Covert Curriculum in ELT Coursebooks: Evidence from *Top Notch* and *English File* Series

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Abstract: ELT coursebooks are the fertile soil for the transmission of cultural perspectives and also strong tools for shaping L2 learners' attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations. The present study investigated the existence of covert/hidden curriculum in two of the widely-used ELT coursebook series, *Top Notch* and *English File* hypothesizing that cultural transmission takes place on two plains, overt and covert, and that the latter is more influential than the former. To do so, the content of the series was analyzed via Moran's (2001) model of *Dimensions of Culture* and Chao's (2011) *Main Categories of Culture*. The results of the study indicated that the series, along with covering different dimensions of culture, are biased mainly in favor of the western products, persons, and perspectives, and that despite their global EFL/EIL audience, they vividly base their dialogues, readings, and listening on the norms and values of the English-speaking countries, with almost no attention to the local, especially Asian values. The study, discussing the implications of such culture-related covert curricula in the ELT coursebooks, makes relevant suggestions for the design of ELT coursebooks in the present global village.

Keywords: Covert/Hidden Curriculum, ELT Coursebooks, Content Analysis, Cultural Content.

Introduction

English Language Teaching (ELT) coursebooks are among the important media which present language and culture in any English language teaching program (Chang, 2004; Huang, 2003). This is significant, especially when researchers maintain that lots of conflicts, misunderstandings, and even disharmonies in communication are largely due to the information delivered via ELT coursebooks (Margolis, 2001), and that still many teachers rely on them as the sole sources to teach English to the L2/FL learners. In other words, the curriculum hidden in the coursebooks may influence learners' cultural perceptions and knowledge more strongly than the overt official curriculum if they are exposed to them for a longer period of time (Cunningsworth, 1995). Covert representation of cultural values or the culture-related hidden curriculum refers to the sets of cultural values that are indirectly reflected in English coursebooks and implicitly carried to learners (Chao, 2011; Cunningsworth, 1995; Hinkel, 1999).

Such concerns are not recent. In the 1990s, Alpetkin (1993) maintained that coursebooks which often make use of target language culture elements (British or American cultures) to present English are likely to interfere with the natural tendency of ESL/EFL learners' cultural cognition. Also, Pennycook (1994) warned that internationally-published coursebooks are never neutral and that they mainly represent the western understandings of language, communication, and learning both overtly and covertly. Despite these concerns, though, Canagarajah (2003) argues that for many practical reasons (such as time and facilities) local teachers are still driven to depending on prepackaged imported coursebooks for teaching English.

Admitting that the questions of whose culture and what kind of culture is included in English coursebooks are crucial for ELT, Gray (2010) recommends that teachers take an active role in the informed identification and selection of appropriate English coursebooks in their teaching practices to compensate for the existing imbalances in the representation of cultural content in the coursebooks. Accordingly, the present study was carried out to pursue similar objectives; namely: 1) finding the type and kind of cultural content in two internationally published ELT coursebooks, the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, 2) exploring the cultural dimensions, categories, and themes of the content in the series, and 3) examining the content sufficiency of the series for developing EFL learners' intercultural competence.

Literature Review

Coursebooks are one of the means to bring culture to a language class. According to Ammon et al. (2004), the way learners respond to the target language culture influences their attitude and beliefs towards the language itself. Freebairn (2000) divided coursebooks into two categories: international/global coursebooks and local or locally-produced coursebooks. Either way, the cultural information embedded in these coursebooks may overtly or covertly represent the source culture, the target culture, or the international target culture (Cortazzi & Jin 1999; Cunningsworth, 1995) and may be biased towards one of the above-mentioned types of culture. Boriboon (2004) compared examples of shopping and cuisine from a current popular English coursebook, *New Headway*, with the learners' lives in rural Thailand. The results indicated that the disparity between Thai culture and the scenarios presented in the coursebook was significant and debilitating in the learners' English communicative competence development. Similarly, the analysis of internationally-distributed ELT coursebooks indicated that the materials were biased for American and British norms and values (e.g., Ilieva, 2000; Ndura, 2004, Chao, 2011). Moreover, cultural bias, either for American and British cultures and values, or local culture and religion, was reported even in the locally-produced English coursebooks (Majdzadeh, 2002). In almost all cases, this bias showed to be likely to create a barrier for students who need to improve their intercultural competence (García, 2005; Chao, 2011). The following table depicts a summary of recent studies that have examined cultural contents in ELT textbooks. It contains two noteworthy features. First, in terms of methodology, content analysis and critical discourse analysis have been used in several studies to analyze and codify the data. Second, research findings have shown that the international and local ELT textbooks both contained shortcomings. The analysis of internationally-distributed ELT textbooks determined that the included materials were plainly dominated by American and British viewpoints (e.g., Chao, 2011; Ilieva, 2000; Kim & Paek, 2015; and Ndura, 2004). Ilieva (2000) argues that this might hinder learners' acculturation because it does not help them expand their own cultural awareness in relation to their society. Similarly, other researchers (e.g. Kim, 2014; Ajideh, Farrokhi, & Nourdad, 2014) have found out that locally produced English textbooks also contained mostly native language cultures and values, rather than including globally-oriented materials. Table 1 presents a summary of recent studies that have examined cultural contents in ELT textbooks.

