The Cultural Representations in the *Unlock English* Series and EFL Teachers’ and EFL Learners’ Perspectives towards Them

Haya F. Abu Hussein

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to find out (1) to what extent the *Unlock English* textbooks present Big ‘C’ cultural themes, (2) to what extent the *Unlock English* textbooks present small ‘c’ cultural themes, and (3) what are EFL teachers’ and EFL learners’ perspectives towards the cultural content of the *Unlock* series. This research has adopted a mixed research design, both quantitative and qualitative. To answer the first two research questions, the cultural content of the *Unlock* textbooks was analyzed quantitively to find out all cultural themes included in the Unlock series. As for the third research question, a qualitative descriptive design was adopted by conducting the perspectives of (9) EFL teachers’ and (75) EFL learners’. The findings show that there is a wide range of various cultural themes available in the *Unlock* series, but with different frequencies and dominance. The findings also show teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards the cultural content which appear to be generally positive. The researcher recommends enriching the EFL textbooks with more interesting and preferred cultural content.

**Keywords**: Attitudes and Perspectives in TEFL, Cultural Representations, The Unlock Series

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English as a foreign language has a paramount status in different Palestinian universities. English language has an important and prestigious position in Palestine, it is a prerequisite for study and employment. As a result of that Palestinian universities tend to depend on international textbooks to teach English language to students from different specializations. Birzeit university (BZU), for instance, has started teaching the *Unlock English* series in 2016/2017. This series presents a wide range of cultural topics and themes distributed on several levels ranging from A1 (Beginners) to C1 (Advanced). These cultural topics have a potential impact on students’ learnability and language receptivity (Bennet *et al.*, 2003). This explains the noticeable research interest in this area in the last two decades (Ahmad & Narcy-Combes, 2011).

The representation of culture in English language teaching books (ELT) has been analyzed and evaluated in different forms and through diverse perspectives (Setyno & Puji Widodo, 2019). One significant manifestation has focused on the two main cultural aspects, the materialistic (observable) like clothing, food, language, geography; and the non-materialistic one (not observable) including values, beliefs, religion, social norms, and opinions (Saville-Troike, 1975). Another common categorization was presented in (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2018) where an analysis was done based on big “C” that focused on norms like history, politics, geography, education, and small “c” that mainly concentrated on themes like lifestyle, food, greetings, weather, and body language (Chen, 2004).

Despite the different ways and methods culture has been approached by, the core in this analytical process remains to be the textbook. English textbooks have crucial status in teaching and learning English as a foreign language (Tomlinson, 2003). In this sense, Omaggio (2001) asserted the importance of representing cultural themes that are likely to be confronted by language learners in the real life in the curricula in general and textbooks in particular. This has the potentiality to help enhance language learning significantly. In this study the researcher intended to analyze the cultural representations in the *Unlock* series that is taught to university students in Birzeit University in Palestine.

Content Analysis (CA) is seen as the most effective tool to evaluate the content of school and university textbooks. This careful and authentic analysis can provide evident insights for practitioners and stakeholders about the weaknesses and strengths in curricula textbooks. Holsti (1969:14) defines CA as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. Content Analysis was first used for analyzing media materials. However, CA was employed after that for different fields and sciences including social sciences and curricula.
Attitudes and perspectives have been valued in language learning and teaching. Sauvignon (1976), Gardner (1985) and Brown (1987) asserted the crucial position that learners’ attitudes and perspectives have, and which can impact learning a new language significantly. Attitudes can affect this complicated process positively or negatively. Hence, it is crucial to survey learners’ perspectives and attitudes towards the learning material and the pedagogical methods adopted in classrooms.

A. Statement of Problem

Being an assistant professor at the Department of Languages and Translation in Birzeit University, the researcher has been teaching the Unlock series for five years. This series has had its significant position in teaching and learning English in Birzeit University. However, the researcher could feel throughout these years of teaching experience that students’ knowledge about the culture of English-speaking countries is limited and needs enhancement. Hence, the researcher decided to study the cultural content of the Unlock series and survey students’ and instructors’ attitudes towards that content.

B. Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the cultural representations in the Unlock series by analyzing the cultural content of these books; it also aims to investigate instructors’ and students’ attitudes towards the cultural content by distributing a questionnaire to survey their attitudes.

C. Research Questions

This study aims at answering the following basic question:
1. To what extent do Unlock English textbooks present Big ‘C’ cultural themes?
2. To what extent do Unlock English textbooks present small ‘c’ cultural themes?
3. What are teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards the cultural content of the Unlock series?

