



***CULTURAL INTEGRATION IN EFL TEXTBOOKS USED IN SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS IN IRAQ***

**ALI ABDULRIDHA OBAID**

**FPP 2020 16**



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SCHOOLS IN IRAQ**

By

**ALI ABDULRIDHA OBAID**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2020**

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## **DEDICATION**

**To the souls of my late parents, with gratitude**

**&**

**To the kindest heart, my wife Wijdan, with all love**



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **CULTURAL INTEGRATION IN EFL TEXTBOOKS USED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IRAQ**

By

**ALI ABDULRIDHA OBAID**

**January 2020**

**Chairman : Lilliaty binti Ismail, PhD**  
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Integrating culture in English language teaching has recently gained an extraordinary importance and attention, especially when English has actually evolved as an international language and a lingua Franca in the twenty-first century era of globalization. This brings about a continuous need to investigate the hidden curriculum in the teaching materials particularly as concerns culture and interculturality in textbooks' contents. The three main objectives of this study are discovering any probable acculturation or alienation through representing cultural types based on their occurrences, detecting if values, ideas and perspectives have a learning space in the textbooks to be taught through specifying the occurrences of the surface and deep culture dimensions, and finding out whether the textbooks promote students' intercultural competence through examining the occurrences of the intercultural elements' representations.

In an in-use textbook retrospective evaluation study, the method of research followed is qualitative. The research technique utilized for analyzing the textbooks' content is a deductive content analysis. Two checklists based on coding schemes are prepared to analyze the materials; the first checklist adopts Aliakbari's (2004) and Yuen's (2011) models for analyzing the cultural representations in the written texts and the visuals in EFL textbooks, and the other adapts Byram's (1997) model for examining the intercultural representations.

Since English language teaching in Iraq is entirely a textbook-oriented process, the cultural and intercultural content of the EFL textbooks can be crystallized in relation to EFL teachers' classroom practices. Classroom observations are conducted to examine the techniques, activities, and the time allotted by teachers in their classrooms to treat the textbooks' content under study. Then, data triangulation is followed to validate the

findings. Therefore, two semi-structured interviews are conducted with educational supervisors who are in-field experts and rich-information stakeholders in the ELT context of Iraq.

Findings show that the textbooks under investigation are dominated by the local Iraqi and neutral cultural types. Thus, acculturation or alienation is less expected to take place. Textbooks are also dominated by products and persons, i.e, they focus on the surface kind of culture and not on the deep culture that encourage students to learn more values, thoughts, and perspectives. Such dominations indicate that the textbooks can be described as mono-cultural textbooks following the traditional approaches of integrating culture in textbooks. Also, the majority of the intercultural content are knowledge-oriented items of mainly fact-stating nature; consequently, textbooks cannot encourage improving the learners' intercultural competence, or be described as adopting the intercultural approach.

Findings of the classroom observations illustrate using few techniques and activities by EFL teachers who allot very short time, if any, of the classes to treat the cultural and intercultural materials. Thus, the Iraqi classes focus on the linguistic and not the cultural and intercultural content of the textbooks. Findings of the semi-structured interviews show that the educational supervisors confirmed the study findings of the textbooks' content analysis and the teachers' practices, adding, as a result, credibility to the findings.

Finally, the study carries pedagogical implications mainly addressed to stakeholders in the ELT process in Iraq including decision-makers, textbook writers, and curriculum designers to pay the issue of incorporating culture in the textbooks its due consideration. Further research is recommended such as investigating the cultural representations in the EFI textbook series from teachers' and/or students' perspectives to decide the materials' appropriateness or effectiveness in the actual Iraqi EFL context.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**INTEGRASI BUDAYA DALAM BUKU TEKS BAHASA INGGERIS  
SEBAGAI BAHASA ASING YANG DIGUNAKAN DI SEKOLAH  
MENENGAH DI IRAQ**

