# ANALYSIS OF CROSS-CULTURAL CONTENT IN EFL COURSE BOOKS

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was aimed at finding cross-cultural content in EFL course books and to see if the number of sentences presented by native and non-native speakers of English is equal in course books or not. Top Notch book A and B were selected for the purpose of this research. Conversation models of the books were analyzed to evaluate the presentation of native and non-native speakers, and reading passages were analyzed to find cross-cultural content. The frequency and percentage of each variable were estimated which indicated that there is cross-cultural content in both books but the number of cross cultural content in book B is more than book A and book A includes more of native culture. Furthermore, as the frequency and percentage of native and non-native speakers were calculated the number of sentences and utterances made by native speakers were more than the ones made by non-native speakers.*

**Keywords:** EFL, EIL, ELT, Expanding Circle, Inner Circle, Outer Circle, Non-native speaker (NNS), Native speaker (NS)

## INTRODUCTION

This study aims at analyzing the Cross cultural content in EFL course books. Related to this study following research questions were asked to conduct the research: "Are there any cross-cultural contents in EFL course books? "And "Is the number of native speakers' and non-native speakers' sentences equal in course books?" Conversation models and reading passages of Top Notch book series were selected and analyzed for the purpose of this research.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since English is considered an international language and it is spoken by many speakers around the world as their first and second language, specifying it to one culture is no longer correct.

Global course books which are used by learners need to cover cross-cultural items in their content in order to raise learner's awareness of different English speakers who have different nationalities.

As Andarab (2014) states, instead of focusing on culture and norms of some typical countries, English should reflect cultural elements of various countries.

Other scholars like Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2012) point out course books should enhance learner's awareness toward various cultural and racial backgrounds and acknowledge them about existence of different perspectives.

By improving learner's awareness toward different cultures they will realize that English is not limited to British and American culture, and there are other English speaker cultures too.

The writers need a second thought because many learners use English for different purposes and focusing on one culture cannot be wide enough to cover all the aspects. It is necessary to cover different cultures in order to meet learner's needs.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this study the main focuses will be on:

1) Analysis of cross cultural content of course books which are used in Iranian institutions to see if the reading texts  include any cross cultural topics or not .

2) Analysis of the native and non-native speakers of English in conversation models.

In this study the course books that are selected are the ones which different institutions are using, each reading text in the chapters is analyzed to see if they help learners to raise their awareness toward other cultures apart from British and American culture, and conversation models were analyzed to evaluate the presentation of native and non-native speakers.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.  Are there any cross-cultural contents (native/nonnative culture) in EFL course books?
2.  Is the number of native speakers' and non-native speakers' sentences equal in EFL course books?"

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Globalization, English language and culture

Related to globalization, terminologies are presented in terms of English language that have come into use, including: English as an international language, Global English(es), international English(es), localized varieties of English, new Varieties of English, non-native varieties of English, second language varieties of English, world English(es), new Englishes, ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) (Kingsley, 2004).

People are becoming LOCALIZED. Despite earlier believes, English is no longer considered the language of one culture (Jenkins, 2011). Standard American English and Standard British English are no longer considered as standard forms and other varieties are not situated in a lower position in a "self-evident hierarchy" (Modiano, 2009, p. 58).

### Culture and language

Culture and language are interrelated and there are many definitions stated by different scholars in terms of culture. According to Kramsch (2006, p.278) in language teaching, culture is known as an essential component.

### World Englishness

In accordance with English varieties around the world, B. Kachru (1985) represents a model based on using English according to which the world includes three circles.  The Inner Circle (where English is originated like England) and distributed afterwards and their L1 is English (including Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand). The Outer Circle includes colonies of the UK and the USA, such as India, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore, among others, where English is used as first or second language and the Expanding Circle for users of English as an international language. This variation of English is called *World Englishes* (WEs), and these varieties represent different forms, functions, acculturation, and literacy.

**Issues related to course books**

In relation to course books, Learners from different countries face with many problems studying English course books, for example,

Prodromou (1988) highlights that the issue that most of the English course books are published by Anglo-American publishers in Inner Circle countries include cultural situations Learners may never experience, such as 'finding a flat in London'.  In his article released in 1988 Prodromou says:

"Globally designed textbooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglo-centric: appealing to a World market as they do, they cannot by definition draw on local varieties of English and have not gone very far in recognizing English as an international language either"(p. 76).

**EIL and cross-cultural awareness**

When English is used for interactions which are cross-cultural, it can be called    EIL. (seidlhofer, 2003, p.8).