D. Significance of the Study

To the author’s best knowledge, this study is considered the first one to analyze the cultural content of Unlock English textbooks, and it is done by one of the Unlock textbooks teachers at the Department of Languages and Translation at Birzeit University. This study is hoped to give clear insights about the cultural content of the Unlock textbooks to the stakeholders at the Department of Languages and Translation so that they can decide about choosing to continue teaching this series or shifting to another more culturally effective one. The researcher, being an instructor at the same time, hopes that getting instructors’ perspectives as well as learners’ attitudes would add another significant dimension to the results of the research.

E. Limitations

A key limitation of this research is that it will be focused on analyzing only the cultural content of the Unlock English textbooks.

F. Criteria of Analysis

The researcher adopted the cultural content analysis proposed by Paterson (2004) and Lee (2009), this envisaged culture as big “C” or the visible culture, which concentrates on themes that are easily observed and understood, these are mainly related to politics, education, clothes and fashions, music, arts and architecture, history, geography and literature; and small “c” or the non-observed culture, which covers themes related to cultural values that are non-observed like life style, ritual behavior, living conditions, social convention, values, beliefs, attitudes, interpersonal relations, body language, customs, and daily routine.

G. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis adopted in this study is the theme presented as the main title of educational units in addition to the themes presented in the reading passages in all the Unlock textbooks.

H. Definition of Terms

- Cultural Representations: In this study, the cultural representations refer to all the cultural themes presented in the Unlock textbooks as the major themes of all educational units, in addition to the topics of all reading comprehension passages in all levels from A1 to C1.
- Unlock Textbooks: It is a series of ELT books that was introduced by Birzeit University (BZU) as a global series to teach English language. This series ranges from A1 (beginners) level to C1 (Advanced) level, and it was introduced from Cambridge University Press in 2016/2017.

I. Definition of the Cultural Themes Analyzed in the Study

| TABLE I: DEFINITIONS OF SMALL ‘c’ THEMES |
|----------------------------------------|
| Small ‘c’ cultural themes | Definition of Terms |
|----------------------------------------|
| Lifestyle | the particular ways that a person or group of people live their life and the values and ideas supported by that person or group |
| Ritual Behavior | a set of actions or words performed in a regular way, often as part of a religious ceremony or a traditional event |
| Living Conditions | the conditions by which people live their life |
| Social Convention | the rules and norms that govern our daily social behaviors without thinking |
| Customs and Traditions | customs: the accepted ways of behaving in a particular society |
| Body Language | traditions: the transition of customs or beliefs from one generation to other |
| Daily Routine | all conscious and unconscious postures and movements through which feelings and attitudes are conveyed |

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2022.3.2.268
Vol 3 | Issue 2 | March 2022
TABLE II: DEFINITIONS OF BIG ‘C’ THEMES

| Big ‘C’ cultural themes | Definition of Terms |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Politics                | the activities related with governments, dominant powers or parties |
| Education               | all activities related with the process of teaching and learning in schools or universities |
| Clothes and Fashion     | all items worn on the body (outfits, dresses, footwear, garments, accessories, etc.) |
| Language                | the basic method of human communication, including words and sentences conveyed by speaking or writing |
| Music                   | the vocal or instrumental sounds |
| Religion                | the beliefs and worship practices associated with superhuman powers |
| Art and Architecture    | the art of designing and constructing buildings |
| History                 | all past events in human affairs |
| Food                    | the traditional dishes and cuisine related with different societies and cultures |
| Geography               | places (cities, countries, continents, etc.), physical features of the earth (mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, seas, oceans, etc.) |
| Literature              | the body of all written works that have long lasting artistic significance and aesthetic merit (poetry and prose) |
| Economics               | all activities related with goods and services production, distribution, consumption, wealth, businesses, and money matters |

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Culture in Language Teaching

Brooks (1975) said “of the several meanings of culture, two are of major importance for us: culture as everything in human life and culture as the best of everything in human life” (p.20). However, Seelye (1993) defined culture as “a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life, from folktales to carved whales” (p.22). Due to its important position in language teaching and learning, culture has been the object of research for a long time. It has received much attention from several scholars. Culture has been considered as the fifth language skill by several researchers as it imposes its vital presence in language teaching and learning (Kramsch, 1993; Jourdini, 2007). Other researchers believed that teaching a foreign language without culture is just impossible, they confirmed its crucial role in teaching and learning a foreign language (Valdes, 1986).

According to Byram (1988) teaching and learning language can’t be separated from culture, which is a crucial component of that process. This explains the necessity to integrate cultural representations in the language curriculum; this necessity is explained through two main reasons: first, language study is an important part of the curriculum because it can lead to a better understanding of other cultures; additionally, language and culture are inextricably linked (Omaggio, 2001). Furthermore, there is no doubt that integrating culture successfully into language teaching can significantly contribute to general humanistic knowledge, that can play a critical role in global understanding, and that has a mandatory status in language education (Galloway, 1985b; Strasheim, 1981).