Oleh

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Integrasi budaya dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris telah mendapat perhatian luar biasa terutamanya apabila Bahasa Inggeris telah berkembang menjadi bahasa antarabangsa dan bahasa perantaraan pada era golobalisasi, iaitu, abad ke dua puluh satu kini. Hal ini membawa kepada keperluan berterusan untuk mengkaji kurikulum yang tersembunyi dalam bahan-bahan pengajaran terutamanya dari segi budaya dan antarabudaya yang diselitkan ke dalam kandungan buku teks. Tiga objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kebarangkalian akulturasi atau pengasingan melalui representasi jenis budaya berdasarkan kekerapannya, mengenal pasti jika nilai, idea dan perspektif mempunyai ruang pembelajaran dalam buku teks yang diajar melalui penentuan kekerapan dimensi budaya pada tahap permukaan luar dan dalaman, dan mengkaji sama ada buku teks tersebut menggalakkan kecekapan antarabudaya pelajar dengan mengkaji kekerapan representasi elemen antarabudaya.

Berdasarkan kajian penilaian lalu yang berkait dengan buku teks, kaedah penyelidikan yang di ikuti adalah kualitatif. Teknik penyelidikan yang digunakan untuk menganalisis kandungan buku teks adalah analisis kandungan deduktif. Dua senarai semak berdasarkan skim pengkodan disediakan untuk menganalisis kandungan buku teks tersebut. Senarai semak yang pertama adalah berdasarkan kepada model Aliakbari (2004) dan Yuen (2011) untuk menganalisis representasi budaya dalam teks bertulis dan visual dalam buku teks *EFI*, dan model oleh Byram (1997) diadaptasi untuk mengkaji representasi antarabudaya.

Sejak pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris berorientasikan kepada buku teks dilaksanakan sepenuhnya di Iraq, kandungan budaya dan antarabudaya dalam buku teks *EFI* jelas dilihat berkait dengan amalan bilik darjah oleh guru *EFL*. Pemerhatian dalam bilik

darjah dijalankan untuk mengkaji teknik, aktiviti, dan masa yang diperuntukkan oleh guru dalam bilik darjah bagi menyampaikan kandungan buku teks yang dikaji. Seterusnya diikuti oleh triangulasi data untuk mengesahkan dapatan kajian. Oleh itu, pengkaji telah mengadakan temu bual separa berstruktur dengan dua orang pakar dalam bidang terbabit dan pendokong yang berpengetahuan luas dalam konteks *ELT* di Iraq.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan buku teks yang dikaji dikuasai oleh budaya tempatan Iraq dan jenis budaya neutral. Oleh itu, alkiturasi atau pengasingan tidak dijangka untuk berlaku. Buku teks juga dikuasai oleh produk dan perseorangan, contohnya, tumpuan diberi pada tahap permukaan budaya dan tidak pada tahap dalaman budaya yang menggalakkan pelajar untuk mempelajari nilai, pemikiran, dan perspektif. Penguasaan tersebut menunjukkan bahawa buku teks boleh dianggap sebagai buku teks budaya tunggal. Juga, majoriti kandungan antarabudaya adalah berorientasikan kepada pengetahuan terutamanya pernyataan berfakta. Justeru itu, buku teks tidak menggalakkan peningkatan kecekapan antarabudaya pelajar, atau sebagai penyerap pendekatan antarabudaya.

Hasil pemerhatian bilik darjah menunjukkan guru *EFL* memperuntukkan masa yang singkat dan hanya beberapa teknik dan aktiviti menggunakan bahan yang berasaskan budaya dan antarabudaya dilaksanakan. Oleh itu, pembelajaran di Iraq hanya tertumpu kepada kandungan linguistik buku teks, tidak kepada budaya dan antarabudaya. Hasil temu bual separa berstruktur menunjukkan bahawa penyelia pendidikan mengesahkan dapatan analisis kandungan buku teks dan amalan guru meningkatkan kesahan dapatan ini.

