مجلة العلوم الإنسـانية

دورية علمية محكمة تصدر عن جامعة حائل

Arcif
Analytics

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نبذة عن المجلة

تعريف بالمجلة

مجلة العلوم الإنسانية، مجلة دورية علمية محكمة، تصدر عن وكالة الجامعـــــــة للدراسـات العليا والبحث العلمي بجامعة حائل كل ثلاثة أشهر بصفة دورية، حث تصدر أربة أعداد في كل سنة، وبحسب اكتمال البحوث المجازة للنشــر. وقد نجحت مجلة العلـوم الإنسانية في تحقيق معايير اعتماد معامل التأثير والاستشهادات المرجعية للمجلات العلمية العربية معامل " آرسيف Arcif " المتوافقة مع المعايير العالمية، والتي يبلغ عددها (32) معياراً، وقد أطلق ذلك خلال التقرير السنوي الثامن للمجلات للعام 2023.

رؤية المجلة

التميز في النشر العلمي في العلوم الإنسانية وفقاً لمعايير مهنية عالمية.

رسالة المجلة

نشر البحوث العلمية في التخصصات الإنسانية؛ لخدمة البحث العلمي والمجتمع المحلي والدولي.

أهداف المجلة

تهدف المجلة إلى إيجاد منافذ رصينة؛ لنشر المعرفــــة العلميـــــة المتخصصـة في المجـــال الإنسـاني، وتمكـــن الباحثين –مـن مختلـف بلـدان العـــــالم– من نشر أبحاثهم ودراساتهم وإنتاجهم الفكري لمعالجة واقع المشــــكلات الحياتية، وتأســــيس الأطــــر النظريـــــــة والتطبيقية للمعـــارف الإنسانية في المجالات المتنوعـــــة، وفــــق ضوابط وشروط ومواصفات علمية دقيقة، تحقيقا للجودة والريادة في نــر البحث العلـــي.

قواعد النشر

لغة النشر

1- تقبل المجلة البحوث المكتوبة باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.

2- يُكتب عنوان البحث وملخصه باللغة العربية للبحوث المكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية.

3- يُكتـــب عنـــوان البحـــث وملخصــه ومراجعــه باللغة الإنجليزيــة للبحـوث المكتوبـة باللغة العربيـــة، علـــى أن تكـــون ترجمـــة الملخـــص إلى اللغة الإنجليزية صحيحـــة ومتخصصة.

مجالات النشر في المجلة

تهتم مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل بنشر إسهامات الباحثين في مختلف القضايا الإنسانية الاجتماعية والأدبية، إضافة إلى نشر الدراسات والمقالات التي تتوفر فيها الأصول والمعايير العلمية المتعـــــارف عليهـــا دوليًّا، وتقبل الأبحاث المكتوبة باللغة العربية والإنجليزية في مجال اختصاصها، حيث تعنى المجلـــــة بالتخصصات الآتية:

– علم النفس وعلم الاجتماع والخدمة الاجتماعية والفلسفة الفكرية العلمية الدقيقة.
– المناهج وطرق التدريس والعلوم التربوية المختلفة.
– الدراسات الإسلامية والشريعة والقانون.
– الآداب: التاريخ والجغرافيا والفنون واللغة العربية، واللغة الإنجليزية، والسياحة والآثار.
– الإدارة والإعلام والاتصال وعلوم الرياضة والحركة.

أوعية نشر المجلة

تصــدر المجلة ورقيًّا حســب القواعد والأنظمة المعمول بها في المجلات العلمية المحكمة، كما تُنشــر البحوث المقبولة بعد تحكيمها إلكترونيًّا لتعم المعرفة العلمية بشكل أوسع في جميع المؤسسات العلمية داخل المملكة العربية السعودية وخارجها.

ضوابط النشر في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية وإجراءاته

أولاً: شروط النشر

أولاً: شروط النشر

1. أن يتّسم بالأصالة والجدّة والابتكار والإضافة المعرفية في التخصص.
2. لم يسبق للباحث نشر بحثه.
3. ألا يكون مستلًّا من رسالة علمية (ماجستير / دكتوراة) أو بحوث سبق نشرها للباحث.
4. أن يلتزم الباحث بالأمانة العلمية.
5. أن تراعى فيه منهجية البحث العلمي وقواعده.
6. عدم مخالفة البحث للضوابط والأحكام والآداب العامة في المملكة العربية السعودية.
7. مراعاة الأمانة العلمية وضوابط التوثيق في النقل والاقتباس.
8. السلامة اللغوية ووضوح الصور والرسومات والجداول إن وجدت، وللمجلة حقها في مراجعة التحرير والتدقيق النحوي.

ثانيًا: قواعد النشر

1. أن يشتمل البحث على: صفحة عنوان البحث، ومستخلص باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، ومقدمة، وصلب البحث، وخاتمة تتضمن النتائج والتوصيات، وثبت المصادر والمراجع باللغتين العربيّة والإنجليزيّة، والملاحق اللازمة (إن وجدت).
2. فــي حال (نشر البحث) يُزوّد الباحث بنسخة إلكترونية من عدد المجلة الذي تم نشر بحثه فيه، ومستلًّا لبحثه .
3. فــي حال اعتماد نشر البحث تؤول حقوق نشره كافة للمجلة، ولها أن تعيد نشره ورقيًّا أو إلكترونيّاً، ويحقّ لها إدراجه في قواعد البيانات المحليّة والعالمية – بمقابل أو بدون مقابل– وذلك دون حاجة لإذن الباحث.
4. لا يحقّ للباحث إعادة نشر بحثه المقبول للنشر في المجلة إلا بعد إذن كتابي من رئيس هيئة تحرير المجلة.
5. الآراء الواردة فــي البحوث المنشورة تعبر عن وجهة نظر الباحثين، ولا تعبر عن رأي مجلة العلوم الإنسانية.
6. النشر في المجلة يتطلب رسوما مالية قدرها (1000 ريال) يتم إيداعها في حساب المجلة، وذلك بعد إشعار الباحث بالقبول الأولي وهي غير مستردة سواء أجيز البحث للنشر أم تم رفضه من قبل المحكمين.

ثالثًا: توثيق البحث

أسلوب التوثيق المعتمد فــي المجلة هو نظام جمعية علم النفس الأمريكية (APA7)

رابعا: خطوات وإجراءات التقديم

1. يقدم الباحث الرئيس طلبًا للنشر (من خلال منصة الباحثين بعد التسجيل فيها) يتعهد فيه بأن بحثه يتفق مع شروط المجلة، وذلك على النحو الآتي:

أ. البحث الذي تقدمت به لم يسبق نشرة (ورقيا أو إلكترونيا)، وأنه غير مقدم للنشر، ولن يقدم للنشر في وجهة أخرى حتى تنتهي إجراءات تحكيمه، ونشرة في المجلة، أو الاعتذار للباحث لعدم قبول البحث.

ب. البحث الذي تقدمت به ليس مستلاً من بحوث أو كتب سبق نشرها أو قدمت للنشر، وليس مستلاًّ من الرسائل العلمية للماجستير أو الدكتوراة.

ج. الالتزام بالأمانة العلمية وأخلاقيات البحث العلمي.

د. مراعاة منهج البحث العلمي وقواعده.

هـ. الالتزام بالضوابط الفنية ومعايير كتابة البحث في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل كما هو في دليل المؤلفين لكتابة البحوث المقدمة للنشر في مجلة العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة حائل وفق نظام APA7

2. إرفاق سيرة ذاتية مختصرة في صفحة واحدة حسب النموذج المعتمد للمجلة (نموذج السيرة الذاتية).

3. إرفاق نموذج المراجعة والتدقيق الأولي بعد تعبئته من قبل الباحث.

4. يرسل الباحث أربع نسخ من بحثه إلى المجلة إلكترونياً بصيغة (word) نسختين و (PDF) نسختين تكون إحداهما بالصيغتين خالية مما يدل على شخصية الباحث.

5. يتم التقديم إلكترونياً من خلال منصة تقديم الطلب الموجودة على موقع المجلة (منصة الباحثين) بعد التسجيل فيها مع إرفاق كافة المرفقات الواردة في خطوات وإجراءات التقديم أعلاه.

6. تقوم هيئة تحرير المجلة بالفحص الأولي للبحث، وتقرير أهليته للتحكيم، أو الاعتذار عن قبوله أولياً أو بناء على تقارير المحكمين دون إبداء الأسباب وإخطار الباحث بذلك

7. تملك المجلة حق رفض البحث الأولي ما دام غير مكتمل أو غير ملتزم بالضوابط الفنية ومعايير كتابة البحث في مجلة حائل للعلوم الإنسانية.