Table 1. *A Summary of Recent Studies on Cultural Contents in ELT Textbooks*

Study	Purpose	Analysis	Texts	Findings
Victor (1999)	Matching the cultural content of textbooks and pedagogical issues, the goals of learning English of Gabonese students, and cultural contexts of Gabon in textbooks used in Gabon	Content analysis	Two widely used textbooks in Gabon: Imagine You're English and L'anglais Vivant	English textbooks used in Gabon were not well suited for the students' needs and situations
Ilieva (2000)	Culture in adult ESL texts designed in Canada: (1) what is cultural knowledge? (2) whose viewpoint of culture is used? and (3) can students reflect their own cultural experiences in the new immigrant society?	Critical discourse analysis	Canadian textbook for adult L2 learners: Canadian Concept 3	(1) Culture examined in the selected texts adhered to target cultural concepts; (2) target cultural viewpoint was prevalent in the texts; and (3) the texts were less likely to contribute in an integrated way in the new setting
Murayama (2000)	The content of cultural features in EFL textbooks in Japan	Document analysis: analysis of the cultural content of textbooks using the categories of aspect and level of culture	Ten EFL textbooks for upper-secondary school in Japan	The reflection of EIL was likely to be different in each textbook; the cultural content of textbooks examined seemed to be consistent at the traditional knowledge-oriented level
Michael Namkil Kim (2010)	cultural content in Korean	content analysis	Interactive Korean,	The textbooks don't represent any cross-cultural content and mostly express the Korean culture
Tzu-chia Chao (2011)	Investigate the hidden curriculum of cultural content in internationally published ELT textbooks	content analysis	*New American Inside Out* (elementary level)	The results showed that the textbook has promoted different dimensions of culture with a focus on the introduction of western products, persons, and perspectives
Sun-Young Kim and Jiwon Paek (2015)	an analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks	content analysis	five English textbooks for second-year middle school students in Korea	An imbalance in the representing textbook materials consistent with students' intercultural communicative competencies was found to exist
Parviz Ajideh et al. (2014)	An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks for Iranian students entitled 'Prospect' and 'Vision' Series	Modified content analysis version of Ramirez and Hall's (1990) model	Prospect and Vision' Series	the textbook developers had only home culture in their minds which is inadequate in fostering intercultural communicative competence and with respect to their cultural treatments

As ELT coursebooks are the sole bases for the language input and language practice in the classroom, Tomlinson (2003) argues that L2 teachers have a thorough knowledge of the presence of the type of cultural content and the hidden curriculum in the coursebooks. Moore (2007) defines the hidden curriculum as the input which goes on in covert ways beneath the surface of what teachers set out to teach. It encompasses the shaping of learners' perception about learning, their own role in it, their teachers, the nature of the subject they are studying, and their attitudes, values, ethics, and norms towards all of these (p. 19). Cornbleth (1984) found that there are different elements that impact to shape the hidden curriculum, such as teachers, students, society, knowledge, and awareness. Moreover, knowledge of the hidden curriculum is of advantage to move towards a more enlightened future.

As L2 learners progress along the language learning continuum, they gain a shared set of perspectives set within specific social contexts and demonstrate their understanding of cultural products, practices, and perspectives by behaving in the so-called "culturally appropriate" ways (Moran, 2001, p. 24). Arguing that the triangular concept of cultural products, practices, and perspectives is still not complete, Moran (2001) adds two more dimensions of communities and persons to model culture.