Kesimpulannya, kajian ini membawa implikasi pedagogi terutamanya kepada pendokong proses *ELT* di Iraq. Hal ini termasuklah pembuat keputusan, pengarang buku teks, dan pereka kurikulum untuk mempertimbangkan pergabungan budaya ke dalam buku teks. Dicadangkan agar penyelidikan lanjut seperti mengkaji representasi budaya dalam siri buku teks *EFI* dari perspektif guru dan/atau pelajar bagi menentukan kesesuaian atau keberkesanan bahan dalam konteks *EFL* di Iraq.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a dissertation is a long journey which is full of challenges and determination as well, which a number of people also share its completion with success. Therefore, I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Lilliaty Ismail, the chairperson of my supervisory committee, whose supervision and insightful guidance were key factors for achieving this work. Special thanks are due to the other members of the supervisory committee, Dr. Abu Bakar Mohamed. Razali whose thoughtful comments and suggestions are apparent in this work, and Dr. Nor Shahila Mansor, whose kind words of support and encouragement always push me forward to do better. My supervisory committee has always been a source of knowledge as well as confidence for me to move ahead; their notes, suggestions, and advice have truly improved this thesis.

I also feel thankful to the two members of the first supervisory committee who got retired before completing my work. Dr. Moomala Othman, the first chairperson, gave me a lot of her valuable time full of instructions and advice, particularly in the first steps of the work which were surely challenging, and Dr. Dalia Aralas whose opinions added vision and depth for the project.

Thanks are also extended to all my instructors and the staff of my university, Universiti Putra Malaysia, especially of Faculty of Educational Studies / Department of Language and Humanities Education/ Teaching English as a Second Language.

I also thank the generous participants in the field-work part of this dissertation who are the kind, respective persons in both, The Directory of Education/ Thi-Qar for giving permissions to conduct observations and interviews, and Dept. of Curriculum and Learning Technologies for providing me with the latest original publications of the textbooks. Lots of thanks also go to both the cooperative managers and wonderful teachers of the two schools for the distinguished students in which the classroom observations were held, and the educational supervisors for their time and their assistance to smoothly conduct the interviews.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all my relatives, friends and my big family of brothers and sisters for their encouragement. But for my small family, words do fail to describe my thanks to the two daughters and son who also have been so patient with the suffering from my absence all through the years of study, and to the dearest and beloved wife whose continuous support, endurance and sacrifices have always inspired me with hope and success in my life which is truly full of endless love to her.

Ali A. Obaid  
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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview

In this chapter a background to the study is first introduced. The focus in the background is on the necessity of investigating the integration of culture in the foreign language textbooks' materials. Then, the problem statement, objectives and research questions are presented. They are all concerned with the topic of this study which is about the cultural and intercultural content of "*English for Iraq*" (Henceforth EFI) textbooks series used in the secondary schools in Iraq. The chapter also includes the purpose, significance and limitations of the study, in addition to definitions of the operational terminologies.

#### 1.2 Background of the Study

There is an integral relation between culture and language as culture is intrinsically related to language, and every language is a carrier of culture; both are described to "represent two sides of the same coin" (Nault, 2006, p.314) or as Ho (2009, p.64) puts it that "Language and culture have an inextricable and interdependent relationship" (see also Brown, 2007; Kramsch, 2013). This bond between culture and language is also conceptualized by the American Anthropologist Agar (1994) through introducing the term "languaculture" (p.28) fostering the idea that language does include cultural elements in addition to its vocabulary and grammar.

Learning or teaching a language is then by necessity learning or teaching culture (Brown, 2007, pp.189-190). In the learning process, learning a new language can also be seen as an enculturation in which a learner "acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers" (Alptekin, 2002, p.58). According to McKay (2003), this inevitable and significant role that culture plays in ELT is reflected through two important ways; first is the linguistic dimension related to semantic, discourse and pragmatic levels, and the second is the pedagogical dimension concerned with teaching methods and materials (pp.2-3). In line with the second dimension, FL textbooks can be expected to embody various aspects of culture in their linguistic content, whether in their written or visual materials.

Pertaining to an essential part of the teaching materials, foreign language textbooks can then be transformers of culture(s) since all "teaching materials (e.g., textbooks) directly or indirectly transmit cultural values to a certain degree" (Xiao, 2010, p.4). Textbooks do communicate explicitly or implicitly "sets of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.90), part of what is termed "hidden curriculum". Textbooks are considered paramount in language

teaching due to their being the most common teaching tool used in pre-university education; textbooks' culture-related content then "becomes a clearly determining element, since it marks the type and extent of the cultural knowledge students are likely to gain in the classroom" (García,2005, p.59). It is the educators' concern to find out the ideology and cultural values in a curriculum behind the subjects presented to the students and the influence of these cultural aspects on learners (Asgari,2011, p.890). Therefore, scholars often chase the cultural and intercultural content of textbooks with various typologies and schemes of analysis, considering the on-going rapid changes in the small-village-like world where English is used internationally as a global language and a lingua franca.