8. في حال تقرر أهلية البحث للتحكيم يخطر الباحث بذلك، وعليه دفع الرسوم المالية المقررة للمجلة (1000) ريال غير مستردة من خلال الإيداع على حساب المجلة ورفع الإيصال من خلال منصة التقديم المتاحة على موقع المجلة، وذلك خلال مدة خمس أيام عمل منذ إخطار الباحث بقبول بحثه أوليًا وفي حالة عدم السداد خلال المدة المذكورة يعتبر القبول الأولي ملغي.

9. بعد دفع الرسوم المطلوبة من قبل الباحث خلال المدة المقررة للدفع ورفع سند الإيصال من خلال منصة التقديم، يرسل البحث لمحكِّمين اثنين؛ على الأقل.

10. في حال اكتمال تقارير المحكِّمين عن البحث؛ يتم إرسال خطاب للباحث يتضمَّن إحدى الحالات التّالية:

أ. قبول البحث للنشر مباشرة.

ب. قبول البحث للنّشر؛ بعد التّعديل.

ج. تعديل البحث، ثمّ إعادة تحكيمه.

د. الاعتذار عن قبول البحث ونشره.

11. إذا تطلب الأمر من الباحث القيام ببعض التعديلات على بحثه، فإنه يجب أن يتم ذلك في غضون (أسبوعين من تاريخ الخطاب) من الطلب. فإذا تأخر الباحث عن إجراء التعديلات خلال المدة المحددة، يعتبر ذلك عدولا منه عن النشر، ما لم يقدم عذرا تقبله هيئة تحرير المجلة.

12. في حالة رفض أحد المحكمين للبحث، وقبول المحكم الآخر له وكانت درجته أقل من 70%؛ فإنّه يحق للمجلة الاعتذار عن قبول البحث ونشره دون الحاجة إلى تحويله إلى محكم مرجح، وتكون الرسوم غير مستردة.

13. يقدم الباحث الرئيس (حسب نموذج الرد على المحكمين) تقرير عن تعديل البحث وفقاً للملاحظات الواردة في تقارير المحكمين الإجمالية أو التفصيلية في متن البحث

14. للمجلة الحق في الحذف أو التعديل في الصياغة اللغوية للدراسة بما يتفق مع قواعد النشر، كما يحق للمحررين إجراء بعض التعديلات من أجل التصحيح اللغوي والفني. وإلغاء التكرار، وإيضاح ما يلزم. وكذلك لها الحق في رفض البحث دون إبداء الأسباب.

15. في حالة رفض البحث من قبل المحكمين فإن الرسوم غير مستردة.

16. إذا رفض البحث، ورغب المؤلف في الحصول على ملاحظات المحكمين، فإنه يمكن تزويده بهم، مع الحفاظ على سرية المحكمين. ولا يحق للباحث التقدم من جديد بالبحث نفسه إلى المجلة ولو أجريت عليه جميع التعديلات المطلوبة.

17. لا تُرّد البحوث المقدمة إلى أصحابها سواء نشرت أم لم تنشر، ويخطر المؤلف في حالة عدم الموافقة على النشر

18. يحق للمجلة أن ترسل للباحث المقبول بحثه نسخة معتمدة للطباعة للمراجعة والتدقيق، وعليه إنجاز هذه العملية خلال 36 ساعة.

19. لهيئة تحرير المجلة الحق في تحديد أولويات نشر البحوث، وترتيبها فنّياً.

An Analysis of Cultural Representation in English Language Textbooks in the Saudi University Classroom

تحليل التمثيل الثقافي في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصل الجامعي بالمملكة العربية السعودية

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Abstract

Textbook materials are a crucial element of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, necessitating investigation to enhance student engagement and interaction. This study contends that textbooks utilized in academic settings significantly shape the dynamism of EFL classrooms, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that materials facilitate active participation and comprehension among students. However, textbooks, namely Touchstone and Unlock employed in Saudi Arabian university contexts fail to resonate with the Eastern cultural backgrounds of students, predominantly showcasing "Western" cultures, particularly American and British. This disparity is evident in the choice of topics, depictions (such as clothing), names, and various other aspects. This study seeks to problematize and challenge the predominance of Western cultural representation within the content of English textbooks utilized in academic institutions in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify and analyze the textbooks. The study concluded with some recommendations and implications.

Keywords: Analysis, EFL, Eastern culture, Textbooks, Western culture.

الملخص

تعتبر الكتب الدراسية من أهم ما يشمله الفصل الدراسي في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مما يستلزم البحث حولها لتعزيز مشاركة الطلاب وتفاعلهم. تؤكد هذه الدراسة أن الكتب الدراسية المستخدمة في البيئات الأكاديمية تشكل بشكل كبير ديناميكية فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مع التركيز على أهمية ضمان أن المواد تسهل المشاركة النشطة والفهم بين الطلاب. ومع ذلك، فإن الكتب الدراسية المستخدمة تحديداً (Touchstone and Unlock) في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات السعودية غالبًا ما قد تتعثر في تحقيق التوافق مع الخلفيات الثقافية للطلاب حيث تعرض في معظم أجزائها جوانب من الثقافات الغربية، وخاصة تلك الأمريكية والبريطانية منها. ويتجلى هذا التفاوت في اختيار المواضيع والصور كالملابس وغيرها والأسماء بالإضافة إلى جوانب أخرى متعددة. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في إشكالية وتحدي هيمنة التمثيل الثقافي الغربي ضمن محتوى كتب اللغة الإنجليزية المستخدمة في المؤسسات الأكاديمية في المملكة العربية السعودية وخارجها. إستخدمت الدراسة منهجية التحليل النقدي لمحتوى الكتب من الصور والنصوص وانتهت بتقديم بعض التوصيات والحلول المقترحة لمحتوى أكثر شموليه في تمثيل الثقافات المتعددة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الثقافة الشرقية، الكتب المدرسية، الثقافة الغربية.

Introduction:

The researcher, an English as a Foreign Language (EFL henceforth) instructor hailing from Saudi Arabia, has been deeply invested in enhancing language learner engagement within EFL classrooms, particularly in environments where the teaching tends to be teacher-dominated. The author shares Chaudron's (2000) perspective that "effective learning of a second language necessitates learners' active engagement in producing the target language" (p. 218). Consequently, the researcher advocates for creating opportunities which encourage students to actively participate in their learning, thus fostering their comprehension of the content at hand. During the researcher's professional journey in EFL teaching, he gained valuable insights into various pertinent factors, including the roles of teachers and the employed teaching approaches. Among these factors, textbook materials emerged as a crucial area worthy of scrutiny and potential transformation to enrich student involvement and interaction within EFL classrooms.

An examination of the current textbooks used at tertiary level in Saudi Arabia reveals a predominant representation of Western culture, predominantly American and British, rather than reflecting the cultural backgrounds of the students, which lean towards the Eastern spectrum of culture. This disparity is evident in the choice of topics, imagery (such as clothing), names, and various other elements depicted in the textbooks. Given that most students at this level are primarily learning English to fulfill individual or institutional needs, as highlighted by Kumaravadivelu (2012), who underscores that English serves as a "language of communicational necessity, not of cultural identity formation" (p. 19; see also McKay, 2002). Moreover, for some, English represents a perceived threat to cultural liberty, as noted by Kumaravadivelu (2006). Chen (2011) points out that the majority of current EFL textbooks predominantly focus on features of Western culture, a trend that is widely accepted in academic institutions across Saudi Arabia. To address this issue, the study aims to explore the dominance of Western cultures in the content of English textbooks used at the tertiary level within Saudi Arabia, namely Touchstone and Unlock.

The present study seeks to make educators in Saudi Arabia and regionally aware of the importance of incorporating a diverse range of cultures represented within EFL textbooks. This includes cultures from countries such as India, Nigeria, and the Philippines. As Eslami et al. (2011) observe, English is no longer solely the language of "inner circle" countries like USA and the UK. Hence, the inclusion of international cultures in language teaching textbooks is rationalized by the widespread use of English as a lingua franca in international settings (Siddiqie, 2011). Furthermore, it is essential for students to see their own culture reflected in textbooks rather than marginalized. By representing students' own cultures in English language textbooks, classrooms can provide equal opportunities for all participants to engage in discussions related to their cultures, whether Eastern or Western. This approach not only facilitates language practice but also fosters intercultural competence (Alptekin, 2000; McCarthy & Walsh, 2024).

Literature Review

Significance of Textbooks in English Language Teaching Programs

The utilization of textbooks remains fundamental in educational courses, particularly within the confines of conventional methods and existing technological paradigms. Despite the potential challenge posed by technological advancements like cloud computing and virtual classrooms, textbooks have not yet become obsolete. Within the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT hereafter), textbooks serve as pivotal resources, offering a centralized platform that guides both students and educators by systematically organizing concepts. They serve to structure the learning process by breaking down course content, facilitating incremental progress (Sohail, 2011; Ur, 2024).