B. Cultural Representations and Themes in EFL Textbooks

The relationship between English language teaching (ELT) and culture has been one of the crucial domains of research. There have been several scholars who got a particular interest in this arena (Byram, 2013). Several scholars carried out research to investigate the cultural content in EFL textbooks. In this section, some of these conducted studies will be presented.

Shin et al. (2011) conducted a content analysis study of the cultural perspectives in international ELT textbooks, where they found out that the diverse cultural aspects were introduced proportionally. However, the dominant cultural content is still that relevant to inner circle cultural content.

Another study was conducted by Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) to analyse the content of three EFL textbooks based on the representations of big “C” and small “c” in these books, which are taught in Iranian universities. The analysis has shown that in some EFL textbooks especially in Top Notch series themes of geography, food, daily life and customs were more dominant, whereas in others particularly in Summit and Passages the dominant themes were values and beliefs.

Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw (2019) investigated the cultural content in EFL textbooks that are in use among the Mongol in basic high schools. The study aimed to get a better understanding of the multicultural representation and the hidden dominant force that control different relations in Inner Mongolia and China.

Setyono and Widodo (2019) conducted a content analysis study to examine the cultural content of the EFL textbook in Indonesia that is adopted nationally. In particular, it investigated the multicultural values represented in the EFL textbook for secondary school students. The results of the study showed that there are themes of multicultural values that emerge from the textbook, such as respect for the cultures of various ethnic and religious groups; respect for indigenous cultures; avoidance of conflict and peaceful relation with life and Nature; and better evaluation for creative cultural products.

Abdul Rahim and Jalalian Daghigh (2019) carried out a content analysis study to investigate which ELT textbooks meet the cultural needs of Malaysian learners, the imported (global) textbooks or the locally developed textbooks. The scholars adopted Byram’s Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). The content analysis showed that the locally developed coursebooks are more satisfying in presenting intercultural content than the imported and global ones.

C. EFL Teachers’ and Learners’ Perspectives on Cultural Representations and Themes in Textbooks

According to Gardner (1985) attitudes have a significant position in teaching and learning a foreign language. Thus, there has been significant research that has been conducted on EFL teachers’ and learners’ attitudes and perspectives towards cultural representations and themes in EFL textbooks. Brown (1987) argued that learners’ perspectives towards learning a new language play an important role in
how they negatively or positively interact with that language (Cited in Suleiman, 1993).

Kahraman (2016) investigated EFL teachers’ and learners’ perspectives and attitudes towards their cultural preferred content in EFL textbooks and their favored ways of introducing the cultural content in EFL classes, in addition to their perspectives towards intercultural communicative competence. The researcher collected data through a Likert scale questionnaire targeted to both EFL teachers and learners in Turkish universities. The results of the attitudinal questionnaire to both teachers and learners have shown propitious signs of a change in the way of perceiving the cultural education through some well-founded evidence from the study participants.

Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) in their study surveyed the attitudes of (135) EFL students and 36 EFL instructors concerning the big ‘C’ and small ‘c’ representations in several EFL textbooks taught in Iranian universities. The findings of the questionnaire used in the study showed areas where the cultural themes have met both teachers’ and learners’ interests, and other areas where there was a mismatch in preferred cultural content.

III. Methodology and Procedures

This study has followed mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods. It is based on analyzing the cultural content of Unlock English series by Cambridge University Press from (A1) to (C1) based on calculating the frequencies and percentages of presented themes. The cultural themes were coded and categorized according to Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) adapted checklist. It has also used a descriptive qualitative research method that is based on analyzing the results of the survey that targeted the attitudes of EFL teachers and learners towards the cultural representations of Unlock English series.

A. Sampling

The current study was conducted to analyze the cultural content in Unlock English series by Cambridge University Press from (A1) level to (C1) level. The analysis covered the cultural themes in all educational units, and it also targeted the topics of all reading comprehension passages. That sample was selected purposefully as it represents the Unlock series taught at Birzeit University. To survey teachers’ and learners’ perspectives towards the cultural content, (9) EFL teachers and (75) students were chosen randomly to complete two short questionnaires.

B. Sampling Instrument of the Study

To analyze the cultural content presented in Unlock English series, the researcher has adapted the cultural content analysis checklist used by Sedaghi and Sepahi (2017), which is based on classifying the cultural content into Big ‘C’ and Small ‘c’. This content analysis checklist classifies the cultural content into observable and non-observable cultural themes. As for the teachers’ and learners’ perspectives, two short questionnaires were also adapted from (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017).

