

Hidden Ideologies within Imported Language Teaching Series: This time the case of *Four Corners* and *Impact Values* Series

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Abstract

Extracting incompatible values in the best-sellers current in ELT markets is a real concern. In this study, the researchers tried to bring some claims/counterclaims for hidden ideologies regarding two imported English language teaching coursebooks-*Four Corners* and *Impact Values* Series, which are commonly taught within Iranian English language institutes. The main intention was that they might transmit incompatible English culture to the Iranian learners. Through a qualitative design, vigorous content analysis was conducted over diverse randomly selected texts/topics and images in the two books, it was found out that regarding images, four themes instantiated incongruent values to the local context for Iranian learners including A) boy-girl relationship, B) imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions, C) incongruent lifestyles, and D) the proportion of the male vs. female images in the two books. As to topics included in the books, mismatching items were detected within seven main categories including A) Cross-gender relationship, B) disregarding the importance of family, C) excessive Use of Internet, D) Mobile Phones, and Computers, E) food and drink prohibitions, F) forbidden or inappropriate habits, G) incompatible jobs and professions, and H) showing disrespect for older people. Finally, some suggestions regarding compatibility issues with local cultural input enrichment with the Iranian culture were given.

Keywords: Cultural invasion, ELT materials, *Four Corners*, hidden ideology, *Impact Values*

Introduction

With new definitions of culture/language interdependency, scholars in the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) believe that language plays a fundamental function (Sirbu, 2015). This function is strongly related to the social nature of a language where there are interdependency and mutual conditionality relations between language and a society with its inherent culture. Also, according to Schaller and Crandall (2004), human thought, for the majority, is not simply the individual outcome of his/her evolved neural architecture, but also the result of his borrowing of the immense symbolic and intellectual resources available in language. This means that culture can denote the lifestyle of a special group of people involving their thought patterns, beliefs, behavior, traditions, religious ceremonies, clothes and language (Zimmermann, 2015). This is in contrast with the former realizations of culture. For example, ELT scholars such as Nunan (1999) formerly believed that culture is a system of norms and rules, often implicit and virtual, and focuses on personal behavior and interactions between and among people.

In this milieu, with new formulations of culture as mainly realized in the language itself,

learning English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) becomes a fundamental concern as the majority of scientific studies are published in English. Insights over the published teaching materials is another concern which should not be neglected as ideologies hidden in others' language can easily be corroborated through linguistic forms. Based on Van Dijk's definition (2000), ideology is the social cognition that is shared by the members of a group. It is the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members. For all language users, the recognition of how their language affects others' ideologies can greatly impact the direction and motivation for both language studies and interpersonal relationships, and it can also add great insights and values to language education, program planning, and curriculum development (Krasner, 1999, cited in Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008) observed that "Western inner circle cultures are portrayed as having modern and desirable behavior while those from other cultures, who exhibit other ways of doing things, are seen as backward and lacking" (pp. 184-185). Such cultural polarization along with other dichotomies such as the native versus non-native speaker has been among controversial issues during the recent decades.

Educational books are part of a system in which sense of responsibility, ethics and cultural cohesion might be transmitted. Lebrun, Lenoir, Laforest, Larose, Roy, Spallanzani, & Pearson, (2002) considered educational books as cultural products and representative of the culture of a nation. As there is an increasing recognition of the important role that culture plays in the framing and delivery of education and development in learning a second/foreign language and as the educational materials are sources of learning, there are no educational books without cultural, social and ethical values. Moreover, with globalization, increasing need for international, political and economic communication, growing requests for studying abroad, the important role of digital media and social networks, and ease of traveling to different countries might have inspired lots of devotion to learning foreign languages and also different cultures. This growing need for learning the other cultures might force the authorities, experts and decision makers to find ways for teaching cultural issues-the most challengeable topics in teaching a foreign language.

Background of the Study

Seargeant (2008) believed English is a language, which is based on a specific thinking and policy. Likewise, others also believed that failure to communicate across cultures is the result of the lack of understanding the values and thoughts of different people with different languages (Tang, 2006). Tang believed by learning the culture of the people, probable misunderstandings would be avoided. In the existing literature, diverse views over inclusion vs. exclusion of culture esp. in EFL contexts was existent, which was noticeable.

Stance for Including Culture as to Language Learning (Pros and Cons)

Notwithstanding the inseparability of language and the culture, the foreign culture has not always been welcomed in the foreign language classes. In effect, some teaching professionals have put forward heated arguments against incorporating it in language courses and textbooks. On the other hand, others believed it to be a taken-for granted component in foreign language teaching among several other arguments (Asif, 2012).