The Five Dimensions of Culture and the Main Categories of Culture:

In this study, two coding schemes, the five dimensions of culture, and the main categories of culture have been utilized to codify the content of the selected books. Moran's (2001) explanation about culture was used to examine the variety of cultural dimensions and the related topics in the target textbooks (*Top Notch* and *English File*). The second coding scheme was used to understand the types of culture and intercultural issues. It was developed according to the suggestions from scholars promoting the development of intercultural communicative competence (Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Mckay, 2002). A brief summary of Moran's five dimensions of culture is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. *Summary of the Five Dimensions of Culture (Moran, 2001)*

Dimensions	Examples
Products (PE)	*Artifacts* (food, document, language, money, tool), *places* (buildings, cities, houses), *institutions* (family, law, economy, religion, education, politic), *art forms* (music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture).
Practices (PRA)	*Acts* (ritualized communicative practices), *scenarios* (extended communicative practice), *and lives* (stories of the member of the future).
Perspectives (PER)	*Perceptions*, *beliefs*, *values*, and *attitudes* that underlie the products and guide people's behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but often implicit, outside conscious awareness.
Communities (COM)	*Specific social contexts* such as national culture, circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and *group* (e.g. different social clubs) in which members carry out cultural practices.
Persons (PER)	*Individual members* who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. Personal identity and life history play key roles in the development of a cultural person.

Since English has greatly spread around the world and developed as an international language for economic, social, and technological purposes (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2007), the primary goal of learning English to have native-like communication with people from all over the world seems to become unrealistic (Alptekin, 2002). The *Main Categories of Culture* was developed by the researcher to explore the tendency of cultural types and intercultural issues presented in the main texts (activities/practices) of the selected coursebooks. Considering that there is a growing need for the development of intercultural communication competence (ICC), and interpersonal communication, Chao (2011) suggests that ELT coursebooks provide EFL/EIL learners with various opportunities to effectively develop their intercultural communicative competence in various categories of culture. He proposed five Main Categories of Culture: *Source/Local Culture* (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC). Table 3 presents a summary of five categories of culture:

Table 3. *The Main Categories of Culture (Chao, 2011)*

Cultural Categories	Explanations
Source Culture (SC)	It includes cultures from the countries of origin where the learners come from which are Muslim countries in this study (Iran, Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Turkey, etc.).
Target Culture (TC)	It includes English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK, and the USA).
International Culture (IC)	It includes cultures of all countries in the world (European countries, countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) except for Muslim countries' cultures and English-speaking cultures.
Intercultural Interaction (ICI)	It includes the comparison, reflection, or awareness of the differences and similarities between the local/source and the target/international culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving, and role-play to help Ss develop knowledge, skills, and awareness in intercultural communication.
Universality across Culture (UC)	It includes general knowledge/content that is not specific to any particular culture or country (The content is mainly related to linguistic knowledge and practice without focusing on any particular culture).

The topic of culture and its covert representation in ELT coursebooks have already received partial attention by some researchers (Alptekin, 2002; Chao, 2011; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Lázár, 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Willis-Rivera, 2010); however, for reaching common ground, more research is yet needed to theoretically address the issue, and specifically shed light on its impact on learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. To this end, this research was initiated to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the relative interplay among the five cultural dimensions, articulated as products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series?

2. Research Question 2: Are there any significant differences among the presentations of cultural categories articulated as Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series?

3. Research Question 3: Is there a hidden curriculum in the presentation of the Target Culture in the materials in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series?

Accordingly, two parallel null hypotheses were adopted to be tested for possible application to ELT.

1. Research Hypothesis 1. There is statistically no significant difference in the relative interplay among the five cultural dimensions in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

2. Research Hypothesis 2. There are not any significant differences among the presentations of cultural categories articulated as Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC).

Methodology

In order to examine the cultural content in the ELT coursebooks, this study used two of the most widely-used series in this research context to serve as the sample for investigation: *Top Notch series* (third edition) written by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher (2015), and *English File* series (second edition) written by Christina Latham-Koenig, Paul Seligson, and Clive Oxenden, (2016).

