping hand	A dialogue (understanding gist and specific information)	Pair work	Sentences about daily routines	Discussing habitual actions and routines
	Days of the week	Quiz: do you spend your life in front of a screen?	A survey (understanding specific information)	Class survey - Third-person singular -s	A paragraph about working habits	Talking about jobs
	Jobs	An interview: Salman Malik: Karate Champion	An announcement (understanding gist and specific information)	Intonation of questions	A paragraph about free time	Talking about free-time activities
	Free-time activities	Cross-curricular page:			A paragraph about likes and dislikes Developing skills: word order	Expressing likes and dislikes
	Words/phrases related to technology	Phishing for danger				Making plans
	Phrases related to the gym					Stating a desire
Unit 3: Changes	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>

	Family	A magazine article: Montreal's underground city	Three short dialogues (understanding specific information)	Guessing game	A paragraph giving news	Talking about current activities, temporary states and future plans
	Furnished and appliances	An article about an unusual house	A monologue (understanding gist and specific information)	Pair work - Word stress - /b/, /v/, /w/	An e-mail describing one's neighbourhood and house/flat Developing skills: Set phrases for letters and e-mails	Giving reasons
	Rooms and parts of a house	Culture page: Life in Tornado Alley	A dialogue (understanding specific information)			Expressing possession
	Prepositions of place					Distinguishing between current events and habitual actions
	Places in a town /city					Referring to location
	Seasons					Describing one's house and town
	The weather					Giving news and responding to news
	Phrases for letters/ e-mails					
<b>Unit 4: Feeling good</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Containers	A magazine article: A rainbow on your plate	Three short dialogues (understanding main ideas)	Role play	A paragraph about people's eating habits	Ordering food and taking an order
	Food and drink	A flyer: Get involved: NEPAL	A telephone conversation (understanding specific information)	Pair work - /I, /I:/, /Ai/	A paragraph giving advice	Making, accepting and refusing offers
	Food courses	A problem page: Keep fit, Stay fit	Three monologues (Understanding gist and specific information)		An e-mail asking for advice Developing skills:	Talking about food preferences and eating habits

	Parts of the body	Cross-curricular page: Healthy Smoothie recipes		- Differentiating between the pronunciation of should and shouldn't	Linking words (and, but, so, because)	Asking and answering about quantity
	Ailments/ diseases					Talking about ailments
	Words/phrases related to fitness					Asking for and giving advice
						Expressing opinion
Unit 5: Thinking back	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Education	A magazine page: Red in the face?	Two monologues (transferring from verbal to visual information)	Pair work	A paragraph about last year's holiday	Talking about past events/ past holidays
	Academic subjects	A magazine article: They made it!	A dialogue (Understanding specific information)	Information gap activity -ed endings: /t/, /d/, /Id/	A short biography	Talking about school days
	Holiday activities	An extract from a book: Who am I?	The continuation of a story (Understanding gist and specific information)	- The reduced form of did you	A story	Narrating events/ a story
	Professions	Culture page:			An e-mail about a day out	Talking about famous people
	Words/phrases related to crime	The Saudi Vs the British education system			Developing skill: advice on how to write a story	Expressing ability in the past
	Years					Describing feelings
				Describing the manner in which something happens		
Unit 6: Ev	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>

				<b>(Pronunciation)</b>		
	Months and dates	A poster: Teacher's Day	A dialogue (understanding gist and specific information)	Pair work	An e-mail to a friend giving information about an event	Talking about events and special days
	Ordinals	An article: Eid al-adha festival	A part of a radio show (understanding specific information)	Group work	An e-mail of invitation	Making future plans
	Animals	Three e-mails: inviting, accepting and refusing an invitation	Four short dialogues (understanding main ideas)	Role play -intonation -/a/, /ʌp/, /a:/	An e-mail refusing an invitation Developing skills: Set phrases to invite and accept or refuse an invitation	Making requests and responding to them
	Wishes	Cross- curricular page: Animals in danger				Expressing obligation
	Word building (- er and -or endings for people)					Making suggestions
					Wishing people well in different situations	
<b>Unit 7: One of a kind (Optional)</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b> <b>(Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Clothes and accessories	A magazine article: Lifetime Friendships	A radio phone- in programme (understanding gist and specific information)	Role play	Sentences comparing people/ books, etc.	Identifying and describing clothes
	Words related to money	A magazine article: Different ways to get around	A dialogue (understanding gist/ understanding directions and locating places on a map)	Pair work	A letter giving information about a place and giving directions	Expressing preference



	Words/phrases related to appearance	A magazine article: Personal heroes	Three monologues (Understanding gist and specific information)	Presenting people -Sentence stress  - /three long vowels/	A description of a person Developing skills: Paragraphing	Talking about prices and sizes
	Means of transport	Culture page:				Asking for and giving opinion
	Prepositions of movement	Driving Around				Describing appearance / personality
	Location and directions					Making comparisons
	Adjectives describing personality					Asking for and giving directions
						Distinguishing between British and American English
<b>Unit 8: Adventure (Optional)</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking (Pronunciation)</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Functions</b>
	Geographical features	Quiz: <i>Are you adventurous enough?</i>	Two monologues (understanding specific information)	Pair work	Sentences about one's experiences	Talking about experiences/ misfortunes
	Equipment	A brochure: <i>All about Peru</i>	A dialogue (understanding specific information)	Group survey	A paragraph about a country: South America	Linking past and present time
	Points of the compass	A brochure: <i>Extreme Summer Camp</i>	A radio show (understanding specific information)	Information gap activity  - Silent /h/ - /two long vowels/	An email to a friend giving news about a holiday Developing skills: Using tenses/ Avoiding repetition	Narrating past events
	Action sports	Cross-curricular page:				Expressing surprise
	Phrases related to misfortunes	Ice Hockey				Reporting commands and requests
			Talking about countries			
						Describing a holiday

<b>Appendices</b>	Speaking Section- Pair work activities	Word list
	Poems	Learning tips
	Grammar Reference	Irregular verbs
	Speaking Section- Pair work activities	British and American English