Bhatia (2000) in a research on Indian English learners proved that consumerism and huge advertising transmitted by teaching and development of English make great impacts on the general culture of Indian people. Kubota (1998) also showed that the mission of English materials is invasion and cultural vulgarity. Following this line of thought, McKay (2000) and

Kachru (1986) suggested that English as an international language needs to describe one's own culture and concerns to others rather than be linked to the culture of those who speak it.

At this point and with such an inalienable position assumed for culture and language relation, learning English found its own strong critics who viewed it as a means of linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1996) in some nations. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) highlighted the significance of textbooks by referring to them as potentially a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner where skills are analyzed systematically and as an ideology.

Ihm (1996) studied a series of textbooks in the EFL context to evaluate cultural representation to see if they reflect the diversity of the target culture as well as racial and gender stereotypes. The findings indicated that the textbooks did not reflect the multicultural structure of the American community. Instead, they presented prejudiced images of Asian Americans, Native Americans, Japanese and Chinese people. Having recognized that the images in textbooks affect learners, Ihm suggested that they should not include misleading and inaccurate information and that textbook writers should be more conscious of this issue.

Çelik and Erbay (2013) evaluated the textbook series Spot used in Turkish elementary schools in terms of its Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)). They examined whether the books reflected a local, target or international approach towards culture. The results demonstrated a balance between local, target and international cultures; however, there was a tendency towards European cultures.

Other researchers sought to analyze ways in which sexism might more directly affect students. Jones, Kite, and Sunderland (1997) noted that little attention had been given to the model dialogues often presented in EFL textbooks. The focus had mostly been on the reading texts or grammar examples, but when the dialogues had been analyzed, they were treated in the same way as the other types of texts. Then, they concluded that gender bias in such dialogues could affect students' knowledge, practice opportunities and language skills being learned. Particularly problematic was the fact that students assigned to dialogues based upon their gender could have different amounts of practice and also practiced different language skills. To test their ideas, they analyzed the dialogues meant to be utilized for conversation practice in three EFL textbooks. However, Jones et al (1997) noted that this could be because of the occupational or social roles given to the characters in the dialogues. Then and there, they made reference to a study done by Poulou (1997). She had analyzed the occupational and social roles in dialogues as well as the language functions: informational, phatic, directive and expressive. She discovered inequality in the language functions assigned to different roles based upon gender.

Iranian Studies on the Intrusion of Culture in ELT Textbooks

Abdollahzadeh and Baniasad (2010), in their study on True to Life and Spectrum, as two commonly used sourcebooks in Iranian contexts, found that the imported educational course books include some specific cultural values, among which the most important ones were A) the hegemony of the English language, B) sexism, C) cultural stereotypes, and D) consumerism. They also found that by increasing the level of those course books, the cultural values increased too. This implied that, in Spectrum VI, cultural values are presented more than the previous books.

Vosoughi (2015) believed in some hidden values in the ELT textbook- Cover to Cover- which presented some counter-local perspectives against Iranian learners' local culture. She also found some positive social values in this textbook, though.

A different examination by Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) on learning objectives in ELT

textbooks displayed the prevalence of lower-order cognitive skills more than higher-order ones in which case culture could be incorporated in full.

As the existing literature indicated, the integration of culture into English as a foreign language has attracted much attention recently as the result of changes in the status of English. In this study, one main guiding question was initially proposed which formed the basis of the sustained talk over cultural incompatibility:

1. What kinds of cultural values are presented in *Four Corners* and *Impact Series* regarding their embodied texts and images?

Purpose of the Study

In this research, the researchers tried to instantiate that some bestsellers as imported course books particularly the ones selected for this study, *Impact Series* and *Four Corners*, might transfer different cultural issues through both the language and non-language items. These course books are newly published and taught in Iranian educational centers, and few related cultural examination as such has been hitherto done to examine if internationalization features to fit an Iranian learner as well has been considered by the authors of the two selected books or not. Since they may then transmit incompatible English cultures to the Iranian learners, this study was projected to bring instantiated evidences in this regard.

Method

In this study, the researchers made an attempt to explore two selected course books from two different time spans (1992 & 2012), *Four Corners* and *Impact Series*, to check if they were engaged with traces of cultural invasion and if they could transmit any incompatible cultures to the Iranian learners. This series included a comprehensive book, along with some supplementary materials such as a teacher's book, a comprehensive exercise book, a lab book, a test book, a tape/CD for recorded lessons, and video programs. Initially, a brief reference has been made to each selected teaching series.