Procedures

First, raw data which include proper names, artifacts (food, documents, language, money, tools), places (buildings, cities, houses), institutions (family names, religions, educational institutes), acts (ritualized communicative practices), and art forms (music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture) were collected from the 64 units of *Top Notch* (Books 1-6) and 84 units of *English File* (Books 1-7). Then, different parts of the books were coded. Artifacts, places, institutions, and art forms were coded as 'products', operations, acts, and rituals were coded as 'practices', perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes were coded as 'perspectives', social contexts (e.g. national cultures), circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and groups (e.g. different social clubs) were coded as 'communities', and individual members were coded as 'persons'. Finally, the number of the existence of different codes (products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons) and their frequencies were tabulated. Moran's (2001) codification framework which also served as a checklist for the researchers to compare the data from one coursebook series with the other, divided the cultural knowledge into dimensions and categories. All the vocabulary, grammar, conversation, listening scripts, reading, and writing sections were scrutinized carefully to classify the content according to 10 dimensions and

categories of culture. Table 4 presents the coursebooks, levels, cultural dimensions, and cultural categories for data analysis.

Table 4. *Books, Levels, and Coding Schemes for Data Analysis*

Books	Levels	Moran's Five Dimensions	Chao's Categories of Culture
Top Notch	Elementary	Person	source culture
	Pre-Intermediate	product	target
	Intermediate	perspective	international culture
	Upper-Intermediate	practice	intercultural interaction
	Advanced	community	universality across culture
English File	Elementary		
	Pre-Intermediate		
	Intermediate		
	Upper-Intermediate		
	Advanced		

Data Analysis

The researchers employed Moran's (2001) five dimensions of culture and Chao's (2011) main categories of culture coding schemes to analyze the content of the series. The content of the coursebooks (*Top Notch*, books 1-6; *English File*, books 1-7) was analyzed which included the vocabulary parts, readings, audio scripts, grammar practices, and writings. Since analyzing all the coursebooks in the market is a huge and time-consuming task, these two books have been entirely codified and analyzed based on the previously-mentioned schemes (the Five Dimensions of Culture and the Main Categories of Culture). The schemes included words, pictures, themes, ideas, and any messages that are planned to be communicated, and the text (written, visual, or spoken) that served as a medium of communication (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Neuman, 1997). To this end, both qualitative and quantitative culture-related content in the main texts in these coursebooks were used as the baseline data for the content analysis. The analysis took place in four rounds.

In the first round, the coursebooks were read in-depth and key contents were categorized according to Moran's (2001) five dimensions of culture and Chao's (2011) cultural categories. After the examination of the pages for Moran's (2001) five cultural dimensions of "Person, Product, Practice, Perspective, and Community", these five dimensions were further categorized with reference to Chao's (2011) cultural categories of "Source Culture (SC), Target

Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC). For example, a person, product, practice, perspective, or community from an Islamic country is considered as a dimension from "Source Culture" (SC); a person, product, practice, perspective, or community from "Target Culture" like America, England, Canada, and Australia is considered as a dimension from Target Culture (TC); a person, product, practice, perspective, or community exempted from source culture and target culture is considered as International Culture (IC). Similarly, a person, product, practice, perspective, or community includes the comparison, reflection, or awareness of the differences and similarities between the local/source and the target/international culture is considered as Intercultural Interaction (ICI); and a person, product, practice, perspective, or community that represents a general cultural representation without a special cultural tendency is considered as a "Culture Free" or "General" dimension that is considered as Universality across Culture (UC). In the second round, again, texts were examined for items that could not be identified in the first round and indicated the contexts where the identified content appeared. In the third round of data analysis, the data that had been identified and categorized were entered into SPSS software (version 22). In this process, the names of the books, levels, units, contents, pages, examples, and all the 10 cultural dimensions were categorized. Finally, in the fourth round, unidentified and incomplete parts on the tables were completed. In this phase, the items under the group of 'general' were further analyzed and the validity of the data was checked by going through the categorizations again, allowing for re-reading as well double-checking the findings by the other researcher to make sure the categorizations are correct and change the ones that are not. The disagreements were discussed to reach a general agreement to finalize the data analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the relative interplay among the five cultural dimensions, articulated as products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons in *Top Notch* and *English File* series?

To address the first research question, a total of 138 units in the selected English coursebooks were analyzed. Through an analysis of the 'cultural dimensions', the researchers first examined the extent to which the selected English coursebooks represented various aspects of cultural dimensions.