C. Validity of the Instruments of the Study

The researcher has conducted her study based on a checklist that was developed by Sedaghi, and Sepahi (2017). This checklist was developed based on previous checklists designed by Chen (2004), Paterson (2004), and Lee (2009). The checklist that has been used in the current study was based on analyzing the cultural themes into big ‘C’ and small ‘c’. It was adapted by including more cultural themes that are reflected in most cultural content in English textbooks. The checklist as well as the teachers’ and learners’ questionnaires were then validated by being exposed to 5 EFL curriculum experts. The checklist and the questionnaires validity were confirmed by them.

D. Reliability of the Checklist and the Questionnaire

To confirm the reliability of the results, an inter-rater reliability was conducted by two inter-raters. The inter-raters re-analyzed and calculated the cultural content of two levels. Then, the inter-rater reliability was calculated between them. It appeared to be 0.80, which is statistically acceptable, and thus the reliability of the results has been confirmed.

E. Data Collection

The researcher analyzed the cultural content of all Unlock English series, second edition, levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, and C1). The cultural content was analyzed in these books by reviewing the themes presented as units’ major themes and the topics introduced in the reading comprehension passages (reading 1 and reading 2) in all educational units. Teachers and learners were asked to complete the questionnaires with their responses.

IV. Results

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does Unlock English series present Big ‘C’ cultural themes?
2. To what extent does Unlock English series present small ‘c’ cultural themes?
3. What are EFL teachers’ and EFL learners’ perspectives towards the cultural themes presented in Unlock English series?

The first part of this section presents the results of the content analysis in accordance with the two research questions, where frequencies and percentages of the cultural themes derived from the Unlock English series were calculated. The third question is also answered by presenting both teachers’ and learners’ perspectives.

Table III presents the findings of the analysis in accordance with the first research question that asks about the extent to which small ‘c’ themes are represented in Unlock English series. Whereas Table IV presents the findings of the analysis in accordance with the second research question that investigates about the extent to which big ‘C’ themes are represented in Unlock English series.

Table III shows that the percentages of the cultural representations for small ‘c’ themes that range between 17 to 25 (15.9% and 23.5%). (A1) Unlock book has the highest frequency and percentage, whereas B2 Unlock book shows the lowest frequency and percentage.
As it is shown in Table III, in (A1) Unlock English, the most frequent small ‘c’ themes are lifestyle (29.6%), living conditions (29.6%) and daily routine (22.2%). Other Unlock textbooks have shown the following percentages: (A2) Unlock English book appeared to have 25 frequencies with (23.4%). The other two books of B1 and C1 both have shown the same representations of small ‘c’ themes with 19 frequencies and (17.8%) for each of them. The lowest frequencies are shown in B2 book with (15.9%).

Table IV shows that the frequencies and percentages for big ‘C’ cultural themes ranged between 21 and 31 (18 % and 27%), with Geography and Economics as the main dominant themes. The highest rate was demonstrated in (A2) Unlock book, with a percentage of (27%), followed by (A1) and (B1) books with (21%) for each of them, then comes (C1) book with (20%) and finally, (B2) book with the lowest percentage of (18%).

Tables III and IV have also shown the highest and lowest cultural themes for both small ‘c’ and big ‘C’. It has been found that among the small ‘c’ themes lifestyle has the highest frequency with (35), followed by living conditions with (34) frequencies. However, both Social convention and Body language have had the lowest frequencies with only (1) for each one of them.

As for the highest and lowest big ‘C’ cultural themes, the study found out that the highest big ‘C’ cultural theme was Geography with (25) frequencies followed by Economics with (24) frequencies, whereas the lowest was Music with only (1) frequency followed by Politics with (2) frequencies.

A. Discussion of the Results of the First and Second Research Questions

The current study aimed to investigate the cultural themes representations in the Unlock English series. As both tables (3 and 4) have shown, there have been good representations of both small ‘c’ and big ‘C’ themes in the Unlock English series. However, the content analysis has revealed that small ‘c’ themes, mainly Lifestyle and Living conditions, were more frequent than big ‘C’ themes in all Unlock English books.