Documentation

Four Corners

Four Corners is a coursebook in American English that integrates a framework on measurable learning outcomes with a tried-and-true communicative approach. It is an integrated four-skill course for young adults who want to use English to communicate effectively in daily life. This coursebook has been compiled by Jack C. Richards, and David Bohlke (2012) and published by Cambridge University Press. This coursebook contains four levels and in this paper, the researchers focused on the first two books, *Four Corners 1* and *2*.

Impact Values

The Impact Values Series is a coursebook written by Richard R. Dey, Joseph Shaules and Junko Yamanaka and has been first published by Pearson-Longman Publishing in (1992). This coursebook helps beginner students develop conversation and discussion skills.

These two books were selected due to the exciting features and timely embedded topics and activities which to their authors' views could help students express their opinions and make short presentations. This brought a sense of curiosity in the present researchers to deeply ponder over the possibly hidden issues in this book.

In order to have a coherent picture over the units of the two books, first the table of

contents in each book series was screened to manage the clustered random sampling based on a thematic criterion. In other words, initially the whole topics included in the two books were collected, then based on this thematic classification of the lessons included under each topic as well as the frequency of occurrence of the relevant or similar topics, units 1, 3 and 5 from Four Corners 1, units 2, 3 and 5 from Four Corners 2, and units 1, 3, and 4 from Impact Values were selected for this study. Tables.1 and 2 below display the whole incorporated topics.

Table 1. Cultural Themes Found in Four Corners (Unit 1 to 6)

No	Main Topics	Units	Volume
1	People	1&2	1
2	Clothing	3	1
3	Favorite things	5	1
4	Everyday life	3,4&5	1
5	Jobs/abilities	6	1
6	Health	---	1
7	People	2	2
8	Clothing	--	2
9	Favorite Things	1&3	2
10	Everyday life	4,5&6	2
11	Jobs/abilities	--	2
12	Health	6	2

Table 2 below also verifies the whole incorporated topics within Impact Values series.

Table 2. Cultural Themes Found in Impact Values

No	Main Topics	Units
1	People	1,2,3,4&5
2	Clothing	3
3	Favorite things	3
4	Everyday life	1,3&4
5	Jobs/abilities	3&4
6	Health	1,3&5

This study had a qualitative design and the researchers were going to use qualitative

content analysis techniques in order to find evidences and examples for representing cultural invasion tactics used by their promoters.

As the main focus of this study was to reveal some social and cultural practices as hidden ideologies behind English language in the internationally-distributed ELT textbooks under the study, a model of culture analysis was developed and then applied to the intended books.

Data Collection Procedures

According to different socio-linguistically and discursively oriented assumptions for measuring intercultural competence (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 1992; Fairclough, 1989; Halliday, 1985; Mckay, 2002; Moran, 2001; Van Dijk, 1998; William, 1983), and based on the operational definition of culture as aligned with this paper, the models to determine the cultural mismatches as embodied in the books had to be closely screened. After collecting enough instances within the existing body of literature, initially, based on Williams' (1983) definition of culture, the researchers made the definition of different variables measurable so that values and norms could be analyzed through the topics and subject matters enunciated in each unit of the selected books. Then based on Moran's framework (2001), two coding schemes drawing on '*the Five Dimensions of Culture*' and '*the Main Categories of Culture*', were issued to codify the data regarding diverse themes and categories for this research. In this study, the second coding scheme was mainly used to understand the types of cultural issues (Table 3).

Table 3. A brief summary of the five dimensions of culture (Moran, 2001)

Dimensions	Examples
Products	<i>Artifacts</i> : food, documents, language, money, tools
	<i>Places</i> : buildings, cities, houses
	<i>Institutions</i> : family, law, economy, religion, education, politics
	<i>Art forms</i> : music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture
Practices	<i>Operations</i> : manipulation of cultural products
	<i>Acts</i> : ritualized communicative practices
	<i>Scenarios</i> : extended communicative practices
Perspectives	<i>Lives</i> : stories of members of the future
	They represent the 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 they are implicit, outside conscious awareness.
Communities	They include the specific social contexts (e.g. national cultures), circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and groups (e.g. different social clubs) in which members carry out cultural practices.
Persons	They refer to 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.