The dimension of 'Person' was used to classify names of people appeared in the selected coursebooks. For example, "*Hi. I'm Martin.*" "*Hi, Martin. I'm Ben.*" These names don't belong

to a specific nationality and are not categorized under the category of 'person' in data analysis, but the sentence "*Idris Elba is an actor.*" in *Top Notch*, elementary, page 10, refers to an English actor, producer, and musician that is born in London, so it is categorized under the category of 'person' with the nationality of 'British'. The names of people that belong to a specific nationality appeared 605 times in total (295 times in *Top Notch* and 310 times in *English File*). Besides, two sub-categories were introduced as 'people with elaboration' that is, people with their photos and 'people without elaboration' or people without their photos to categorize the total number of people in each book. The term 'people with elaboration' was used to show the number of names that are shown with their photos and provide the learners with more information on the people, but the term 'people without elaboration' was used to show the number of names shown without photos with just the names presented.

The dimension of 'Product' was used to classify names of cities, countries, languages, items, devices, machines, brands, food, entertainment materials, merchandise, printable resources, and places to travel. An analysis of the cultural themes revealed that 'Products' were the most frequently-used dimensions in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series in comparison with the other four dimensions which accounted for 47.6 percent of the cultural dimensions with 1581 items. Most of the products that are introduced in the selected coursebooks didn't belong to a specific country and couldn't be categorized under a particular nationality. For example, the product names in "*I'm sorry to hear that. What brand is it?*" "*A Quick point. It's a piece of junk.*" don't belong to a specific nationality and are not categorized under the category of 'product' in data analysis, but the sentence "*Meet ASIM, a robot from the Honda Motor Company.*" in *Top Notch*, elementary (p. 58), refers to a Japanese product made by Honda Motor Company that is a public multinational conglomerate corporation, so it is categorized under the category of 'product' with the nationality of 'Japanese'. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the products that belong to a specific nationality appeared 1581 times in total (718 times in *Top Notch* and 863 times in *English File)*.

The dimension of 'Practice' was used to classify practices in accordance with a specific nationality. It can be said that practices that belong to a specific nationality appeared 123 times in total (81 times in *Top Notch* and 42 times in *English File)*. The frequency of the number of times that practices with a specific nationality were presented in *English File* and *Top Notch* showed a less biased dominance of American and British culture than introduced earlier but were still more dominant than the others.

The dimension of 'Perspective' was used to classify perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas, myths, and world views that guide people's behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but are often implicit, outside conscious awareness. Ideas such as gender equality, men and women comparisons, discriminations, and racism are other examples of 'practices' to classify the items in the selected coursebooks. Most of the perspectives that are introduced in the selected coursebooks don't belong to a specific country and couldn't be categorized under a particular nationality. For example, the sentences: "*Globalization has its good points and bad points.*" in *Top Notch*, advanced (p. 119), and "*I don't think men should wear earrings.*" in *Top Notch*, intermediate (p. 56) don't belong to a specific nationality and are not categorized under the category of 'perspective' in data analysis, but "*An American tourist that says "I also find British people are not very good at telling you what to do and giving you the address.*" in English file, elementary (p. 99), refers to an American point of view towards British people, so it is categorized under the category of 'perspective' with the nationality of 'American'. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the perspectives that belong to a specific nationality appeared 90 times in total (16 times in *Top Notch* and 74 times in *English File)*.

The dimension of 'Community' was used to classify specific social contexts such as national culture, circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and groups (e.g. different social clubs) in which members carry out cultural practices. In this category, there is not much data as in the other categories and classifications for cultural dimensions and 'perspective' has the least frequency in comparison with other dimensions. Most of the communities that are introduced in the selected coursebooks don't belong to a specific country and couldn't be categorized under a particular nationality. For example, the phrases: "*UN hunger relief- the UN World Food Program is...*" in *Top Notch*, advanced (p. 115), and "*the Football World Cup*" in English File, elementary (p. 57) don't belong to a specific nationality and are not categorized under the category of 'perspective' in data analysis, but the phrases: "*Starbucks Corporation is an American coffee company...*" in *Top Notch*, advanced (p. 121), and "*The school educational system in the UK and the US- children in UK start ...*" in English File, intermediate (p. 65), refer to an American and British point of view towards American and British communities, so they are categorized under the categories of 'perspective' with the nationality of 'American' and 'British' respectively. Through the data analysis of *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the communities that belong to a specific nationality appeared 43 times in total (16 times in *Top Notch* and 27 times in *English File)*.