While systematization is crucial, textbooks cannot replace the pedagogical prowess of teachers. If educators were to merely delegate students to self-learning through textbooks without engagement, the classroom would lose its relevance. Physical course materials complement but do not supplant the multifaceted dynamics of a classroom environment. Moreover, the use of textbooks in education has a significant influence on the process of socialization. Students absorb information from textbooks, forming associations between the content and the educational objectives. This includes the portrayal of cultures through images, which contributes to students' lexical comprehension and their understanding of cultural values and norms (Shin et al., 2011; Banaruee H et al., 2023).

In the ELT context, specific challenges arise concerning how textbooks shape individuals' perceptions and interactions with language and its associated culture, particularly English. The images and examples within textbooks influence students' understanding of vocabulary through psychological associations and memory. A critical issue in the context of English teaching stems from its historical legacy as a colonial language and its contemporary dominance as a global lingua franca, leading to a nuanced tension between its historical baggage and the imperative of cultural diversity. Therefore, it is essential to meticulously curate ELT textbook content in alignment with post-colonial theories, aiming to preserve local cultures and counteract cultural imperialism.

The Ongoing Discourse: For and Against Textbook Usage in ELT Programs

This section briefly delves into the contentious issues surrounding the utilization of textbooks in ELT programs, with a specific focus on the case of ELT in Saudi Arabia. It sets the stage for the subsequent section, which delves into the literature regarding specific debates surrounding the publication of ELT textbooks. While the use of textbooks in ELT programs might seem straightforward, it is imbued with complexities and values that warrant closer examination. Central to this discourse is the question of what defines "English" in today's context and whether it is viable to conceptualize it as a monolithic and universal entity amidst the prevalence of "Englishes". This latter term will henceforth be employed to denote the diverse array of English language varieties in existence, encompassing examples such as Irish English, Jamaican English, African-American English, and Saudi English (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

The colonial legacy of English traces back to England's imperial history and its dominance over other nations, culminating in the widespread influence of what has evolved into a global language today (Smith, 1998). Although the decline of the British Empire led to a waning hegemony of British English, traces of implicit dominance persist. Presently, this is evident in the predominant influence of British and American English. Consequently, a pivotal question arises: How should English be portrayed in ELT textbooks? Should textbooks predominantly feature British and American colloquialisms and cultural nuances, utilizing them as exemplars of lexical usage, or should the content be adapted to resonate more closely with the cultural context of the educational program? One can argue vehemently against the propagation of English as a uniform stan-dard and advocate instead for the continued use of localized textbooks. However, this approach is not without its drawbacks. Exclusively showcasing localized content may inadvertently fuel biases against foreign cultures and, given the backdrop of terrorist activities in recent decades, exacerbate xenophobic sentiments. This stems from the imposition of local culture as a normative benchmark, thereby casting deviations from this standard as transgressions (Bao, 2008; Milner, 2010; Siddiqie, 2011; Elyas & Badawood, 2017).

Furthermore, an exclusive emphasis on local culture may fail to equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the global economy, potentially leaving them marginalized. As highlighted by Macedo et al. (2004), there exists a pressing need to acknowledge history while recognizing English as a major language, without perpetuating hegemonic structures. As elucidated in the ensuing section, it can be contended that ELT textbooks ought to strike a delicate balance between the localization of content—especially in cultures like Saudi Arabia, where the paramount importance of respecting Islamic values prevails—and representations of foreign cultures and their respective values.

Relevant Studies

A recurring theme in the literature regarding the use of textbooks in ELT revolves around the juxtaposition of post-colonial acceptance of English as an international language and the assertion of cultural autonomy. Throughout the reviewed articles, there is a subtle undercurrent of anti-Western sentiment, particularly directed towards the UK and the US. Therefore, it becomes imperative to strike a balance between acknowledging historical legacies and mitigating further hegemony within the field of ELT.

Vis-à-vis the Saudi context, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) argue that English "is not a 'neutral' language" (p. 128). They posit that it serves as a symbolic representation of a comprehensive system encompassing politics, economics, religion, and culture. It is evident that Western culture differs significantly from that of Saudi Arabia, which is deeply rooted in Islamic conventions. Some of these conventions, such as gender equality, sexual morality, and the use of mood-altering substances, stand in contrast to Western values. Consequently, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) contend that the proliferation of English as a symbol of cultural imperialism is met with resistance and   hostility. Moreover, they highlight an internal dilemma within Saudi Arabia, characterized by "tension between forces for reform and traditional practices" (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014,

p. 128), with varying attitudes towards ELT. In light of these tensions, the authors advocate for content localization as a strategy to circumvent potential cultural hegemony, ultimately proposing the recognition of "Saudi English" as a distinct variant among the broader spectrum of "Englishes."

Mahboob and Elyas (2014) offer a historical perspective on the perception of non-native languages, such as Turkish, through the lens of "us and them," with Ottoman rule often viewed with hostility. Over the course of the 20th century, attitudes towards foreign languages, particularly English, evolved, acknowledging its status as an international language. However, this evolution also reinforced cultural hegemony, exemplified by initiatives like the Scholarship Preparation School in Saudi Arabia, aiming to prepare students for education in the UK and the USA, implicitly prioritizing foreign culture over local traditions. Despite this, English is taught in public schools due to its perceived economic value and external pressure to promote tolerance towards American culture. This approach aims to foster acceptance of cultural diversity rather than viewing foreign cultures as distant and antithetical to the values of Saudi Arabia.

While the importance of English in today's world is undeniable, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) address the challenges associated with ELT in Saudi Arabia. Early ELT materials in the country heavily censored content deemed taboo in Islamic culture, such as references to dating and alcohol consumption. However, modern ELT materials portray Western culture as a facet of global diversity. Yet, this portrayal raises concerns about cultural relativism and the depiction of Western customs offensive to Islamic values, potentially perpetuating Western imperialism. To address this, the authors propose accommodating textbook materials suitable for Saudi society and culture, exemplified by the inclusion of expressions like "Assalamu Alaikum" in conversational examples, reflecting a local sociocultural worldview.

In the researcher's opinion, while localizing textbooks is a step towards addressing cultural concerns, it is essential to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of conversational conventions in English and Arabic. Balancing representations of Western and Eastern cultures in textbooks, tailored to specific topics, can help achieve a harmonious blend of cultural perspectives. Mahboob and Elyas (2014) underscore the growing need to revise ELT materials in Saudi Arabia, whether through localization or by preventing the hegemony of Western culture in textbooks. This reflects a broader recognition of the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in educational materials.

Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) discuss the challenges of ELT in Saudi Arabia, noting that educational reform has underscored the universal importance of literacy and education. Central to education in Saudi Arabia is the preservation of Islamic culture, values, and ideals, which is deemed equally vital as individual and national development. Notably, the Ministry of Higher Education aims to enhance ELT to enable students to articulate and expound Islamic concepts while also fostering respect and tolerance for other cultures. This dual objective seeks to promote harmony rather than hostility towards diverse cultures, particularly those of English-speaking nations. However, despite these commendable objectives, the reality falls short due to various challenges within ELT. Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) highlight recurring issues such as the inadequacy of textbooks in meeting learners' needs, as well as the difficulty faced by educators and administrative bodies in selecting appropriate materials. The authors note the indecision and insecurity among educators regarding textbook selection, attributing it to the lack of suitable content that aligns with the curriculum. In response to these challenges, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) advocate for an overhaul of current ELT practices, emphasizing the need for reform in textbook materials. They stress the importance of addressing these issues to improve the quality of ELT in Saudi Arabia, which is essential for the holistic development of students and the fulfillment of educational objectives. This call for action underscores the urgency of addressing shortcomings in ELT practices, particularly concerning the selection and adaptation of appropriate textbook materials.

Nikou and Soleimani (2012) offer a unique perspective on ELT practices in Iranian and Turkish high schools, critiquing the insufficient representation of foreign cultures in textbooks. They argue that while certain topics like science are overrepresented, other aspects of Western culture are inadequately portrayed, failing to adequately prepare students for engagement with English-speaking nations. Despite this, the authors assert that exposure to foreign cultures through ELT textbooks does not necessarily threaten students' native culture. Instead, they argue that such exposure can enhance students' understanding of new cultures while simultaneously strengthening their own cultural identity.

Shin et al. (2011) delve into the issues stemming from the dominance of an "English-as-such" paradigm in ELT, echoing many of the concerns raised previously. They emphasize the detrimental effects such hegemony can have, including the marginalization of non-native English speakers and challenges to language identity and ownership. The authors ad-

vocate for a more inclusive approach that recognizes the cultural diversity within the English-speaking world, including countries like Korea, Japan, and China in the mainstream circle of English-speaking nations. Defining culture as a framework of assumptions and beliefs used to interpret others' actions, Shin et al. underscore the importance of exposure to diverse cultures in ELT. They argue that such exposure fosters a deeper appreciation for both foreign and local cultures, promoting cultural understanding and sensitivity among learners. Shin et al. (ibid) advocate for a post-colonial perspective in ELT, challenging the notion that English belongs exclusively to inner-circle countries. They argue that while it is crucial for students to appreciate foreign cultures, understanding and valuing their own cultural identity is equally important. This approach, they contend, helps avoid perpetuating past hegemonies. However, the authors recognize the complexity of creating ELT textbooks devoid of cultural bias. They acknowledge the challenge of producing materials that are value-free and stripped of cultural influence, especially considering the diverse backgrounds of both learners and compilers. For instance, Western compilers may struggle to incorporate examples conflicting with their own values, just as Islamic individuals might face similar challenges when compiling Arabic language textbooks. In response, Shin et al. propose a pragmatic solution: finding a balance between representing inner-circle cultures and implementing content localization. They suggest integrating both local and global perspectives into ELT materials, thereby accommodating the cultural diversity of learners while promoting a broader understanding of different cultures.