(A1) Unlock English book has revealed to have the highest small ‘c’ cultural themes with a percentage of (25.2%), with the themes of lifestyle, living conditions and daily routine as the most frequent themes of small ‘c’. However, some small ‘c’ themes have shown little or no representations at all. For instance, interpersonal relations, ritual behaviour and
customs and traditions have shown very low representations of (3.7% and 7.4%) respectively. Other themes have no representation at all, for instance, social convention, and body language, which have (0%) for both. Concerning big ‘C’ themes representations in A1 book, the dominant theme is geography with (33%). Other themes have shown low frequent presence like economics and language (12.50%), education, religion, history, and literature (4.10%), clothes and fashion and food (8.30%). One theme ‘Music’ has no representation in big ‘C’ chart.

(A1) Unlock English book is targeted to beginner learners of English language as remedial level. These learners are expected to interact more with these basic themes that are related to their daily life. The cultural themes of lifestyle, living conditions, daily routine, and geography can be observed daily by learners and present concrete and observable themes for them. These dominant themes can create more interaction with their daily life as they are more associated with daily topics and experiences. This is significant since it will promote their understanding of English language and create an atmosphere of language learning easiness and more enhanced cultural interaction inside the classroom.

(A2) Unlock English book has shown very similar rates and percentages of small ‘c’ themes as (A1) book with slight differences. For example, lifestyle, living conditions and daily routine have shown almost similar frequencies and percentages. Similarly, big ‘C’ themes in (A2) Unlock English book are less presented than small ‘c’ themes. The most dominant themes were geography (22.58%) and history and economics (16.12%). Other themes have shown very low frequencies, although they only appeared in (A2) book. These themes are particularly music, politics and religion (3.22%).

(A2) Unlock English book, which is described as Intermediate 1, is mainly directed to learners who have to communicate about their daily life and their routine experience, in addition to the importance of being communicative about their living conditions. These goals can be reached through presenting these cultural themes as dominant topics in (A2) book. Also, the emergence of some cultural themes that are observed as more complicated ones like history, politics, in addition to music. This is seen as a gradual representation of more complicated and abstract cultural themes as learners are moving forward in learning the language.

As for (B1) Unlock English book, themes like living conditions and lifestyle are still dominant among small ‘c’ themes but with lower frequencies. However, new themes have emerged for the first time, particularly, social convention and body language. These two themes are generally more complicated and need to be presented in intermediate level 3, so that students can interact better with these themes. One interesting observation about (B1) intermediate book is that all small ‘c’ themes are represented, and no theme has shown (0%) frequencies. This is important for English learners in this level, whether students who are finishing their English levels (students who start with A1 or A2), or students who start English courses with (B1) and have to finish with (B2) book, it is essential for students to be exposed to all small ‘c’ cultural themes to have more effective cultural understanding and interaction. With a glance on the big ‘C’ themes, they are less frequent than small ‘c’ themes. The most dominant themes are related to clothes and fashion, history, geography, food, and literature. There are some themes that have no representation (0%). These are politics, music and religion. The analysis of (B1) book affirmed that learners should be exposed more to small ‘c’ themes more than big ‘C’ themes (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1990).

Analyzing the content of (B2) Unlock English book, which is directed to advanced learners, has shown a shift towards minimizing the presentation of small ‘c’ cultural themes in a noticeable way. For instance, most cultural themes have (0%) representation including ritual behavior, social convention, customs and traditions, and body language. These themes have already shown little or no representation in other Unlock books. However, they still had some observed presence in other Unlock books. It has also been noticed that even the presented small ‘c’ cultural themes have low frequencies. For example, interpersonal relations and daily routine. However, the big ‘C’ cultural themes have a more noticeable presence. Most cultural themes have representations in units except for politics and music. This can be justified as (B2) learners are expected to be advanced language learners, so they are supposed to be able to communicate effectively in more complicated topics like economics, literature, art and architecture, language and education. Such topics can be complex and require advanced linguistic repertoire.

Finally, (C1) Unlock English book has shown close analysis with (B2) book. The book has been proved to minimize small ‘c’ cultural themes representations in a noticeable way. Four small ‘c’ themes have no representations at all. These are ritual behavior, social convention, customs and traditions, body language and daily routine. Nevertheless, a careful analysis of big ‘C’ cultural themes representations, it is well noticed that eight of the twelve themes are represented in the book, including education, language, art and architecture, history, food, geography, and economics. (C1) Unlock English book is aimed to be the textbook for highly advanced English learners. These students are directly placed in this level after gaining a high score in the Language Placement Test. Generally, the number of (C1) students is the lowest among all Unlock students. This means that they are assumed to have higher linguistic skills and better cognitive abilities. These special characteristics make them able to communicate effectively in such complicated concepts like economics, art and architecture, and language. Such themes are not attractive for the majority of students, who usually show interest in daily life topics like lifestyle and daily routine.