These findings illustrate that there are imbalances in the representation of cultural dimensions in the selected coursebook materials. Table 5 represents the five dimensions of cultures in terms of percentage and the frequency across the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

Table 5. *The Summative Percentages of the Dominant Cultural Dimensions in Top Notch and English File*

Coursebooks	Dominant cultures represented above 10 percent				
	Persons	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Communities
	33.39% American	22.07% American	13.82% American	42.22% American	30.23% American
	26.78% British	21.70% British	22.76% British	24.44% British	23.26% British
Top Notch and English File	39.83% Other countries that are presented less than 10 percent	56.23% Other countries that are presented less than 10 percent	63.4% Other countries that are presented less than 10 percent	33.33 Other countries that are presented less than 10 percent	46.51 Other countries that are presented less than 10 percent

As shown in Table 5, American and British cultures have been represented in all five cultural dimensions more than 10 percent, and other countries are all presented less than 10 percent.

To test the first research hypothesis, then, the researchers cross-tabulated the data according to Moran's (2001) coding schemes and ran chi-square tests for the categories of person, product, practice, perspective, and community. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. *Chi-Square Tests for Cultural Dimensions (Moran, 2001)*

Chapte	**Chapter 2 Person**	**Chapter 3 Product**	**Chapter 4 Practice**	**Chapter 5 perspective**	**Chapter 6 Community**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	166.993a	48	.000	506.168a	84	.000	85.293a	27	.000	35.317a	10	.000	29.172a	10	.001
Likelihood Ratio	197.749	48	.000	594.667	84	.000	102.269	27	.000	29.602	10	.001	38.820	10	.000
N of Valid Cases	605			1581			123			90			43		

According to the Chi-Square results in Table 6, the Pearson Chi-Square value for the category of 'Person' is 166.993[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a

statistically significant difference in the relative interplay among the persons represented in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to the table, the Pearson Chi-Square value for the category of 'Product' is 506.168[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the relative interplay among the products represented in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to the Chi-Square table, the Pearson Chi-Square value for the category of 'Practice' is 85.293[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the relative interplay among the practices represented in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

In addition, the Pearson Chi-Square value for the category of 'Perspective' is 35.317[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the relative interplay among the perspectives represented in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to Table 6, the Pearson Chi-Square value for the category of 'Community' is 29.172[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .001 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the relative interplay among the communities represented in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series. Therefore, the null hypothesis for all dimensions of culture is rejected.

To sum up, the findings verify the fact that there was an imbalance in the representation of the five dimensions of cultures in the coursebook materials. Therefore, it can be concluded that the coursebooks are biased in favor of Target Culture throughout and that it is likely that the power of Target Culture (TC) reflected in the internationally published ELT coursebook will consciously or unconsciously affect EFL/EIL students' attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations.

Research Question 2: Are there any significant differences among the presentations of cultural categories articulated as Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC) in the *Top Notch* and English File series?

To address the second research question, the researchers examined the ways that the *Top Notch* and *English File* series represented cultural categories. A total of 138 units in the selected English coursebooks were analyzed.

The category of 'SC' was used to classify the names of persons, products, practices, perspectives, and communities that are related to countries whose major religion is Islam. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the items that were related to Islamic countries appeared 80 times in total (54 times in *Top Notch* and 26 times in *English File)*.

The category of 'TC' was used to classify the names of persons, products, practices, perspectives, and communities that are related to countries with the official language of English such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the items that were related to target countries appeared 1310 times in total (406 times in *Top Notch* and 904 times in *English File)*.

The category of 'IC' was used to classify the names of persons, products, practices, perspectives, and communities that are related to all of the countries except for SC and TC that represent other countries not included under the categorization of 'Source Culture' and 'Target Culture'. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the items that were related to international countries except SC and TC appeared 986 times in total (623 times in *Top Notch* and 363 times in *English File*).