For authenticating the results, the current researchers also interviewed two experienced Iranian teachers. In so doing, the researchers gained access to the two experienced English

teachers who had already taught these books to explain if they had dealt with any of the results concluded in this study. The volunteering teachers were both male and having 15 to 25 years' experience in teaching English in Iranian contexts. One third of the analyzed results was randomly given to the two teachers and they were asked to review the themes and decide if their relevance to the books is legitimate enough to be used as claims/counterclaims for and against the possible hidden values in the selected books. The following interview questions were given to them as a guiding inquiry:

- 1) Do you think that the emerged themes and assigned categories in the selected books are validated to be claimed as hidden values?
- 2) If yes, have you faced with any challenges to introduce such values as topics for discussion in class?

Data Analysis

The process of creating and applying a coding scheme consisted of several basic steps. One of the most fundamental and important decisions concerned the definition of the basic unit of text to be classified. Words, sentences, themes, paragraphs and whole texts are six commonly used options (Mckay, 2000). Throughout this study, the two above-cited coding schemes could be utilized for the sections under investigation. The quality and the justification of the choices are given in the following sections.

In order to analyze the data, Content Analysis via an unprejudiced perspective through both a priori and a posteriori codification to find out any probable patterns of the cultural content mismatches in the texts, data were content analyzed.

Based on Cohen (2007), the content means words, pictures, themes, ideas and any messages that are designed to be communicated, and even written, visual or spoken forms that are served as a tool for communication. In this research, an attempt was made to explore the reading passages and images of the selected books.

Codification schemes were undertaken by MAXQDA (Ver. 12 pro) as one available software for systematic inquiries over qualitative research studies. After prescribing the codes, the whole texts of the mentioned coursebooks were reviewed by another researcher (having a PhD in Applied Linguistics) then the culturally related issues were marked and fed into the Maxqda software. Then, the culturally related pictures/texts of the two coursebooks were reselected and then recorded and analyzed by the present researchers. In the end, to avoid subjective evaluation by the present researchers, the views of some English language teachers were also sought using one third of the data files for confirming the dependability of the results.

Results

After coding the selected units and checking the propositions, the researchers extracted some themes as categorized into two main segments including 1) inappropriate images and 2) inappropriate topics, for which individual subcategories were deliberated. In the next section, firstly themes pertained to non-language items (images) are briefly explicated. Also, Appendix A displays a mind map of the extracted themes in this regard.

1) Inappropriate Images

Among the educational tools, a critical issue which could be considered was the used images and drawings in the selected teaching materials. Since learners make mental images in learning concepts and words, these images can help them to create in/correct images. For better understanding of the content, in most cases, English language teachers use images as an

independent tool to train, enhance, and practice all language skills, especially listening and speaking. In such cases, there is an image that is debatable and can become the topic for speaking. Learners are asked to speak about people and objects they see or use these images to write essays consistent with their concepts.

Within the first category- in/appropriate images-, four different subcategories emerged after analyzing the data including:

- A) boy-girl relationship,
- B) imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions,
- C) incongruent lifestyles, and
- D) the proportion of the male vs. female images in the two books.

Table 4 below shows an image of the emerged categories and themes, which were used for analyzing the data. In each case, examples of western cultural mismatches in most of the images in the current collections of English language teaching in both *Four Corners Series* and *Impact Series* have been brought for a close scrutiny in the subsequent sections.

Table 4. Descriptions for the incompatible images in the selected corpus

No	Book	Code/ Categories	Image Description	Page no.
1	<i>Four Corner 1</i>	(B) Imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions	Two women in a laundry room, dressed in Arabic style, one of them has upright purple pink hair	18
2	<i>Four Corner 1</i>	(B) Imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions	A female rock singer while having an electric guitar.	24
3	<i>Four Corner 1</i>	(C) Incongruent lifestyles	A collection of six images of various occasions in the United States: The second image depicts a red heart symbolized by Valentine's Day.	43
4	<i>Four Corner 1</i>	(B) Imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions	A man tweaks a woman's hair in a woman's labyrinth	85
5	<i>Four Corner 2</i>	(B) Imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions	A heart to give an idea of the first appointment of boys and girls	14
6	<i>Four Corner 2</i>	(A) The proportion of male vs. female	A woman's dress fashion model	35

		images in the two books		
7	<i>Four Corner 2</i>	(C)Incongruent lifestyles	Albert Einstein wearing American sports uniform	85
8	<i>Impact Values</i>	(C)Incongruent lifestyles	A great image on two pages of famous Hollywood actors	24
9	<i>Impact Values</i>	(B)Imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions	A TV program: Three men in a contest are trying to win a program that will bring friendship with a beautiful woman.	37
10	<i>Impact Values</i>	(C)Incongruent lifestyles	Showing Western fashion trends from the 1950s, 60s and 70s	38
11	<i>Impact Values</i>	(C)Incongruent lifestyles	A young boy in his sleeping bedroom is playing guitar and listening to music	56
12	<i>Impact Values</i>	(C)Incongruent lifestyles	Introducing American occasions such as Valentine and Halloween along with other occasions such as China, Mexico and so on.	77