On the cultural level, many studies examining the EFL textbooks' cultural content employ one or more model of categorizing culture; examples of these models, among others, are Cortazzi and Jin (1999) three categories (or types), Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) four senses (or meanings), Kachru (1992) three (geographical) circles, and scholar-made checklists of analysis such as Olajide (2010), and Byram (1993). Textbooks' cultural content is also described as having a two-fold manifestation in relation to the themes it pertains. One is termed as (Big "C") parallel to surface culture demonstrated in cultural representations of products and persons; the second is termed as (small or little "c") parallel to deep culture demonstrated in cultural representations of practices and perspectives (Liu & Laohawiriyanon,2012; Moran,2001; Xiao 2010; Yule, 2011).

On the intercultural level, English has imposed itself as an international language (EIL) and as a lingua franca (ELF) dominating various fields of knowledge as well as everyday life practices in a large number of countries in the world; therefore, several trends, orientations and concepts have urgently been pushed to the front in ELT literature (including that in TEFL and TESL), such as intercultural communicative competence, intercultural education, intercultural literacy, intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, among others. And, more objectives in ELT have emerged such as promoting the learners' intercultural competence to qualify the students to be efficient intercultural speakers characterized with tolerance, empathy and respect to other people with other cultures (otherness). In Europe, for instance, criteria were set, under CEFR supervision, as standards for producing EFL textbooks which should promote the learners' intercultural communicative competence through providing materials that develop knowledge, attitude, skills and cultural awareness. On the part of teachers, they also need to be well empowered through developing their cultural and intercultural awareness in order to successfully handle the cultural aspects in ELT textbooks.

A large number of EFL textbooks are continuously published so as to conform to what comes new in the ELT field. But among all such publications, it is of great importance to select a textbook which is most useful and effective in a particular local teaching / learning environment, and in which the cultural aspects are efficiently integrated. Still, producing a perfect textbook that can work in all cases and overcome all the expected problems in a specific setting is a matter that has been viewed as too ideal by the

specialists in the ELT area. Grant (1987, p.8) plainly puts it “Perfect book does not exist”. Hence, textbooks’ contents, including the cultural/ intercultural representations, need to be consistently examined. Studies of in-use or post-use evaluation of textbooks are periodically conducted to fine-tune these contents.

In Iraq, the Asian middle-east country, the EFL context encompasses English for Iraq textbooks series as the sole source of knowledge of learning English in the Iraqi schools. For each grade in the six-grade secondary schools there is a students’ textbook, activity book and a teachers’ guide. This series has been used since 2012 in all schools whether public or private all over the middle and southern parts of the country. The textbooks of EFI series are written by foreign authors (non-Iraqis) and published by Garnet Education which also holds a two-week training workshop for the Iraqi EFL teachers to qualify them on teaching this series. The textbooks publication is supervised by a committee of local Iraqi members.

This study investigates one focal point of research which is the cultural and intercultural content of the rather recently adopted EFI textbooks series, as part of the integration of culture in the EFL Iraqi context. Since ELT in Iraq is textbook-oriented, this focal research point is crystalized through addressing it in relation to teachers’ classroom practices for treating the textbooks’ cultural and intercultural content.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The rationale of the current study is motivated by both the consistent need to explore the hidden curriculum of the textbooks’ language content and the gap in the available literature as related to *English for Iraq* textbooks series in this concern. A comprehensive investigation to culture integration in EFL textbooks is expected to be concerned with both the cultural dimension where any imbalance of representations can result in learners’ acculturation and alienation from social identity, and to the intercultural dimension essential for promoting the learners’ intercultural competence to prepare the students as intercultural citizens who can cope with the globalization requirements. Consequently, the approach with which culture is integrated in EFL textbooks can also be discovered.