B. Teachers’ and Learners’ Perspectives towards the Cultural Representations of Unlock Series

This study also aimed at investigating EFL instructors’ and EFL learners’ attitudes towards the cultural content of the Unlock series. To detect their attitudes the researcher has adapted questionnaires used by (Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017). The questionnaires were distributed to (9) EFL instructors and (75) Unlock learners at the Department of Languages and Translation, at Birzeit University.
I. EFL teachers’ perspectives

To disclose EFL instructors’ perspectives towards the cultural content of the Unlock textbooks, (9) teachers were asked to answer a questionnaire that consisted of six main questions. In the first question which aimed at investigating how EFL teachers perceive culture six teachers answered that it is a set of behaviours, customs, rituals, patterned ways of living; whereas three teachers perceived culture as a system of thoughts, assumptions, values and norms as it is shown in Table V:

In the second question Table VI that aimed to investigate whether EFL teachers think that learning/teaching a foreign language should include learning/teaching about its corresponding culture, all EFL teachers answered with ‘Yes’. However, they showed differences in clarifying the reasons why they think culture should be included in language teaching and learning (Table VII). Five teachers believed that language and culture are interconnected, two teachers believed that cultural context is important in communication, while the rest thought that cultural knowledge motivates students to learn the language and cultural knowledge broadens students’ general knowledge.

The third question aimed to find out what culture teaching means to EFL teachers. Five teachers believed that it is mainly about developing the students’ understanding of the underlying bases of the foreign culture (values, assumptions, beliefs). Three teachers thought that teaching culture aims at developing students’ ability to behave appropriately when in contact with a foreigner. Only one teacher expressed his belief about teaching culture as a tool to provide learners with information about the foreign culture facts and artifacts as it appears below in Table VIII.

The fourth question inquired whether culture should be treated as supplementary optional material (i.e., to be dealt with when it incidentally occurs in texts and activities) or as an integral part of language learning (i.e., to be deliberately included in texts and activities). As it appears in the table below, the majority of teachers believed that culture should be treated as an integral part of language learning, while only two instructors viewed teaching culture as supplementary and optional material in EFL teaching. Look below in Table IX.

The teachers were asked whether the cultural component should be considered on equal footing with the other language components. As it appears below in Table X, five teachers agreed that the cultural content should be treated as important as other language components, whereas the other four teachers disagreed.

The last question, the teachers were asked about their most preferred cultural themes they recommend to be included in EFL textbooks and introduced to their students. The highest frequencies are relevant to customs and norms, beliefs and values and food. Interestingly, these results do not correspond totally with the content analysis results conducted...
earlier in this study. These cultural norms have a lower representation compared with other themes (Table XI).

2. EFL learners’ perspectives

The learners’ questionnaire investigated the perspectives of (75) students. The students who represented learners from all levels and from both genders had to answer a questionnaire that consisted of eight main questions.

In the first question that sought to investigate students’ responses why they learn English. The four given options were as it is shown with students’ responses in Table XII below:

You are learning English because:

a) It is the language of technology and scientific research.
b) You like this language and you want to know more about its speakers and their culture(s).
c) Its mastery is required to get a good job.
d) It is a compulsory university subject.

| Cumulative Percent | Valid Percent | Percent | Frequency |
|--------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 41.3               | 41.3          | 41.3    | 31        | A         |
| 73.3               | 32            | 24      | B         |
| 84                 | 10.7          | 8       | C         |
| 100                | 16            | 12      | D         |
|                    | 100           | 75      | Total     |

The percentages show that (41.1%) of the students study English as it represents the language of technology and scientific research for them, while (10.7%) opted for option (b) which is that they like this language and want to know more about its speakers and their culture(s).

The second question which investigated about what learning English means most to them, the highest percentages of the students’ responses (38.7%) revealed that they perceive learning as the ability to build words and sentences and the second highest percentage (30.7%) was that learning English is learning about the culture(s) of English-speaking people. However, learning how to pronounce words and sentences has got the lowest percentage with only (2.7%) as it is shown in Table XIII below.

What does learning English mean most to you?

a) Learning how to build words and sentences.
b) Learning the meanings of words and sentences.
c) Learning how to pronounce words and sentences.
d) Learning about the culture(s) of English-speaking people.

In the third question, the highest percentage of responses has gone to classroom or group discussion as the most effective way to learn English, while watching and analyzing foreign films received (28%) of students’ responses as it appears in Table XIV below.