Alfahadi (2012) delves into the examination of suitable cultural models for EFL textbooks, particularly from the perspective of Saudi teachers. This exploration holds significance in navigating the nuanced relationship between the propagation of Western cultural values and the cultural autonomy of Saudi Arabia. Alfahadi (ibid) contextualizes the historical backdrop of education in Saudi Arabia, acknowledging the pivotal role of English while emphasizing the inherent tensions between content localization and the potential imposition of foreign cultural values on students. Despite the dominance of local Islamic culture in ELT materials within Saudi public schools, Alfahadi notes that this dynamic is subject to reform, partly catalyzed by the global rise of Islamophobia post-9/11. Consequently, there has been external pressure, notably from the US, to foster more tolerant attitudes toward Western culture. However, despite efforts to introduce more diverse perspectives, Alfahadi's research reveals that the representation of local culture remains hegemonic in ELT textbooks. This finding underscores the continued sensitivity to Islamic practices and values within the educational framework. Notably, most Saudi teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the cultural content of ELT textbooks, revealing a divergence in attitudes toward the West. While some advocate for increased content localization, others call for a greater representation of Saudi culture, reflecting the ongoing complexity and debate surrounding ELT content in Saudi Arabia.

The Study Methodology

In line with the outlined objectives, this concise critical examination seeks to question and confront an aspect that is often overlooked in many universities in Saudi Arabia and potentially beyond. The focus of this critique revolves around the pervasive presence of Western cultural influences, predominantly from the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, as portrayed within English language textbooks. According to Troudi (2014), "if we want to be educators and intellectual teachers (Giroux 1988) rather than consumers and perpetuators of hegemonic structures and dominant discourses, then our research ought not to be stripped of its critical agenda" (p. 109).

This study aligns with a critical paradigm, as advocated by Troudi (2014), which underscores the suitability of a critical stance for addressing and shedding light on issues pertinent to educational practices, including matters of voice, marginalization, and exclusion. Similarly, Pennycook (2000) posits that a primary aim of critical approaches is to interrogate the presumed norms of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and question their underlying assumptions, thereby endorsing such a perspective. Adopting the same stance as Rubin (2012, p. 20) asserts that "research should redress past oppression, bring problems to light and help minorities, the powerless and silenced".

In order to confront the evident dominance of Western culture in the ELT materials utilized in Saudi universities, this study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify and analyze the underlying content depicted in these textbooks. CDA is "a type of discourse analytical research that mainly investigates the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 352).

CDA is a methodology applicable to both written and spoken language texts. Given the objectives of this study, specifically to question and challenge the predominance of Western culture depicted in textbooks, CDA emerges as a suitable

approach. This is because communication, as emphasized by Weber (1990), is fundamental to human interactions. Textbooks, serving as a form of written discourse, serve as a means of communication through which students receive information and messages across various topics. These topics have the potential to shape students' perceptions of what constitutes essential information within texts or conversations, thereby influencing their assumptions. Van Dijk (2008, p. 357, citing Giroux, 1981) suggests that: "…in some situations, participants are obliged to be recipients of discourse, e.g. in education and in many job situations. Lessons, learning materials, job instructions, and other discourse types in such cases may need to be attended to, interpreted, and learned as intended by institutional or organizational authors". CDA expounds on these "social, political, cognitive, moral and material consequences" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 15).

The researcher utilized textual analysis as a method to scrutinize the content of the textbooks, drawing on Fairclough's framework (2003). This approach enabled me to investigate the language utilized, the topics covered, and the prevailing cultural representations. Through this analysis, the researcher gained an understanding of how the textbooks either reinforce or challenge the notion of power imbalances within society, while also highlighting any overlooked or omitted topics. Ultimately, the aim of this analysis was to uncover the underlying ideology and political implications embedded within the text. This approach resonates with Fairclough's assertion (2003, p. 5) that while textual analysis can provide valuable insights into the content of a text, the absence of certain elements is equally significant from a socio-cultural standpoint.

Weninger and Kiss (2013, p. 699) assert that "Critical Discourse Analysis is a commonly employed method for analyzing cultural content within teaching materials" (also see Camase, 2009; Gulliver, 2010; Liu, 2005). Similarly, Troudi (2014, p. 5) argues that "Critical Discourse Analysis serves not only as a subject of study but also as a significant methodology aiding critical researchers in investigating and addressing questions concerning the use of discourse in language education."

In this study, the analysis aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Do the English language textbooks utilized in the English Language Unit (ELU) classrooms at Taibah University adequately represent the diverse range of cultures associated with the English language?

2. How do these textbooks depict the social issues prevalent in Saudi society?

The Study Sample

The study sample included two series of English language textbooks: the Touchstone and Unlock series as both are popularly utilised in different universities across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (i.e. Taibah University, Taif University, King Abdul Aziz University). As stated in the introductions of both textbook series (p. iv), these materials are considered innovative and are tailored for adult and young adult learners in the Arab world, guiding them from beginner to intermediate levels of English proficiency. For the purposes of this paper, attention was focused on levels 1 and 2 of the Touchstone series, and levels A1 and A2 of the Unlock series. Both series are designed for beginners and high beginners, respectively, aiming to teach fundamental grammar, vocabulary, and conversational skills for everyday interactions. Levels 3 and 4 of the series are intended for low-intermediate and intermediate learners.

The design of these textbooks was informed by the Cambridge International Corpus, a comprehensive database of spoken and written English developed by Cambridge University Press. This corpus comprises over a billion words sourced from authentic materials, reflecting how English is used in real-world contexts. The Touchstone Middle East edition was initially released in 2009, while Unlock was first published in 2014. Both series have been utilized in teaching English within the preparatory program (foundation year) at the university where the study was conducted.

The Study Data Analysis

Nikou and Soleimani (2012) assert that "To date, no specific methodology has been universally accepted for analyzing the cultural content of foreign language textbooks" (p. 649). In this study, the analytical framework relied on the textual analysis approach, a component of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which involves scrutinizing written or spoken language texts. This approach was also utilized by Murayama (2000), who adapted a modified version of the model employed by Ramirez and Halls (1990) to explore the cultural content and levels of cultural information presented in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) materials within a specific context (Japan). Murayama (2000) employed the terms "aspects of cultures" and "levels of cultural understanding" to assess the cultural content in textbooks, whereas in this study, I adopted the terms "aspects of cultures" and "varieties of cultural presentation" to align with the research focus. Additionally, I conducted an examination of the ideological and political implications evident in the texts.

The findings are visually presented through illustrations (Figures 1 to 9) depicting various topics and themes extracted from the Touchstone textbooks. Subsequently, I qualitatively discuss and analyze the text, focusing on the depictions presented in the materials concerning different themes. Table 1 outlines the topics, themes, and the types of culture portrayed in these topics.

Table 1
Topics analyzed in Touchstone and Unlock

Topics analysed	Examples		Type of culture represented in each topic
TV programmes	Soap opera, talk show, game show, sitcom, documentary		Western (US)
			Inner circle
Local events and neighbourhoods	Yankee Stadium, J. Paul Getty Museum, Stanley Park and Parkview Area	Canada)	Western (US,
			Inner circle
Sports activities	American football, baseball		Western (US, UK)
			Inner circle
Fashion and clothing style	Dress pants, sweater, jeans, blouse and skirt		Western (US, UK)
			Inner circle
Sightseeing	New York City, Los Angeles, Minnesota, Vancouver	Canada)	Western (US,
			Inner circle
Currencies	Dollars $, Pound sterling £		Western (US)
			Inner circle
Heroes past and present	Paul Revere		Western (US)

The Study Results

Upon analyzing the Touchstone ELT textbooks utilized in Saudi Arabia, it becomes apparent that Western culture, particularly that of "inner circle" countries such as the US, the UK, and Canada, predominates in the materials. This hegemony is consistently observed across the seven topics examined (c.f. Table 1), which are indicative of prevalent themes found within textbook content.