Based on the conceptualization of inseparability of culture and language that leads to an axiom that no one is able to use or learn any language without being acquainted with the culture of its speakers (Kramsch, 1998, p.63), foreign language textbooks can be counted as transformers of culture(s) through their language content. A dominance in representing any particular type (or category) of culture can definitely result in undesirable cultural influences on the learners; an imbalance in favor of a foreign culture in the culturally-loaded materials of a textbook, for instance, can lead to acculturation affecting consequently the learners’ social identity (Damen, 1987, p.140) as they can be driven alienated. Therefore, culture integration, part of the hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks’ content, is an issue that is to be seriously considered by decision-makers in education and be carefully treated by textbook writers. The issue



comes to be more problematic when textbooks are authored by foreign writers who are usually unfamiliar with the learners' local culture. That said, a continuous need is to be met for investigating the hidden curriculum potentially implied in the cultural content of in-use EFL textbooks. In the case of Iraq, *English for Iraq* textbooks series are written by foreign (non-Iraqi) authors and are the only source of knowledge for learning English in the Iraqi schools, making the whole ELT context in Iraq as entirely textbook-oriented. Culture integration in *English for Iraq* textbooks needs then to be examined in terms of any dominance of a particular cultural type, in an attempt to uncover the hidden curriculum behind the culturally-loaded materials, whether textual or visual, in the content of these textbooks.

In the 21st-century small-village world of globalization where English has become a lingua franca that can meet the needs of its users for communicating not only globally but even locally (McKay, 2002, p.24), new innovations and re-conceptualizations came to focus in ELT field, particularly what concerns setting the goals in both pedagogy and materials. The intercultural dimension has gained an utmost priority within the objectives and practices, particularly as connected to culture integration in the ELT textbooks in the context of different countries of the world. As a result, one of the objectives globally set for EFL textbooks is promoting the learners' intercultural competence (see CEFR). In view of this objective, intercultural content of EFL textbooks comes to be urgently covered within integrating culture as part of the formal or hidden curriculum in EFL textbooks' content. In Iraq, *English for Iraq* textbooks series used in secondary schools should not be an exception; therefore, there is also a need to investigate the intercultural load in the content of these textbooks with the purpose of developing the Iraqi learners' intercultural competence.

Also, despite the above-mentioned needs for examining the cultural and the intercultural content of EFL textbooks, *English for Iraq* textbook series has not so far received sufficient research in the available literature. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are few studies in this regard such as Akef (2015), Al-Akraa (2007), AL-Obaidi (2015), Al-Obaydi (2010), Hejal (2012). A few of these studies (such as Al-Akraa, 2007, and Al-Obaidi 2015) partially focus on the cultural content of the textbooks whereas the rest tend to be evaluative studies about the effectiveness of these textbooks in the Iraqi context. In addition, there is a lack of studies that tackle together the cultural and intercultural aspects of these textbooks to comprehensively, and probably complementarily, investigate culture integration in these textbooks. Therefore, there generally remains a literature gap that raises a need to quality studies for scrutinizing the cultural and intercultural content of these textbooks.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study.**

The study is intended to scrutinizing culture integration in the content of *English for Iraq* textbook series in the six-grade secondary schools of Iraq. Both the cultural and the intercultural representations in the textual and visual content of these textbooks are examined part of uncovering the hidden curriculum behind these representations. This is achieved through finding out the imbalance of presentations, in the sense of

any probable sharp difference in their frequency occurrences. Imbalanced representations of cultural types, particularly in favor of target or foreign cultures, can be regarded as a source of acculturation that may lead to learners' alienation. Also, the imbalance in representing the cultural dimensions may lead to treating culture superficially in the textbooks providing less learning space for deep culture of values and perspectives to be learned. Moreover, the imbalance of representing the intercultural elements in the textbooks can result in lacking opportunities to develop the Iraqi students' intercultural competence, consequently, the learners cannot be expected to be well-prepared as intercultural citizens successfully communicating in this small-village world of globalization. This investigation of the cultural and intercultural content of the textbooks will reveal the approach followed by *English for Iraq* textbooks writers, who are foreigners, for incorporating culture in these textbooks. Since EFL classrooms in Iraq are entirely textbook-oriented, the textbooks' content under study is crystalized through being examined in relation to the EFL teachers' classroom practices in the EFL context of Iraq. This is a retrospective in-use textbook evaluation study, that can support decision makers and textbook writers in Iraq improving the currently-used textbooks.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives of the present study:

1. to detect any acculturation resulting from imbalanced or sharp difference of occurrences among the cultural representations (cultural types) in the content of EFI textbook series currently taught in secondary schools of Iraq.
2. to discover the kind of culture (surface or deep) resulting from imbalanced or sharp difference of occurrences among the cultural representations (cultural dimensions) represented in the content of EFI textbook series currently taught in secondary schools of Iraq.
3. to find out the extent to which secondary school EFI textbooks promote intercultural competence through incorporating intercultural materials that imply balanced intercultural elements i.e. no sharp difference of occurrences, that leads to domination, among the intercultural elements.
4. to discover the Iraqi EFL teachers' classroom practices (techniques, activities and time allotment) related to treating the cultural and intercultural content of EFI textbooks used in the secondary schools in Iraq.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The Study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are the cultural types represented in the written texts and visuals of EFI textbooks series currently taught in the secondary schools of Iraq, based on their occurrences as local, target, international, and neutral types?



2. How are the cultural dimensions represented in the written texts and visuals of EFI textbook series currently taught in secondary schools of Iraq, based on their occurrences as products, practices, perspectives, and persons dimensions?
3. To what extent do the texts and visuals in EFI textbooks' series currently used in secondary schools of Iraq promote the learners' intercultural competence through integrating intercultural materials with elements of knowledge, attitudes and skills?
4. How is the cultural and intercultural content of EFI textbooks treated by the Iraqi EFL teachers in their classroom practices, based on the use of techniques, activities, and time allotment?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The main value of the study stems from the fact that it is one of the few studies related to integration of culture in the ELT context of the Iraq. The study thoroughly covers both the cultural and intercultural content of the EFI textbooks used in the secondary schools, and its relation to teachers' classroom practices. This scope also makes the study one of the comprehensive studies as concerned with culture in ELT textbooks.

In addition to enriching TEFL literature, particularly in the Iraqi setting, with more thoughts and insights, the study will be of benefit to textbook writers, textbook evaluators, researchers and scholars. Also, the transferability of the study can be feasible to other researchers through the use of the schemes of analysis used or the methodology adopted.

The conclusions of this study, if practically considered by Ministry of Education in Iraq, could foster improving the EFL situation in Iraq especially in concern of textbook writing; in the minimum, it can lead to any possible necessary changes or modifications to benefit the Iraqi EFL learners and teachers.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The EFL textbooks series EFI is used in both primary and secondary schools of Iraq. For the purpose of this research work, only textbooks of this series that are used in secondary schools are examined. Then, materials where the cultural aspects are focused are taken as a primary source of data; the study is limited to analyzing the materials available only in the written texts and the visuals in both the students' books and activity books of the EFI textbooks series. Audio materials are excluded because they only repeat the same written materials.

Also, owing to the fact that ELT setting all over Iraq is to a great context identical as the same textbooks are used all over the middle and southern parts of Iraq, the setting of the research for field work, which is particularly concerned with classroom observations and interviews is only limited to "Thi-Qar" province of Iraq.

## **1.9 Definitions of the Terms**

The following definitions are considered for the purpose of this study:

### **1.9.1 Culture**

Though culture is a complex term to define, it is for Liddicoat and his colleagues (2003, p.45), a complicated system that encompasses all lifestyle, beliefs, rituals, values, attitudes, practices, behaviors, concepts, and conventions of a certain group in addition to their products and creations presented through their artifacts and institutions. This comprehensive definition draws upon a conception of culture which can cover all the cultural aspects or components that are dealt with in this study.

### **1.9.2 Intercultural Competence**

In spite of the different wordings to define this term, it remains that it simply encompasses a pivotal idea that focuses on the individual's ability to successfully communicate with the other who can be culturally different. Putting it more concisely and plainly, Meyer (1991) presented an extensive definition for this term, which can therefore be adopted in this study, that is "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (p.138).