In a second attempt and in line with the first suggested question, the researchers made an attempt to bring substantial evidences over the inappropriate topics as incorporated in the randomly selected texts and talks in the two sampled books.

2) Inappropriate Topics

Among the common ways of developing syllabus of language teaching, one can refer to the thematic codification of the lessons. In this way, each lesson is designed for a specific subject. Regarding the significance of focusing on the contents, in general, it should be noted that learning and practicing topics that are prevalent in western societies might make English learners unable to talk about their indigenous subjects because they have not thought about these concepts in English. This situation might ultimately lead to the unpardonable learning of the subject after an unconscious conversation about his indigenous subjects and to seek to speak about western issues. The other condition might be the fact that these learners might take on a passive position in the practical situations of using English when confronted with foreigners.

The topics presented in the English language books under the study, although seemingly

justified, had a subtlety to impose the culture of the western countries only. Below, in table 5 the main topics, sub topics and reference number of the related units are shown respectively.

Table 5. *Incorporated topics in the sampled units of the books*

Main topic	Sub topic	Books / Units
1 People	- Appearance	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Personality	Unit 1
	- Relationships	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Feelings	Unit 2
		<i>Impact Values:</i>
		Unit 1 & 3 & 4
2 Clothing	- Fashion	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Formal vs. informal	Unit 3
	- Colors	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Clothes for special occasions	----
		<i>Impact Values:</i>
		Unit 3
3 Favorite things / interests	- Likes and dislikes	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Personal preferences	Unit 5
	- Animal lovers / pets	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Eating and drinking habits	Unit 3
	- Hobbies	<i>Impact Values:</i>
		Unit 3
4 Everyday life	- Habits	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Routines	Unit 3 & 5
	- Everyday activities	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Hobbies	Unit 5
	- Weekdays and weekend	<i>Impact Values:</i>
		Unit 3 & 4
5 Jobs and Abilities	- Abilities	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Favorite jobs	Unit ---
	- Job routines	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Job specifications	Unit ---
	- Salary and income	<i>Impact Values:</i>
	- Work hours	Unit 3 & 4
	- Relationships among colleagues	
6 Health	- Healthy diets	<i>Four Corners 1:</i>
	- Eating and drinking habits	Unit ---
	- Physicians and patients	<i>Four Corners 2:</i>
	- Exercise	Unit 5
		<i>Impact Values:</i>
		Unit 1 & 3

Table 6 below displays the negative or mismatching views as observed in the selected

units based on the researchers' opinion. Mismatched topics were delineated into eight subcategories including A) Cross-gender relationship, B) incompatible jobs and professions, C) forbidden or inappropriate habits, D) food and drink prohibitions, E) disregarding the importance of family, F) showing disrespect for older people, and G) excessive Use of Internet, Mobile Phones, and Computers. In each case, short explanations have been provided for a close scrutiny.

Table 6. *Negative and Incompatible Issues inside the Sampled Textbooks*

Detected mismatching Topics	Book / Page	Short Explanation
1 Cross-gender relationship	Four Corners 1/page 2 Four Corners 1/page 4 Four Corners 1/page 6 Four Corners 1/page 16 Four Corners 1/page 26 Four Corners 1/page 28 Four Corners 1/page 35 Four Corners 1/page 40 Four Corners 1/page 50 Four Corners 1/page 53 Four Corners 1/page 68 Four Corners 1/page 70 Four Corners 1/page 78 Four Corners 1/page 88 Four Corners 2/page 13 Four Corners 2/page 25 Four Corners 2/page 33 Four Corners 2/page 35 Four Corners 2/page 56 Four Corners 2/page 69 Four Corners 2/page 89 Four Corners 2/page 92 Impact Values/ page 10 Impact Values/ page 12 Impact Values/ page 18 Impact Values/ page 23 Impact Values/ page 28 Impact Values/ page 36 Impact Values/ page 44 Impact Values/ page 50 Impact Values/ page 56 Impact Values/ page 70 Impact Values/ page 80	Pre-marital relationships (boy/girlfriends) are strictly Haram (forbidden) in Islam.