Figure 1
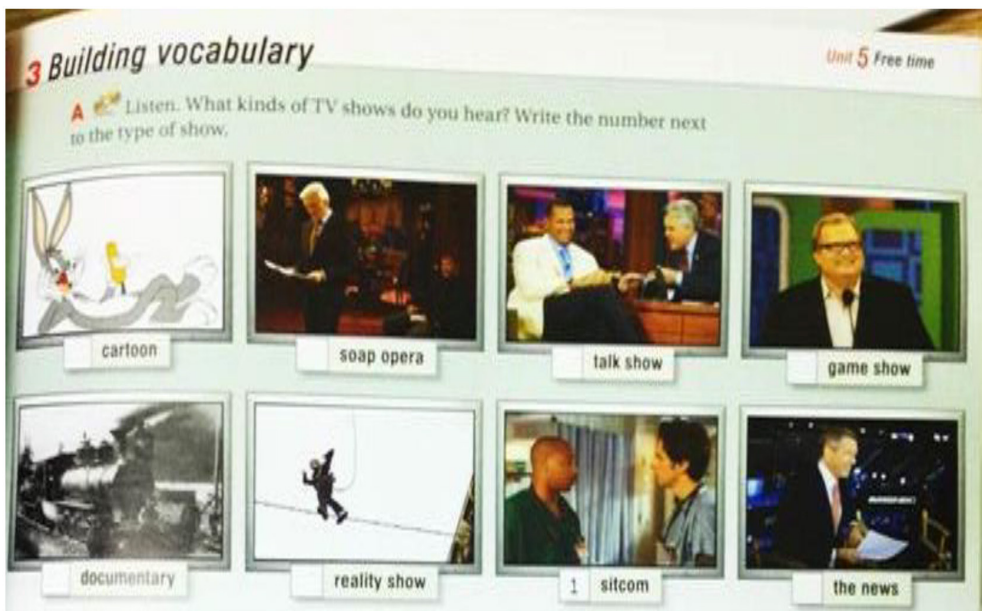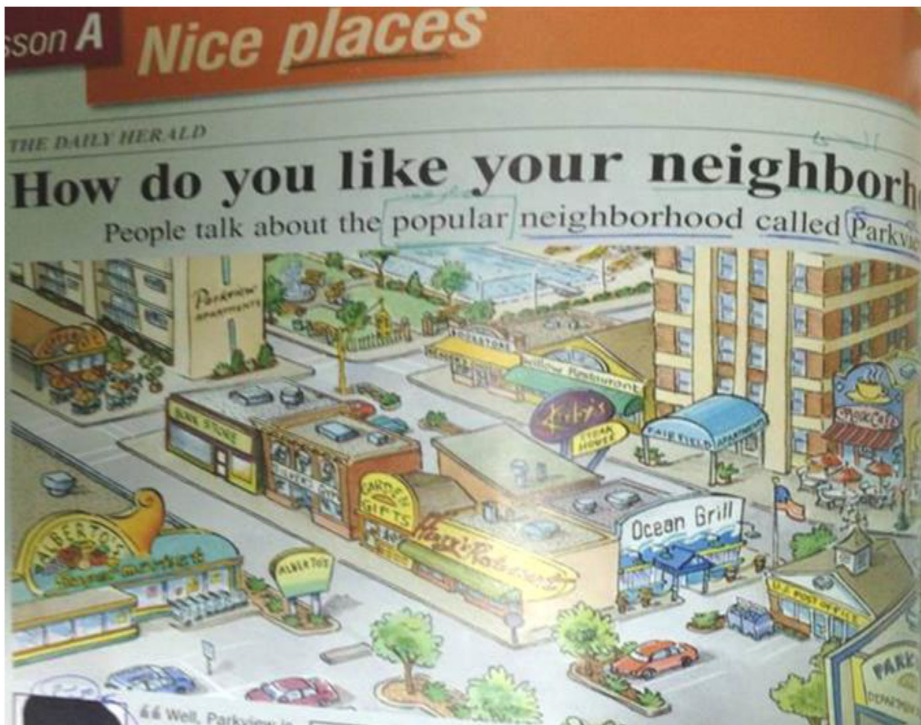*Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Television Programmes)*

Figure 1 above depicts a listening exercise sourced from Touchstone Level 1, Unit 5, Lesson A. Here, students listen to excerpts from various TV shows and sequentially match them with corresponding images. The content notably reflects Western culture, featuring mainstream American programs such as soap operas, talk shows, game shows, and sitcoms. This cultural representation extends to the appearance and attire of the characters. These TV programs enjoy widespread popularity in the United States.

The image accompanying the documentary indicates that the inaugural transcontinental train journey in the United States occurred in 1869. While the textbooks are tailored for Arab countries, specifically the Middle East edition, it is apparent that all featured shows originate from and reflect one culture-American. However, there exist alternative options, such as Tash ma Tash (a comedy series) or Alrassid (a talk show), widely popular in Saudi Arabia.

Though the current study does not primarily focus on localizing textbooks, as suggested by prior research (e.g., Mahboob & Elyas, 2014), which, in the researcher's opinion, is just one aspect of the solution, it is crucial for students to embrace diverse cultures representing the English language worldwide, including their own. Numerous scholars (Alptekin, 2000; McKay, 2003; Shin et al., 2011; Troudi, 2005) advocate for incorporating international cultures into EFL textbook materials. Similarly, Seidlhofer (2003) asserts that, given the rapid global spread of English, expanding circle countries should feature in EFL materials. In the researcher's perspective, integrating a spectrum of cultures into EFL textbooks would foster greater learner engagement in language acquisition, enabling them to actively participate and exchange knowledge and personal experiences reflective of their cultures, while also exposing them to others'. As Bao (2006) suggests, "thoughtful inclusion of culture in textbooks may facilitate effective communication in cross-cultural contexts and promote learners' tolerance and receptivity towards diverse cultural values" (p. 112; see also Cunningsworth, 1984).

Figure 2
Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Local Events and Neighbourhoods)

Figure 3
*Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Local Events and Neighbourhoods)*
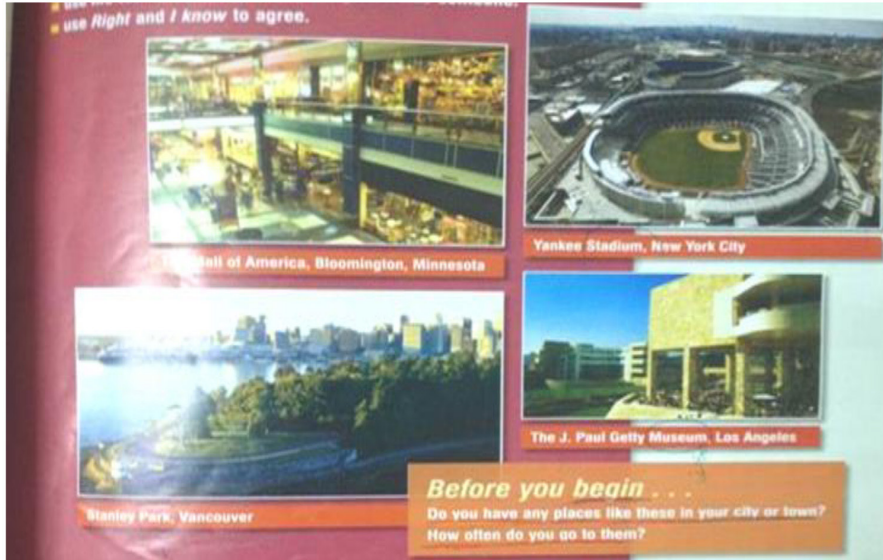
In Touchstone Level 1, Unit 6, Lesson A, students are prompted to discuss their neighborhoods and local events. Figures 2 and 3 feature examples predominantly from the US, evident in the Western names of establishments and the presence of the US flag in Figure 2. Additionally, the local venues illustrated, such as the shopping mall, stadium, park, and museum in Figure 3, primarily relate to cities within inner-circle countries like the US and Canada. While these images serve as mere prompts, it is pertinent to question why they exclusively represent these countries. Alternatives could draw from other outer-circle nations where English is prevalent or feature various cities in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, aligning with the lesson's focus on local events. As extensively discussed in literature, En-glish transcends its status as the language of "na-tive speakers," being utilized by millions world-wide for diverse purposes.

Siddiqie (2011) posits that "any attempt to pro-mote specific cultural aspects solely from a par-ticular English-speaking country could be per-ceived as imposing one cultural group's values on others and may be seen as 'language hegemo-ny or linguistic chauvinism'" (p. 111). The domi-nance of English represents a significant concern for EFL educators and practitioners. Therefore, this study aims to scrutinize this hegemony with-in the textbooks utilized in the Saudi educational context. Further exploration will delve into the underlying causes of English hegemony overall and particularly within EFL textbook materials.