### **1.9.3 Cultural Aspects**

All the cultural types and dimensions as well as the intercultural elements in the materials investigated in this study. In the literature, they can also be referred to as culture-related materials.

### **1.9.4 Cultural Types**

These are cultural aspects in textbooks that can be attributed to a geographical factor; e.g. the source culture is the learner's own culture in his/her own country, or the target culture is the English-speaking countries' culture, international culture is any culture other than that of the learners' country and of the target culture countries, and the neutral culture is of a general type which is related to all cultures such as culture in science and health topics. Though in a few cases only, topics are also considered of neutral culture if it is impossible to the researcher to attribute them to a specific culture.

### **1.9.5 Cultural Dimensions**

These are understood for the purpose of this study as the four manifestations products, practices, perspectives, and persons. The first three dimensions are practical demonstration to the conception of culture as one of five standards for FLT in twenty-first century introduced by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages); the fourth dimension is added by Yuen (2011). According to ACTFEL, language learning is to achieve several goals encompassed in five areas pertained in the content of these standards, which are the five Cs for foreign language learning “Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities” (see also Lear & Abbott, 2008, pp77-8; Phillips, 2003). In the area of “Culture” standard, students are supposed to demonstrate a relation among a triangle of three corners as culture is seen to include “the philosophical perspectives, the behavioural practices, and the products – both tangible and intangible – of a society” (cited in Dema & Moeller, 2012, p.78).

### **1.9.6 Intercultural Elements**

These are the criteria set under CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) supervision as standards for producing EFL quality textbooks which should promote the learners’ intercultural communicative competence through providing materials that develop knowledge, attitude, skills and cultural awareness. These intercultural elements draw upon Byram’s (1997) theory of Savoirs. Byram’s conceptions of (Knowledge, attitude, and skills) are adopted as intercultural elements for the sake of this study.

### **1.9.7 Acculturation**

The frequency occurrences of the textual and visual items in the textbooks content are expected to provide opportunities for the learners to use the learnt foreign language. They can consequently have a significant impact on the learner’s self-perceived competence for successful communication (Dewaele, 2010), including the cultural and the intercultural competence since language and culture have intrinsic relation. Acculturation is usually understood as the “process of becoming adapted to a new culture where reorientation of thinking and feeling is necessary” (Brown, 1994, p. 169). But, for the purpose of this study, acculturation is operationally defined in accordance with both the above-mentioned Dewaele’s (2010) and Brown’s (1994) conceptualizations as any potential process of cultural adaptation on the part a learner due to the exposition to frequency occurrences of cultural representations in an EFL textbook.

### **1.9.8 Hidden curriculum**

In the formal school curriculum, students learn what is pre-planned and explicit course with overtly-stated specific objectives. Hidden curriculum, which is also called latent or covert curriculum, includes all “learning states of a setting which are either unintended or intended but not openly acknowledged to the learners in the setting unless the learners are aware of them” (Martin, 1979, p. 144).

Generally, the sources of the curriculum include a teacher’s language use, textbooks, learning activities, and the classroom social structure, among others (Lee, 2014, p. 40). For the purpose of this study, Hidden curriculum can be defined in accordance with both Lee (2014) and Martin (1976) perspectives as the intentional or unintentional cultural and intercultural orientations that can be detected behind the frequency occurrences of the cultural aspects in the EFL textbooks under study.

### **1.10 Summary**

This chapter gives an introductory, yet comprehensive, picture about the current study. It starts with a necessary background, and then refers to the rationale to conduct this study which is based mainly on a premise that integrating culture in EFL textbooks is gaining an increasing importance in ELT research all over the world, therefore, the Iraqi country-wide experience of adopting EFI textbook series in secondary schools should not be an exception. Accordingly, this study is an attempt to examine the cultural and intercultural representations in EFI textbooks series; accordingly, research objectives and questions are formulated. The current study can hopefully be of a practical significance for the stake-holders of Education in Iraq, particularly those who are concerned with textbook writing or selection. The chapter also includes the definitions of some terms essential all through the work like the cultural types, cultural dimensions, intercultural competence, and acculturation.

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