 Researchers argue that target culture whether it is American or British, can be separated from the English language (e.g., Murayama, 2000). According to McKay (2003a) EIL can be separate from a culture according to his following perception:

First, the cultural content of EIL materials should not be limited to native English-speaking cultures. Second, an appropriate pedagogy of EIL needs to be informed by local expectations regarding the role of the teacher and learner. Third, the strengths of bilingual teachers of English need to be recognized. (p. 140).

Also, as the result of global economic activities, cross-cultural communication has been increased, and finally the usage of English language is changing globally (Hodgson, 2014). And, since non-native speakers begin to outnumber native speakers (Crystal, 2004; Rajagopala, 2004), the plurality of English is being questioned and even more noticeable. So, by getting familiar with these changes, many theorists have advocated a shift From EFL (English as a Foreign Language) which is more centralist, to a more comprehensive one known as EIL (English as an International Language or Lingua Franca) (Jenkins, 2007; Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2001; Sifakis and Sougari, 2005).

**Evaluation based on year of publication**

According to Hamiloglu and Mendi (2010), since 1970s and 1980s EFL course books which written after the communicative movements in foreign language teaching and learning are supposed to include cross-cultural items.

They conducted a research and the goal was to analyze the number of intercultural elements in teaching materials. So, five course books were chosen evaluated and the number of cross-cultural/intercultural elements was detected. Also, the inclusion of the cross-cultural topics, the genre and frequency of these cross cultural elements were analyzed. . In addition the back cover of the course books was examined to see cross cultural objectives are explained or not. In their analysis they ignored culture of the USA and England because they name them the target culture.  The cultural factors of countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand which are not known as target culture countries considered as cross-cultural elements.

The results showed that despite one book which was based on the culture of England and the USA, there are different amount of cross cultural topics in each course book.   Also one book (Enterprise) had the highest frequency of cross-cultural issues (with a total number of 33).

**Necessity of cross-cultural awareness in course books**

At present time, It is believed that course book should contain cross cultural content to raise awareness of learners and meet their needs because learners do not use English only in Britain or America and most of them use English for different reasons. Nault (2006) states, despite having knowledge about language and culture, English professionals need to focus more on multicultural elements while designing curricula.

Culture teaching is not an easy job; it is beyond just including some information about culture. Learners are needed to increase their cultural awareness to gain global and multicultural viewpoint by using ELT textbooks and curricula (Menard-Warwick, 2009).

Honna defines intercultural literacy as: (Honna, 2003, p. 165-170):

1. Intercultural literacy is an attitude, preparedness, and competence to transmit one's message and understand others' appropriately in a cross-cultural encounter;
2. It involves an ability to adjust intercultural differences in a mutually beneficial manner;
3. Intercultural literacy is the literacy of the fourth kind after basic literacy (reading and writing plus mathematics), media literacy, and information literacy; and
4. It is expected to be introduced to the school curriculums across disciplines from primary, through secondary, to tertiary education.

**Native speakers or non-native speakers**

Graddol (1999), related to the number of native speaker of English is decreasing, argues that there will be a significant change in balance between native and non-native speakers in the next 50 years. He asserts that: according to expected growing number of population based, the number of English speakers is expected to increase from 235 million to around 462 million in the next 50 years. According to this situation, balance between L1 and L2 is going to change in a situation where L2 speakers will outnumber L1 speakers. (Graddol 1999: 62)

In sociocultural theory, learners are believed to be active participants in their new culture. Most of the interactions are among nonnative speakers with other non-native speakers, not among non-native speakers and English native speakers of in settings of EIL (Jenkins, 2006).(Shin et al., 2011, p.4).

In recent years, British and American norms in part of ELT practices is challenged by EIL (Modiano, 2001), and by the outnumbering multilingual, multicultural speakers and research in sociocultural elements since1985, doubts started to rise about the model of native speaker (Kramsch, 2003).

So English today is not only used among NSs or between NSs and NNSs, but also among NNSs (Graddol, 1997; Smith,1981/1983; Widdowson, 1994). Since the arrival of NSs of nonnative varieties of English, NSs and NNSs have became blurred.(Kachru, 1998; Yano, 2001).

## METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted in order to describe to what extent current course books available in language classrooms include contents related to various cultures of countries around the world and to measure that such coursebooks are not limited to defined cultures of specific countries such as Britain and USA and to see if the number of sentences presented by native and non-native speakers of English are equal in course books or not.. In this chapter first the materials and participants which are used in analysis are presented the second section is dedicated to the methods conducted related to the evaluation and final section includes procedures of the study.

## Participants/materials

Top Notch series were selected as the main source of the study. Top Notch series includes two books of A and B. The books start with two pages of introduction which give some exercise to make the learners familiar with the topics. The books include 14 units in which there are sections of communication practice, vocabulary, grammar, listening, pronunciation and reading-writing and pair work practices after every skill, and there is one page review exercises of each unit at the end of every unit.