Figure 4
*Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Sports Activities and Games)*
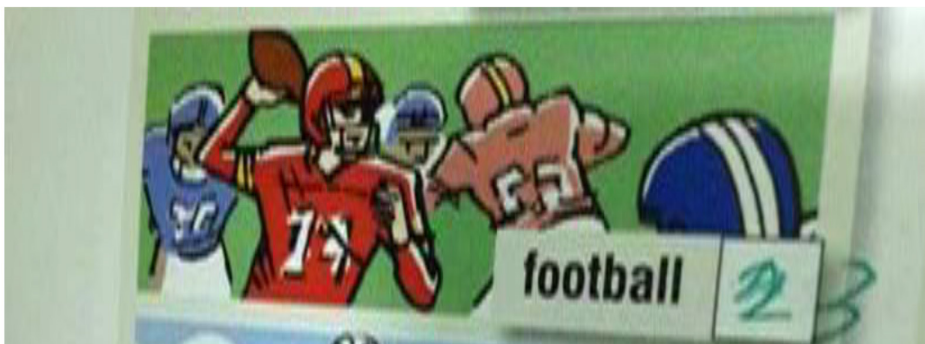
Unit 7 of Touchstone Level 1 tackles sports activities and games, encompassing content on commonly favored physical activities and televised sports. However, once again, American culture takes center stage, as illustrated in Figure 4 where "football" is depicted, referring to American football, which might lead to confusion for students in various countries, such as Saudi Arabia, where "football" typically refers to the globally popular soccer.

In the subsequent exercise within the same lesson, a picture depicts a conversation between a man and his son, with the son engrossed in watching a baseball game on TV. While baseball enjoys immense popularity in the US, it lacks similar traction in many other countries, particularly in EFL contexts like Saudi Arabia.
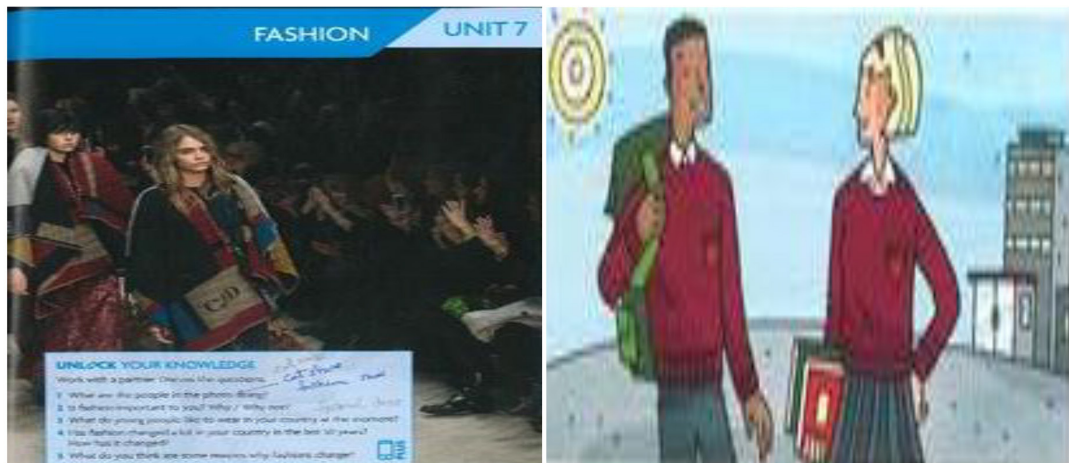
Figure 5
Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Sports Activities and Games)
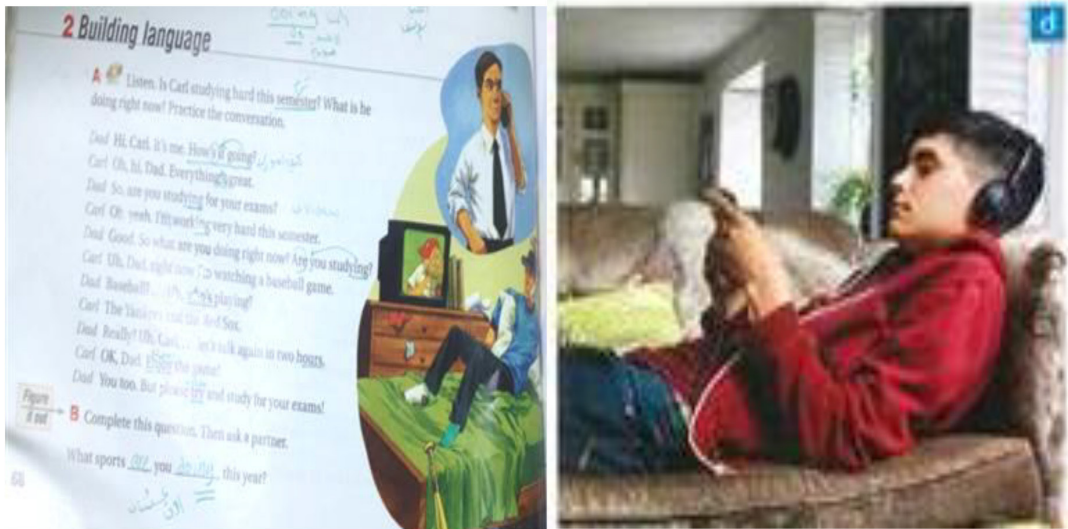
Presenting sports and games in EFL textbooks is beneficial, yet it is noteworthy that the emphasis seems to be exclusively on those prevalent in the US and the UK, while other English-speaking countries are overlooked. It would be advantageous to incorporate examples with a more global appeal, such as horse riding, car racing, tennis, and soccer. In this regard, baseball receives additional attention, with further historical details provided in Unit 11, Lesson D (refer to Appendices).
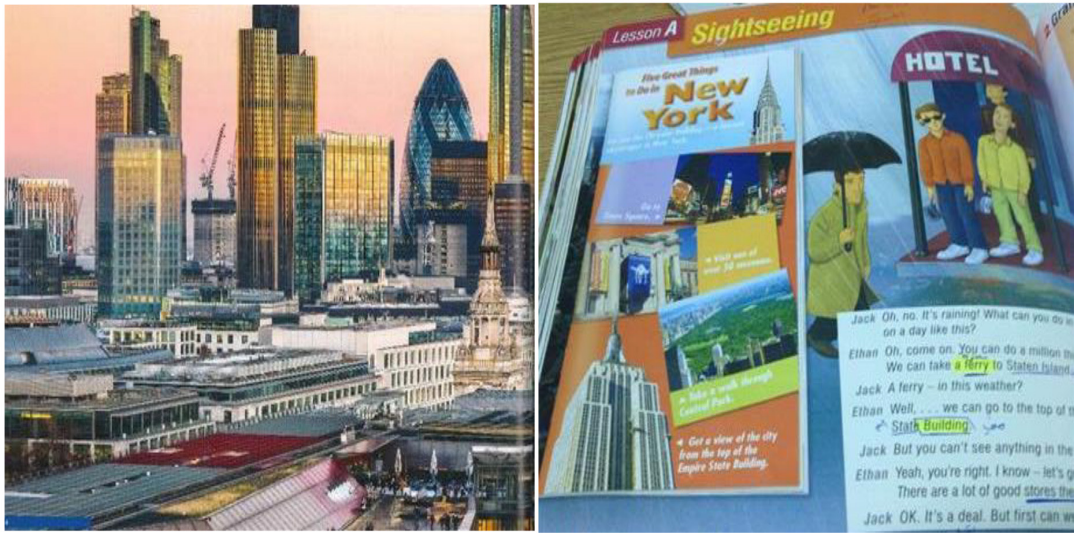
Figure 6
Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Fashion and clothing style)

In Unlock Level 3, Unit 7 explores the topic of fashion, encompassing the types of clothing people prefer to wear. However, Figure 6 exclusively showcases Western attire, particularly from the US, evident in the use of American English terms like "pants" and "sweater." This raises the question: why is there no representation of clothing from outer-circle or expanding-circle countries? As highlighted by Shin et al. (2011), countries within the expanding circle of English speakers, such as Korea, Japan, and China, merit inclusion alongside mainstream circle countries like New Zealand and Canada.