2 Incompatible jobs and professions	Four Corners 1/page 10	Women maintained being a singer, musician, model, waitress and driver.
	Four Corners 1/page 11	
	Four Corners 1/page 12	
	Four Corners 1/page 13	
	Four Corners 1/page 16	
	Four Corners 1/page 22	
	Four Corners 1/page 36	
	Four Corners 1/page 56	
	Four Corners 1/page 60	
	Four Corners 1/page 70	
	Four Corners 1/page 91	
	Four Corners 2/page 21	
	Four Corners 2/page 56	
	Four Corners 2/page 57	
	Four Corners 2/page 60	
	Four Corners 2/page 69	
	Four Corners 2/page 89	
	Four Corners 2/page 92	
	Impact Values/ page 36	
	Impact Values/ page 38	
Impact Values/ page 45		
Impact Values/ page 69		
Impact Values/ page 79		
Impact Values/ page 80		
3 Forbidden or inappropriate habits	Four Corners 1/page 45	Example cases were dancing, playing too much with the computer, drinking too much coffee, playing with the animals and pets, going to the night clubs, eating food in the restaurants and fast food centers and eating lots of snacks such as popcorn etc.
	Four Corners 1/page 46	
	Four Corners 1/page 47	
	Four Corners 1/page 50	
	Four Corners 1/page 53	
	Four Corners 1/page 55	
	Four Corners 1/page 60	
	Four Corners 1/page 61	
	Four Corners 1/page 72	
	Four Corners 1/page 74	
	Four Corners 1/page 90	
	Four Corners 1/page 91	
	Four Corners 2/page 23	
	Four Corners 2/page 26	
	Four Corners 2/page 39	
	Four Corners 2/page 49	
	Four Corners 2/page 56	
	Four Corners 2/page 62	
	Four Corners 2/page 80	
	Impact Values/ page 10	
Impact Values/ page 16		
Impact Values/ page 33		

	Impact Values/ page 35	
	Impact Values/ page 39	
	Impact Values/ page 45	
	Impact Values/ page 54	
	Impact Values/ page 69	
	Impact Values/ page 81	

4	Foods and drinks	<p>Four Corners 1/page 30</p> <p>Four Corners 1/page 69</p> <p>Four Corners 1/page 91</p> <p>Four Corners 2/page 20</p> <p>Four Corners 2/page 77</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 63</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 64</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 88</p>	<p>Many food taboos and other prohibitions forbid the meat of a particular animal, including mammals, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, fish, crustaceans and insects, which may relate to a disgusting response being more often associated with meat than plant-based foods.</p>
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5	Rejecting the importance of family	<p>Four Corners 1/page 13</p> <p>Four Corners 1/page 65</p> <p>Four Corners 1/page 69</p> <p>Four Corners 2/page 72</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 23</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 25</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 69</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 70</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 73</p>	<p>They lived in separate houses and they never respect their families.</p>
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6	Showing disrespect for older people	<p>Four Corners 1/page 15</p> <p>Four Corners 1/page 44</p> <p>Four Corners 2/page 88</p> <p>Four Corners 2/page 90</p> <p>Impact Values/ page 21</p>	<p>Characters in the books were sometimes too busy or simply dismissed the elderly and their contributions to their community and family.</p>
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7	Excessive use of internet and mobile phones	Four Corners 1/page 33 Four Corners 1/page 56 Four Corners 1/page 86 Four Corners 1/page 95 Four Corners 1/page 99 Four Corners 2/page 12 Four Corners 2/page 33 Four Corners 2/page 39 Four Corners 2/page 48 Four Corners 2/page 85 Four Corners 2/page 87 Impact Values/ page 23 Impact Values/ page 36 Impact Values/ page 55 Impact Values/ page 59	In the texts of the mentioned textbooks, people were using such harmful devices in different occasions.
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Discussion

In the following section, regarding the instantiated data in the previous section, the categorized subthemes for inappropriate images and topics in the two books are debated to find enough counter/claims over appropriacy of their inclusion for Iranian learners of English.

In the following section, initially, the data analyzed within inappropriate images/pictures are discussed within four subcategories including A) boy-girl relationship, B) imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions, C) incongruent lifestyles, and D) the proportion of the male vs. female images in the two books.