The following table presents the details of the books under study.

Table 1.  Details of the books under study

| Title | Writer | Level | Year of publication | Publisher |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Top Notch | Joan     Saslow & Allen Ascher | A B | 2011 | PEARSON Longman |

## Design

The frame work which was selected was Murayama's (2000). "Murayama's approach was used for this study because it focuses both on the cultural content presentation and on the level of presentation of cultural information. The framework addresses the existence of different cultural materials in the textbooks, and it also contains how deeply the materials are presented and discussed in the textbook" (J. Shin et al. 2011. p.8). However in this study the focus is on existence of cross-cultural content and not the level of presentation which is excluded from the study.

Also Kachru's (1985) framework has been used in this analysis because native and non-native speakers can be found according to inner circle where the speakers are native and outer and expanding circle where English is spoken as second or foreign language and speakers are non-natives.

According to Kachru's framework Inner circle speakers considered native speakers and outer and expanding circle speakers considered as non-native speakers of English.

## Procedure

In order to calculate the frequency and percentage of the cross-cultural content, the reading passages of each unit has been read and the countries which are presented have been counted and put under scrutiny, except for units 1, 5, 6 and 13 which were excluded from the analysis since the nationality was not clear. Then related to Kachru's model they were divided into countries belong to inner, Outer and expanding circle and those countries that were belonged to Inner circle were considered as countries whose  culture is native, while Outer and Expanding circle countries' culture  were considered as non-natives. In order to determine the frequency and percentage of presence of native and non-native speakers of English in conversation models, the speakers of the conversations were counted but since their nationality was not specified, they were listened to by CD player and their accent determined whether there are native and nonnative speakers. Also in some units since the accent count did not help in making decision, the pictures of the conversations were helpful.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The main purpose of the analysis was to find whether related to English used as a global language, currently used course books contain cross-cultural content and to see if the number of sentences presented by native and non-native speakers of English are equal in course books or not. In order to answer such questions, Top Notch text book series were selected. The sections which were chosen for analysis were reading passages and conversation models and other sections were excluded from the study. In relation to representation of native and nonnative culture, kachru's and Murayam's models were selected to be a basis for our investigation. So the countries were divided to Inner, Outer and Expanding circle countries. Inner circles were countries that own native culture and non-native culture belonged to Outer and Expanding circle countries. To reach required results the frequency and percentage of the under study variables were measured and presented in form of tables (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4).

The results indicated that in book A in which the frequency of the native speakers was 33 and the percentage was 86.8%in contrast to non-native speakers whose frequency was 10 and the percentage was 26.3%, there is a huge discrimination despite the fact that such books are used globally. It showed that book A is native based. In terms of native and non-native culture content of book A, the frequency and percentage of native culture was 8 and 21.1%, and the frequency and percentage of non-native culture was 7 and 18.4% which indicates that related to cross-cultural content of reading passages there was an small discrimination but still domination of natives are apparent.

Analysis of book B in which the frequency and percentage of native speakers was 31, 79.5% and the frequency and percentage of non-native speakers was 11 and 28.2% showed that in conversation models natives dominate non-natives the same as book A. in reading passages of book B the native culture frequency was 4 and the percentage was 10.3, and the frequency of non-native cultures was 7 and the percentage was 17.9. Such results show that in contrast to book A, book B contains more information related to different countries.

## CONCLUSIONS

Globalization and its influence on English as a global language has changed its ownership to one special region and made it become the language of many cultures. Such changes has raised the questions of which cultures should be thought and since English is a global language who dominate, the native or non-natives. So in relation to such issues This study was aimed to find cross-cultural content in two course books used in language institutions and to see if the number of sentences presented by native and non-native speakers of English are equal in course books in order to find if in accordance with global English, currently used course books contain different cultures in their content and native and non-native speakers are equal. Conducting this research we found that Top Notch books in terms of presentation of native and non-native speakers of English still present more native speakers in conversation models and non-native speakers are presented in small numbers. We reached the conclusion that there are cross-cultural content in both books but in book B there were more cross-cultural Contents and in book A there were more native cultures presented. Cross-cultural content help learners to gain cross-cultural awareness and perform better when using English for different purposes and in different countries. Since English is considered the language of many cultures it should include cultures of different nations and as it is global language native and non-natives are required to be equal in conversations.

Finally it should be reminded that the needs of learners are different and many students want to use English in contexts where may not be the native countries where English is their first language. They may want to use English in different cultures where it is the second or foreign

language. So book writers should consider the fact that in contrast to past when English used to be the language of one culture, now it contains many cultures which are needed to be included in textbooks to grow cross-cultural awareness of the learners. And since there is no dominance of native speakers, they should be presented as non-natives in textbooks.

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