Figure 7
Dominance of Western Culture Represented in the Topic of Sightseeing

In Unlock Level 1, Unit 4, Lesson A delves into sightseeing and notable destinations worldwide. However, the examples provided lack diversity and global representation. Figure 7 features London in the UK and New York in the USA, with the depicted weather (rainy) characteristic of both regions rather than the Middle East. The array of potential sightseeing locations across the globe is vast and inclusive. Examples encompass landmarks such as Burj Khalifah Tower in Dubai, UAE, Petronas Twin Towers in Malaysia, Taj Mahal in India, and Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Figure 8
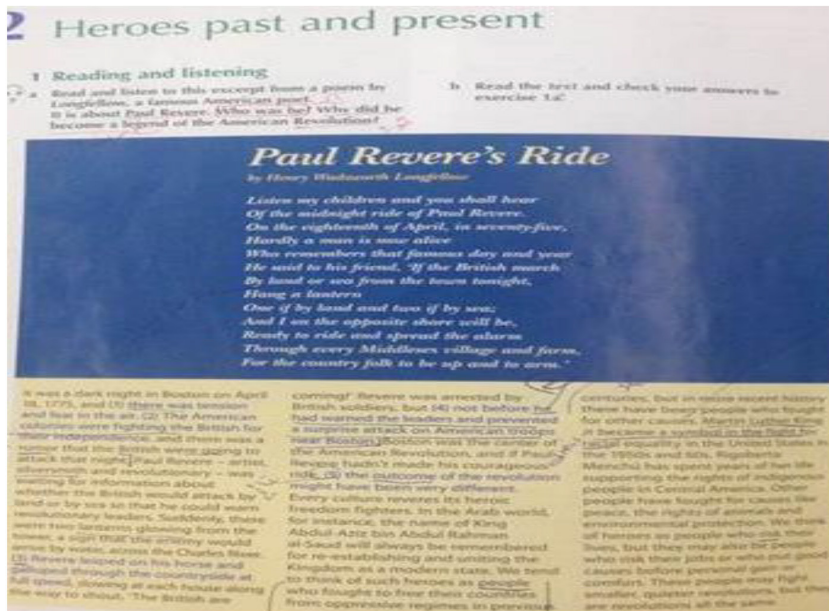*Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Money)*
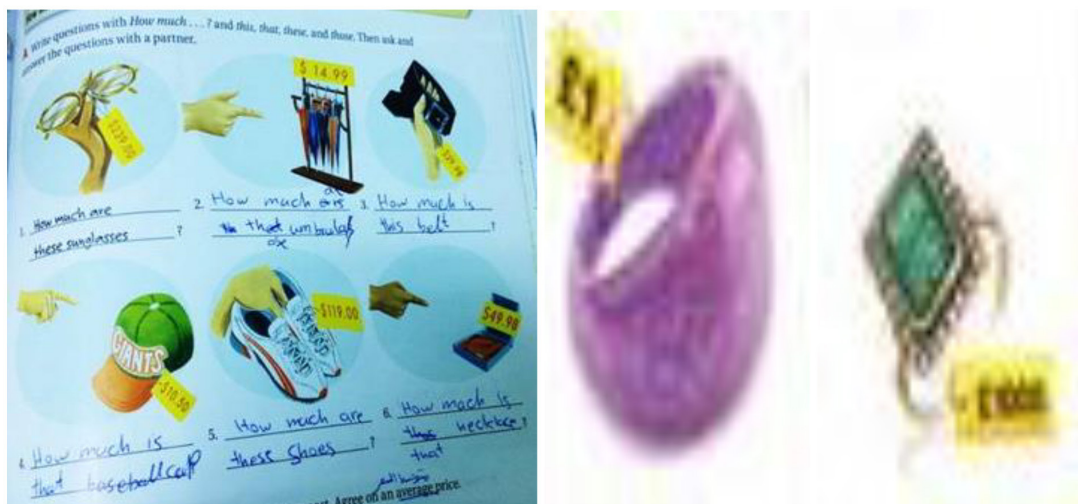
In Unit 8's Lesson B of the Unlock series, the promotion of Western cultural hegemony persists. Here, students learn to formulate questions using "how much" and "how many," along with employing demonstrative pronouns like "this," "that," "these," and "those." However, Figure 8 exclusively displays product prices in US dollars and British pounds, without any representation of Middle Eastern or other currencies. This pattern recurs across various lessons and topics (refer to Figure A2 in the Appendix), completely sidelining Eastern culture, which is reflective of the students' own backgrounds.

In the researcher's perspective, such representations warrant reconsideration. It is crucial to strike a balance between the cultures depicted in language learning materials. While Western culture should be included to facilitate EFL students' connection to the language in relevant contexts, it is imperative to note that Western culture encompasses countries from both inner and outer circles. Simultaneously, Eastern culture, representing the students' own cultural heritage, should be portrayed. Literature has long debated this issue (Gray, 2010: Downes et al, 2017; Farsani D, 2022) While some scholars argue that students encounter their culture in other subjects, rendering its presence in English language textbooks unnecessary,

the researcher counters that in Saudi Arabia, where 99% of English teachers are native speakers (e.g., American, British), there is a genuine interest among educators in understanding their students' cultural background (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

Both students and teachers should have equal opportunities to share and discuss their own cultures within classrooms, whether they are Eastern or Western. Jenkins (2006) emphasizes the need to validate learners' cultures and experiences within teaching materials and instructional practices. She argues that textbook writers and developers should consider this diversity and assist learners in leveraging their life experiences to facilitate identification with various English varieties and associated cultures. Moreover, echoing researchers like Victor (1999), Crystal (2001), Majdzadeh (2002), and Troudi (2005), Shin et al. (2011) advocate for localizing textbooks while incorporating target and global cultures to enhance learners' intercultural competence. It is however essential to clarify that advocating for the inclusion of Eastern cultures does not imply minimizing or removing Western culture from EFL textbooks. Students are inherently curious about cultures worldwide, and EFL teachers play a pivotal role in bridging the familiar with the unfamiliar, establishing connections between different cultures while fostering respect for all nations and traditions.

Figure 9
Dominance of Western Culture Represented (Heroes: Past and Present)

The predominance of Western culture is evident in Touchstone Level 2. In Unit 2, lesson 1, the topic "heroes past and present" features excerpts from a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a renowned American poet. The poem centers on Paul Revere, discussing his signifi-

cance and legendary status during the American Revolution. Figure 9 above further underscores the influence of Western (US) culture within the curriculum. Two key issues arise here for critical examination. Firstly, the focal point of the curriculum is the American Revolution, which may understandably engage American students or those studying within the United States. However, its relevance in EFL textbooks within contexts such as Saudi Arabia is questionable. Secondly, the exclusive focus on American figures marginalizes other countries and their historical narratives.

Discussing the Study Results

By analyzing both the Touchstone and Unlock textbook series, a recurring issue becomes apparent: the pervasive dominance of Western culture, particularly that of inner-circle countries such as the US and Canada, while Eastern culture, representative of the students, remains conspicuously absent. Drawing from existing literature, this hegemony could be interpreted as a consequence of political pressures exerted by the US government post-9/11 (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). The sustained influence of these pressures is evidenced by the introduction of English language teaching in primary schools across Saudi Arabia, purportedly aimed at fostering acceptance and tolerance, particularly towards the US and the West (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 130). This shift in English curricula in Saudi Arabia has been met with mixed reactions internally, as evidenced by various studies (e.g., Al Essa, 2009; Al Faisal, 2006; Elyas, 2008).

The dominance of Western culture in EFL materials extends beyond Saudi Arabia and has been widely observed by researchers who characterize English as an "imperialistic tool" (Phillipson, 1992) and a "missionary language" (Pennycook, 1998; Pennycook, 2001). Troudi (2005) suggests that due to the political and cultural hegemony of the US, many countries have adopted the American variety of English, leading to the exclusive representation of American culture in numerous ELT materials.

It is imperative to recognize that this study does not seek to oppose Western culture outright or to condone the current hegemony evident in many EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia. Instead, it advocates for the inclusion of a diverse range of cultures within EFL materials. This inclusivity should encompass the students' local culture, the Western culture associated with the target language, and a spectrum of "Englishes" from around the world, including those from inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle countries.

In response to the second research question, this study contends that the mainstream topics covered in the Touchstone materials are insufficient in addressing students' needs and interests. It is worthy to note that while it is true that the present research did not involve direct inquiries into students' topic preferences, the assertion regarding the insufficiency of mainstream topics were derived from an extensive background in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for nearly seventeen years. This experience provided invaluable insight into the dynamics of student engagement and the relevance of textbook content, particularly in the context of university-level students in Saudi Arabia. While it is here acknowledged that formal survey data on topic preferences would have provided additional support for the present study's conclusions, it is believed that the depth of insight gained from years of teaching experience offers a compelling basis for the current study's assertions.

The assertion that mainstream topics may not fully meet the needs and interests of students was informed by observations of the socio-cultural realities facing many students in the region. The responsibilities and time constraints experienced by students were key factors in understanding their preferences and limitations. This understanding was further supported by the observation that topics such as sports and holidays, while common in ELT textbooks, may not resonate with the experiences of university-level students in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, in the context of Saudi Arabia, many students bear significant financial responsibilities for their families. Balancing study commitments during the day with work obligations in the evening leaves them with little leisure time. For such students, activities like watching football matches or taking summer holidays may be unattainable luxuries. Consequently, the topics covered in the materials lack cultural and intellectual stimulation and predominantly reflect US culture, thereby limiting their scope. Regardless of students' proficiency levels, there exist alternative topics that would be more appropriate, engaging, and culturally relevant.

This aspect of the present study underscores the importance of considering the criteria used for selecting textbook materials. According to the curriculum committee currently tasked with this responsibility, textbooks were chosen to

align with the primary objectives of the English Language Unit (ELU) and the specific needs of preparatory year students:

1. To enhance the English language skills of preparatory year students.

2. To cultivate the academic and study skills of preparatory year students.

3. To equip preparatory year students with the necessary English language proficiency for subsequent courses in the colleges they enroll in after completing the preparatory year.