A) The proportion of male vs. female images in the two books

Initially, the interesting point in the images of the two textbooks under the study was that the number of women was far more than men in the whole book. In both textbooks, Four Corners Series and Impact Value, there were eighty-three (% 61.48) pictures of girls and women, and fifty-two (%38.51) pictures of men. In response to the second research question, meanwhile, none of those women could be symbolized as a typical Muslim woman and nearly all were without Hijab or had an improper stance that could hardly denote care about other religions including Islam as well. As the authors of the books had claimed, they tried to familiarize learners with the customs and cultural traditions of various communities, but not even a single case of an image of a Muslim woman in the whole collections could not be detected. This incongruity between a female outlook and her religion could not only be noted in issues related to Hijab. Other incongruent religious norms were worthy of note as discussed in the second category for the images: Imbalance of religious norms.

B) Im/balance of religious norms as opposed to other religions

Despite the political views, Muslims are widely believed to be seen in almost every part of the world. A quick look at the books showed that Muslim as a religion could not be seen in the massive number of images in the two books. For example, in the first book -Four Corners Series-

Lesson One, the method of saluting among different tribes was shown only in five images (Fig 1).

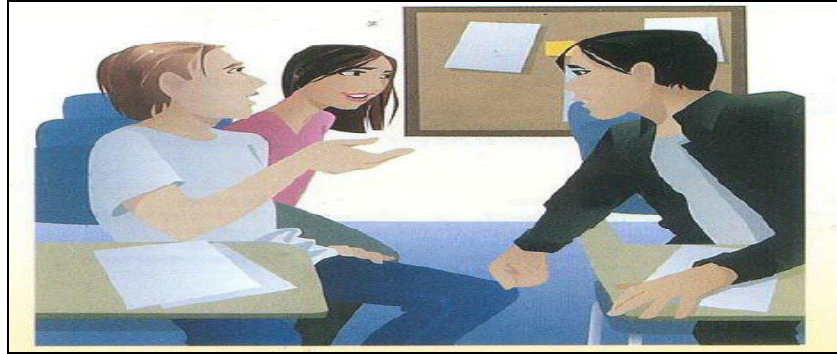


Figure 1. *Saluting among different nations (Four Corners)*

In this image, as shown in Figure 1, saluting was realized through three forms involving 1) shaking hands (with an emphasis on the shaking hands with the opposite sex), because in each of the three images the shaking hands in this lesson came from a man with a woman), 2) bending as the sign of respect, 3) hugging, 4) the kiss on the cheek and 5) stroking on the back, this could indicate a concern for a multiculturalism in this respect. Nevertheless, in Islam, hand shaking and kissing is banned between men and women but in most cases in both textbooks, men and women had such traditions and customs when they met one another.

C) In/congruent lifestyles

Another remarkable point in the images was a special attention to the education and promotion of western lifestyles. Subcategories regarding incongruent life-styles were improper appearance, clothes and make up. Here, one or two examples are given for a quick reference (Fig. 2 & Fig, 3).

Document: four Corners 2\unit 3 3
Code: improper appearance clothes and make up



Figure 2. *Improper appearance clothes and make up in unit three, lesson three (four corners two)*

Document: four Corners 2\unit 3 1
Code: improper appearance clothes and make up



Figure 3. *Improper appearance clothes and make up in unit three, lesson one (four corners two)*

As the specific examples and evidences indicated above, in some pictures, photographed women were carrying some musical instruments (Four Corners: p.24), which might not be in alignment with the local norms of social behavior in our Iranian contexts. This is so since in Iranian culture; it is not appropriate for women to sing or speak aloud in front of the strangers. Also, solo singing is prohibited for Muslim and Iranian girls and women in Iran. In Four Corners and Impact Values Series, as also specified in Table. 4. there were some pictures that showed girls were singing or playing musical instruments in public. In the selected sections of the two coursebooks, totally in five cases women and girls were singing a song in a group or alone.

D) Boy-girl relationship

Another conspicuous issue in the analyzed pictures of the two books were boy-girl relationship. A complete list of the codes and example cases are available in Appendix A. In this section, some examples are brought for a quick reference to this section (Fig. 4 & 5).

Document: four Corners 2\unit 3 2

Code: women's seeking advice from another sex



Figure 4. *An image of a man giving advice to his female colleague*

Document: impact values\unit 4 3

Code: women's seeking advice from another sex



Figure 5. *A scanned image of a little woman seeking advice from another sex*

In Unit 2, in Four Corners 1, there is a café and a boy and girl are speaking and laughing without the presence of their parents. Or in Impact Values, Unit 3, a boy asks a girl to marry to him and this ceremony happens in front of their friends and not their family members. Also, in Unit 5 from Impact Values, there are two young boys and two girls setting on a bench in the park and eating ice-cream.