What activities are, in your opinion, most effective to learn English?

a) Word-building and sentence completion exercises.
b) Vocabulary exercises (searching for synonyms, antonyms...).
c) Transcription (pronunciation) exercises.
d) Role plays.
e) Classroom or group discussions.
f) Problem-solving practice.
g) Watching and analyzing foreign films.

| Cumulative Percent | Valid Percent | Percent | Frequency |
|--------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 24                 | 24            | 24      | 18        | A         |
| 37.3               | 13.3          | 13.3    | 10        | B         |
| 38.7               | 1.3           | 1.3     | 1         | D         |
| 69.3               | 30.7          | 30.7    | 23        | E         |
| 72                 | 2.7           | 2.7     | 2         | F         |
| 100                | 28            | 28      | 21        | G         |
|                    | 100           | 100     | 75        | Total     |

As for the fourth question, students were asked whether they think it is important to know about the culture(s) of English-speaking people, their way(s) of life, and their worldview(s). The majority of students (84%) believed that it is important to learn about the cultures of English-speaking people. Table XV below shows the responses clearly.

Do you think that it is important to know about the culture(s) of English-speaking people, their way(s) of life, their worldview(s)?

- Yes.
- No.

If ‘Yes’ about which topics would you like to know more?

a) Daily life and routines.
b) Customs/norms.
c) Beliefs and values.
d) History.
e) Art.
f) Music.
g) Government/Politics.
h) Food-Economy.
i) Geography.

Students who answered with ‘Yes’ were asked to choose their most preferred cultural topics that should be presented in their EFL textbooks. Their responses showed that the majority opted for Daily life and routines and History as their most preferred cultural themes. This corresponds with the results of content analysis that was conducted in this study, especially the part relevant to Daily life and routines. This theme in particular was dominant in the content analysis. However, ‘History’, which received high percentage in students’ preferred themes, was not highly frequent in the big ‘C’ cultural content of the Unlock textbooks, it was moderate. See Table XVI below.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2022.3.2.268
Do you think that learning the culture(s) of English-speaking countries will have negative effects on you? 
- Yes or - No

TABLE XIX: QUESTION 8/EFL LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVES

| Cumulative Percent | Valid Percent | Percent | Frequency |
|-------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 14.7              | 14.7          | 14.7    | 11        | N          |
| 100               | 100           | 100     | 75        | Total      |

In Table XX, the next question aimed to find out how much of foreign culture students have already learned. Most students (65.3%) indicated that they have learned very little about the culture of English-speaking countries. This indicates that there is a need to focus more on the cultural content in EFL classrooms.

How much of the foreign culture do you think you have learned up to now? 
- Much 
- Little 
- Very little

TABLE XX: QUESTION 9/EFL LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVES

| Cumulative Percent | Valid Percent | Percent | Frequency |
|-------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 29.3              | 29.3          | 29.3    | 22        | A          |
| 94.7              | 94.7          | 94.7    | 49        | B          |
| 100               | 100           | 100     | 75        | Total      |

The last question investigated whether students think that learning the culture(s) of English-speaking countries will have negative effects on them. Almost all students (94.7%) answered ‘No’. This implies that students do not have any negative attitudes towards learning about the culture of English-speaking countries. This illustrates students’ readiness and openness to learn more about other cultures. See Table XXI.

Do you think that learning the culture(s) of English-speaking countries will have negative effects on you? 
- Yes or - No

TABLE XXI: QUESTION 10/EFL LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVES

| Cumulative Percent | Valid Percent | Percent | Frequency |
|-------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 94.7              | 94.7          | 94.7    | 71        | N          |
| 100               | 100           | 100     | 75        | Total      |

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed at analyzing the cultural content in the Unlock English textbooks. It also aimed to investigate both teachers’ and learners’ perspectives towards the cultural content of the Unlock textbooks. The findings have shown that both big ‘C’ and small ‘c’ cultural themes were represented in the Unlock series. However, the small ‘c’ themes are more dominant as it was shown in the content analysis. This partially harmonizes with both teachers’ and learners’ preferences regarding their most preferred cultural themes. Nevertheless, some surpassed themes particularly ‘History’, ‘Customs, beliefs and values’ and ‘Food’ have shown moderate and low exemplification in the Unlock series. These themes were among the ones that excelled in teachers’ and students’ perspectives. Based on the findings,
the author suggests integrating more cultural themes that ally with teachers’ and students’ preferences.

Based on the findings of this study, Cambridge University Press, the producer of the Unlock series, is also recommended to include more educational material that could support teaching and learning culture inside TEFL classrooms. This material can be more cultural themes illustrated in pictures, videos, reading texts, vocabulary items, activities, etc. This is hoped to enhance learning English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, stakeholders and policy makers are strongly advised to take into their consideration the cultural content of the English textbook they buy and adopt for the local universities and educational institutions. This is crucial as it impacts how learners interact effectively with the presented content. Finally, EFL teachers are also counselled to give teaching favoured cultural themes more interests. They are highly recommended to use supplementary educational material that provides appropriate cultural content to their students whenever they feel that the textbooks do not present sufficient and appropriate cultural content.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their efforts and constructive review feedback notes. The author is also thankful to her colleagues and students for their cooperation while conducting the research.