The category of 'ICI' was used to classify the names of persons, products, practices, perspectives, and communities in case of comparison, reflection, or awareness of the differences and similarities between the local/source and the target /international culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving, and role-play to help students develop positive attitude, knowledge, skills, and awareness in international communication. Most of the intercultural interactions that are introduced in the selected coursebooks don't belong to a specific country and couldn't be categorized under a particular nationality. For example, the sentences: "*Before you travel to another country, check the exchange rate of your currency against.*" in *Top Notch*, pre-intermediate (p. 50), and "*In some countries, people should bring a gift for a party.*" in Top Notch, intermediate (p. 18), don't belong to a specific nationality and are not categorized under the category of 'ICI' in data analysis, but the sentences: "*The dress code is generally liberal, so it's common in the warmer months for Americans.*" in *Top Notch*, pre-intermediate (p. 34), and "*Teenagers in the UK who have to look after a member of their family, usually ...*" in English file, pre-intermediate (p. 27), provide an opportunity for

comparison, reflection, or awareness of the differences and similarities between the local/source and the target culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving, and role play to help students develop positive attitude, knowledge, skills, and awareness in international communication and refer to an American and British point of views, so they are categorized under the categories of 'ICI' with the nationality of 'American' and 'British', respectively. Through the data analysis, the items that were related to International Culture (ICI) appeared 273 times (126 times in *Top Notch* and 147 times in *English File*).

The category of 'UC' was used to classify the names of persons, products, practices, perspectives, and communities in case of general knowledge/content that is not specific to any particular culture or country. Most of the universal items that are introduced in the selected coursebooks don't belong to a specific country and couldn't be categorized under a particular nationality. For example, the sentences: "*tipping in a restaurant is....*" in *Top Notch*, pre-intermediate (p. 56), "(food habit) *My family loves pasta.*" in *Top Notch*, intermediate (p. 6), and "*I'd like to get married...*" don't belong to a specific nationality and are categorized as 'general' terms under the category of 'UC' in data analysis, but the sentences: "*The couple dressed in the traditional hanbok during the Korean holiday of Chuseok.*" in *Top Notch*, intermediate (p. 14), and "*The celebrations that take place in Brazil during Carnaval are really wild*" in *Top Notch*, intermediate (p. 17), indicate a specific culture from a specific country that is beyond the categorization of UC classification. The selected coursebooks also have a high representation on the category of Universality across Culture (UC) meaning that the coursebooks include general materials that are not specifically related to a particular country or culture, but the specific cultures that are presented, again show a biased representation of American and British culture. Through the data analysis of the *Top Notch* and *English File* series, the items that were related to Universality across Culture (UC) appeared 3321 times in total (1761 times in *Top Notch* and 1560 times in *English File)*. Table 7 represents the cultural categories in terms of percentage and the frequency across the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

The results in Table 7 show that there were imbalances in the representation of coursebook materials among the cultural categories. According to the results, although the coursebooks have covered different aspects of culture, the percentage of source culture was much lower than the other four dimensions. 'UC' was the most frequently-used dimension in all five categories (56%) of the cultural categories and "TC', 'IC', "ICI', and 'SC' (22%,16%, 5%, and 1%) were the other dimensions that are presented by order of percentage, respectively.

Table 7. *The Summative Percentages of the Cultural Categories in the Top Notch and English File Series*

Coursebooks	Cultural Categories				
	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
Top Notch	54	406	623	147	1761
	67.5%	31.0%	63.2%	53.8%	53.0%
English File	26	904	363	126	1560
	32.5%	69.0%	36.8%	46.2%	47.0%
	80	1310	986	273	3321
	1%	22%	16%	5%	56%

To test the second null hypothesis and check whether the result was significant or not, the Chi-Square test was run. The results are displayed in Table 8.

According to the Chi-Square table, the Pearson Chi-Square value for *SC* is 18.213[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .252 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the presentations of Source Culture (SC) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to Table 8, the Pearson Chi-Square value for *TC* is 258.593[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the presentations of Target Culture (TC) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to the table, the Pearson Chi-Square value for *IC* is 210.024[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the presentations of International Culture (IC) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

In addition, the Pearson Chi-Square value for *ICI* is 131.538[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference between the presentations of Intercultural Interaction (ICI) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

According to the Chi-Square results in Table 8, the Pearson Chi-Square value for *UC* is 79.191[a]. Its Asymp. Sig (two-sided) value is .000 which is smaller than the Pearson Chi-Square value at an alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq .05$). Thus, there is a statistically significant difference

between the presentations of Universality across Culture (UC) in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series.