While these objectives serve as criteria for selection, they are relatively broad and primarily focus on facilitating students' success during their preparatory year. Many English language textbooks available in the market cater to the development of language skills among international students in general, without a clear framework for selecting materials tailored to this specific context. Notably, the objectives do not address aspects related to students' cultural backgrounds, age, specific needs, or interests.

Implications and Recommendations of The Study

It is evident that academic institutions should establish appropriate criteria for selecting textbooks that align with their objectives and cater to the needs of their students, rather than solely serving the interests of publishers or authors. The criteria for selecting textbook materials should be well-defined and tailored to the context, taking into consideration student cultural backgrounds, age, interests, and intellectual levels. Moreover, the topics covered should be engaging and challenging. Achieving this requires a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted considerations involved in selecting textbook materials that meet the standards mandated by the curriculum.

The present study advocates for the implementation of training programs for individuals tasked with selecting textbook materials at universities. Such training would equip them with the necessary skills to conduct thorough evaluations, ensuring that the topics and content are pertinent to both the students and the educational context. Additionally, it suggests allocating time for piloting textbooks, ideally spanning from six months to a year, before their widespread adoption throughout a university.

A precedent for this approach exists within Saudi Arabia, as the Ministry of Education initiated a similar process in many intermediate and secondary schools across the country in 2011. This policy garnered positive reception and support from educators in Saudi Arabia, who perceived it as an effective means to gauge student responses to the textbooks (Alfahadi, 2012). Therefore, the Ministry of Education could emulate this policy in universities as an initial measure toward ensuring the suitability of textbook materials. Such proactive steps would enhance the quality and relevance of educational resources, ultimately enriching the learning experience for students.

Kayaoglu (2011), in a study examining EFL textbooks used in a high school in Turkey, asserts that many commercially-available textbooks fail to align with the needs and expectations of language learners. These textbooks are often designed to cater to the global market demand for English, leading to dissatisfaction among language teachers (p. 342). This issue of inadequacy in meeting students' needs is reflected in the Saudi context as well. Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) similarly suggest that, like many other countries, syllabus designers and higher authorities in various schools and universities in Saudi Arabia struggle to select textbooks that effectively cater to learners' needs (p. 115).

In this regard, it is imperative to involve students in discussions concerning issues more closely related to their immediate needs. Within the Saudi context, these may encompass societal challenges such as the absence of parental figures in Saudi families, the prevalence of divorce, unemployment, and the alarming rate of car accidents. Furthermore, other pertinent issues such as health topics including obesity, diabetes, and drug addiction should be considered in these textbooks. Students ought to be encouraged to adopt healthy habits and deter from detrimental practices such as consuming excessive amounts of fast food, sugary beverages, and tobacco use. It is paramount to cultivate student awareness regarding these pressing health concerns.

Other way around, students should be encouraged to engage in physical activities such as going to the gym or participating in accessible exercises like walking or jogging. Societal concerns relevant to students or their local communities should be integrated into their study materials. Leveraging textbooks to address such issues is vital for engaging students and heightening their awareness of these challenges. However, this does not imply the exclusion of common and enjoyable topics such as travel and hobbies. Both

types of topics should coexist within the content of textbooks. As Troudi (2005) emphasizes, "topics need to be relevant to [students'] daily experiences and concerns. Drawing on students' experiences, activities will have real meaning beyond the learning of linguistic and structural items" (p. 12; see also Freeman & Freeman, 2003).

To address issues pertaining to EFL textbooks, several authors have proposed suggestions for developing EFL materials in Saudi Arabia and other EFL contexts more broadly. For instance, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) advocate for the utilization of needs analysis, defined as "the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities" (p. 115). Additionally, EFL teachers, being pivotal in any language-learning environment, should be consulted and involved in the selection of appropriate materials. Given their daily interactions with students, teachers possess valuable insights into their needs. Empowering teachers to choose suitable textbooks addresses Troudi's (2005) observation that "most teachers are not involved in second language policies and will have no choice but to use the variety chosen by those in charge of TESOL curricula" (p. 15).

While more than one culture representing English should and could be incorporated into EFL materials, it is widely recognized, as noted by Alptekin (2000), that "most textbook writers are native speakers who consciously or unconsciously transmit the views, values, beliefs, and feelings of their own English society" (p. 138). The shortage of bilingual English textbook writers must be acknowledged, and efforts should be made to encourage bilingual and multilingual English-speaking educators to contribute to textbook writing and material development. It is challenging to create materials completely free from one's own cultural biases (Shin et al., 2011), highlighting the importance of diverse perspectives in the creation of EFL materials.

Concluding Remarks

The present study endeavors to problematize and contest the hegemonic dominance of Western cultural representation pervasive in English textbooks utilized within a university setting in Saudi Arabia. The underlying rationale driving this study is to foster awareness regarding the imperative of inclusivity by representing a diverse array of English-speaking cultures within such educational materials. Moreover, it seeks to elucidate to educators both in Saudi Arabia and

regionally the prevalent portrayal of Western culture in mainstream English language materials, particularly emanating from inner-circle nations such as USA, UK, and Canada, thereby sidelining those from outer-circle and expanding-circle countries (cf. Kachru, 1985).

Furthermore, this study posits that the current English language textbooks employed in the KSA inadequately cater to the multifaceted needs and interests of learners. Consequently, the paper offers several solutions and recommendations for the future development of textbook materials within the KSA and potentially other analogous English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. In light of its findings, it becomes evident that EFL educators, whether consciously or unconsciously, contribute to the perpetuation of this issue. Consequently, this study endeavors to spotlight the entrenched status quo prevalent in most academic institutions in the KSA, with the aim of catalyzing transformative change.

Lastly, it is pertinent to acknowledge that critical discourse analysis within the realm of educational research aspires to maintain neutrality and apolitical stance, eschewing any hidden agendas. Rather, its implementation is geared towards unveiling or rectifying issues that may otherwise be marginalized, such as those apparent in the content of English language teaching materials (Troudi, 2014). Herein lies the premise that "TESOL teacher education needs to scrutinize the nature of education through the lenses of the critical paradigm alongside post-structuralism, cultural studies, and social constructivism" (Troudi, 2005, p. 6; see also Canagarajah, 1999; Giroux, 1983; Hall, 2002; Hall & Eggington, 2000; Pennycook, 1998, 1999, 2000; Tollefson, 2002).

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Appendices
Appendix 1
Selected textbook material samples
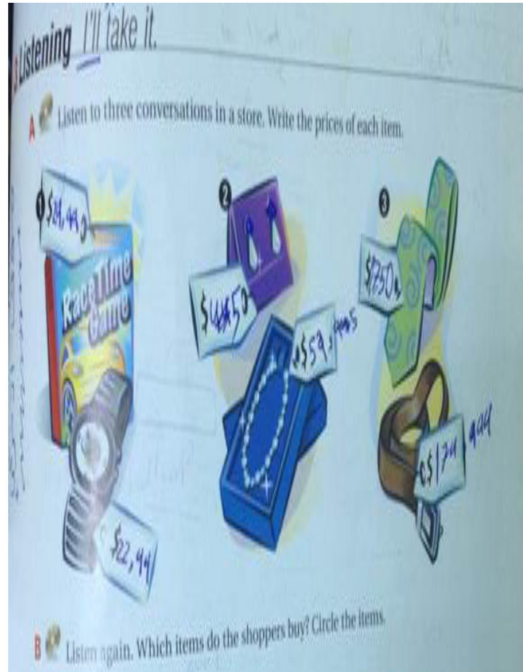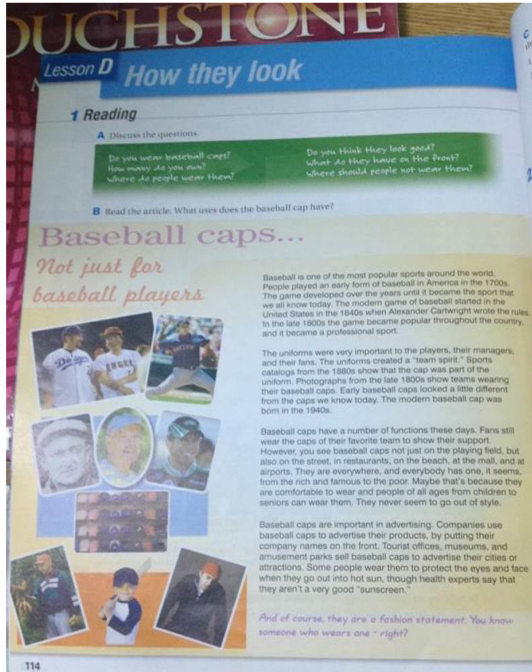
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