REFERENCES
Abdul Rahim, H. & Jalalidin Daghhigh, A. (2019). Locally developed versus global textbooks: an evaluation of cultural content in textbooks used in English language teaching in Malaysia. Asian Englishes, 22(3), 1–15. doi:10.1080/13488678.2019.1669301
Ahmed, F. & F. M. Narcy-Combes. (2011). An Analysis of Textbooks from a Cultural Point of View. TESOL Journal, 5, 21–37
Bennet, J., Bennet, M., & Allen, W. (2003). Developing intercultural competence in the language classroom. In D. L. Lange & R. M. Paige (Eds.), Culture as the core: Perspectives in second language learning. Greenwich. CT: Information Age Publishing.
Brooks, N. (1968). Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. Foreign Language Annals, 1(3), 204–217.
Brooks, N. (1975). The analysis of language and familiar cultures. In R. Lafayette (Ed.), The cultural revolution in foreign language teaching (pp. 19-31). Reports of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook.
Brown, H.D. (1987). Principle of language learning and teaching. London: Prantice- Hall International.
Byram, M. (1988). Foreign language education and cultural studies. Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 1(1), 15-31.
Byram, M. (2013). Foreign language teaching and intercultural citizenship. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1(3), 53–62.
Chen, B. B. (2004). A survey on cultural learning and its variables analysis. Journal of X’ian, International Studies University, 12(3), 21–24.
Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). Cultural mirrors: Materials and methods in the EFL classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), Culture in second language teaching (pp. 196 – 219). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Galloway, V.B. (1985b). A Design of the Improvement of the Teaching of Foreign Language Classrooms: ACTIFL project proposal. Gardner, R. (1985). Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitude and Motivation. London: Edward Arnold.
Holsti, O. (1969). Content Analysts for the Social Sciences and Humanities. Reading, Mass: Carl W. Roberts. (ed.), Washington.
Jourdini, M. (2007). The fifth skill: Culture as a language learning motivator. http://www.stoa.org.
Kahraman, A. (2016). Teachers” and Learners’ Attitudes towards Culture and Culture Learning in a Turkish Context. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 12(2), 01-12.
Kramsch, C. (1993). Context and culture in language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lee, K-Y (2009). Treating culture: what 11 high school EFL conversation textbook in South Korea do. English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 8, 76-96.
Omaggio, A. (2001). Teaching language in context. New York: Heinle & Heinle.
Petersen, B. (2004). Cultural intelligence: A guide to working with people from other cultures. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
Saville-Troike, M. (1975). Teaching English as a second culture. In R. Crymes & W. Norris (Eds.), ON TESOL ’74 (pp. 83–94). Washington, DC: TESOL.
Sedaghi, K. & Sepahi, Z. (2017). Cultural content of three EFL textbooks: teachers’ and learners’ cultural preferences and cultural themes of textbook. Pedagogies: An International Journal, 13(3), 222–245.
Seeley, H. N. (1993). Teaching Culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
Setyono, B. & Widodo, H. P. (2019). The representation of multicultural values in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture-Endorsed EFL textbook: a critical discourse analysis. Intercultural Education, (4), 1–15.
Shin, J., Eslami, Z. R. and Chen, W.-C. (2011). Presentation of local and international culture in current international English-language teaching textbooks. Language, Culture and Curriculum, 24(3), 253–268.
Shin, J., Z. R. Eslami, and W.-C. Chen. (2011). Presentation of Local and International Culture in Current International English-Language Teaching Textbooks. Language, Culture and Curriculum, 24, 253–268. doi:10.1080/07908318.2011.614694.
Strasheim, L. (1981). Establishing a Professional Agenda for Integrating Culture into K-12 Foreign Languages: An Editorial. The Modern Language Journal, 65, 67-69.
Saleiman, M. F. (1993). A Study of Arab Students Motivations and Attitudes for Learning English as a Foreign Language [Unpublished Doctoral Thesis]. University of Arizona State, Arizona: USA.
Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (1993). Cultural awareness. Oxford: Oxford University Press
Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2003). Developing materials for language teaching. A&C Black.
Valdes, J. M. (1966). Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Xiang, R. and Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2019). EFL textbooks, culture and power: a critical content analysis of EFL textbooks for ethnic Mongols in China. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 1, 1–15. doi:10.1080/01434632.2019.1692024