Table 8. *Chi-Square Tests for the Five Categories of Culture (Chao, 2011)*

		SC			TC			IC			ICI			UC		
		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		18.213[a]	15	.252	258.593[a]	4	.000	210.024[a]	66	.000	131.538[a]	36	.000	79.191[a]	33	.000
Likelihood Ratio		21.947	15	.109	274.590	4	.000	236.954	66	.000	166.950	36	.000	103.939	33	.000
N of Valid Cases		80			1310			986			273			3313		

To sum up, as the analysis of the results indicates, the second null hypothesis (there are not any significant differences among the presentations of cultural categories articulated as Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture) was rejected. This accounts for the fact that although the selected coursebooks' editors have tried to include other International Cultures (IC) (this effort was more tangible in the *Top Notch* series than *English file* which obviously showed

more tendency towards showing the target culture), they tend to emphasize the cultures of European and American countries more.

Research Question 3. Considering the third research question (i.e. Is there a hidden curriculum in the presentation of the Target Culture in the materials in the *Top Notch* and *English File* series?) the results of the content analysis of cultural dimensions and categories verified the fact that there were some messages or ideologies hidden in the selected coursebooks. Therefore, the findings support the assumption that *English File* and *Top Notch* series are biased in favor of Target Culture in their materials that is too British and American. That is, target culture perspectives prevail in the coursebooks through reading or listening texts of diverse topics to promote different dimensions of culture, particularly centering on the introduction of popular products/practices, famous persons, and perspectives of Western and European countries. Examples are demonstrated through the presentation of many perspectives from English-speaking countries, the preferred introduction of Western products, and the extensive description of famous people in the USA and Britain. It is believed that ELT coursebooks are the perfect means and fertile soil for transmitting culture and that the power of Target Culture (TC) reflected in the internationally-published ELT textbooks in terms of various cultural dimensions is going to consciously or unconsciously affect university EFL/EIL students' attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviors, and expectations. From this perspective, it should be noted that although the textbooks claim that they include other International Cultures (IC), the authors implicitly emphasize the cultures of European and American countries more and pay little or no attention to the Asian, especially Muslim countries.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed a serious imbalance in the presentation of culture-related content and the power of Target Culture (TC) reflected in the selected internationally published ELT coursebooks in terms of various cultural dimensions and categories. These results have a lot in common with the earlier studies. The findings are partially consistent with Stapleton (2000), Richards (2001), Chen (2004), Karahan (2007), Shams (2008), Yuen (2011), Chao (2011), Dweikat and Shbeitah (2013), and Masduqi (2014) and other researchers who have emphasized the conscious and unconscious presence of the hidden curriculum in the internationally-published textbooks. According to Hager (2011), there's too much American and British cultural representation in the ELT coursebooks. Indeed, there is no room left for other countries to present their cultural values.

With regard to Moran's (2001) cultural dimensions, the *Top Notch* and *English File* series appeared to have less content on 'perspectives' and 'communities', though these two dimensions were considered as important factors in gaining an understanding of different cultures. In addition, the findings indicated that the contents on intercultural interaction (ICI) were seriously under-represented in the current English coursebooks. Among Chao's (2011) cultural categories, Source Culture (SC) has been used the least.

Overall, the aims of 'developing students' intercultural understanding' and 'encouraging, an awareness and appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures' are not taken into consideration by the series investigated in this study. This is significant as the scanty inclusion of Source Culture (SC) in the ELT coursebooks is likely to lead EFL learners to limit themselves to the norms and values of the dominant cultural group and hence fully assimilate themselves with the TC; that is, instead of contributing to diversity and forming the 'global culture' in this global village, the process leads to one unified culture in which diversities disappear and people get indistinguishable from one another.

The findings have both pedagogical and theoretical implications. From the theoretical point of view, the results of the study can underscore the importance of the influence of hidden curriculum on EFL/EIL learners' cultural perceptions and knowledge that has a strong impact on them. From the pedagogical point of view, imbalanced course content may be balanced by the teachers, language instructors, and materials developers. ELT teachers should take a more critical role in choosing an appropriate English coursebook by reviewing and analyzing the multicultural perspectives underlying the coursebooks and provide feedback for ELT authors and coursebook publishers who should in turn redress the existing imbalances in the representation of cultural contents.

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