Overall, in the mentioned course books, there were still lots of other conversations and situations in which boys and girls were talking to each other or going out to the party or park without the presence of their parents.

In the next section, the related subthemes for inappropriate topics are also deliberated to bring the evidences regarding language as well as non-language incongruences. Groupings for language indications of cultural invasion are discussed within eight separate subthemes.

A) Cross-gender Relationship

In the surveyed pages, there were lots of conversations between single boys and girls in different places and most of them ultimately led to the friendship as specified in Table 6. Or sometimes, boys and girls lived together in the same house without getting married, something which is called “white marriage” in our country. Also, in some cases, boys and girls were e-pals and they chatted via internet. In response to the second research question, these issues are in fact not compatible with our Iranian Islamic culture and the Iranian families will not accept such situations for their children.

B) Incompatible Jobs and Professions

Among some more popular jobs in the selected units was singling. Singing as a profession means performing in the theaters, TV studios etc. and taping those songs to be broadcasted and distributed among people. Meanwhile, erotic poems, and songs that contain vulgarity are forbidden in our country even if one sings for her/himself or among her/his Maharim (unmarriageable relations). Scholars of Islam do not restrict a woman from working outside of her home. In fact, there are jobs where women are required. For example, teaching women or female gynecologists, nurses etc. So, according to these rules, singing and being a model is forbidden for girls and women. But, unfortunately, in the mentioned pages, there were diverse jobs for women that were incompatible based on our cultural and religious rules, like singer, musician, model and even actress, chef, waitress and driver.

C) Inappropriate Habits

Some habits and daily activities are against our Islamic and Iranian culture. In the surveyed books, there were diverse case topics and situations for dancing, playing too much with the computer, drinking too much coffee, playing with the animals and pets, going to the night clubs, eating food in the restaurants and fast food centers and eating lots of snacks such as popcorn or potato chips or ice-creams are not acceptable as a proper activity but the researchers could find many of these examples in the textbooks (Table 6).

D) Talking about Prohibited foods and drinks

Some people abstain from consuming various foods and beverages in conformity with various religious, cultural, legal or other societal prohibitions. Many of these prohibitions constitute taboos. Many food taboos and other prohibitions forbid the meat of a particular animal, including mammals, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, fish, crustaceans and insects, which may relate to a disgust response being more often associated with meats than plant-based foods. In general, Islamic dietary law distinguishes between food and drink that are allowed (halal) and those that are prohibited by God (haram). Muslims are enjoined by their religion to abstain from eating certain foods. This is said to be in the interest of health and cleanliness, and in obedience to God. In the two books, there were instances as such regarding excessive talks over haram food and drinks as evidences in Table 6 above.

E) Rejecting the Importance of Family in Islam

The family, which is the basic unit of civilization, is now disintegrating in the best sellers. To the present researchers' views, Islam's family system brings the rights of the husband, wife, children, and relatives into a fine equilibrium. It nourishes unselfish behavior, generosity, and love in the framework of a well-organized family system. The peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued, and it is seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its

members. A harmonious social order is created by the existence of extended families and by treasuring children. Islam places great importance on ‘Silat Ur Rahim’ (keeping family ties) and being good to parents as emphasized in many Quranic verses.

“They ask thee, (O Muhammad), what they shall spend. Say: that which ye spend for good (must go) to parents and near kindred and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatsoever good ye do, lo! Allah is Aware of it.” - Surah (al-Bakara), Ayah 215

“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing.” - Surah (al-Bakara), Ayah 177

In Impact Series and Four Corners Series, most of the time young adults and teenagers are away from their family members. They live in separate houses and they never respect to their families. Such issues may have negative effects on the Iranian learners and may weaken the power of families and the relationship among the family members.

F) Showing disrespect for older people

Today’s world has greatly changed, with technology at the forefront of human communication. Between bustling schedules of juggling family life and work, in addition to reaching people through cyberspace as the main mode of connection, manners have begun to be forgotten. Instead of treating our elders with the appreciation and respect they deserve, many are often either too busy or simply dismiss them and their contributions to their community and family. In our Islamic Iranian culture also respecting elders is very important but unfortunately in the mentioned pages we can see that elders are ignored by the group of young people and this issue may effect on the Iranian learners.

G) Excessive use of the internet and mobile phones

Presently, mobile phones and laptop computers are being used everywhere because these devices do not use the physical cable/wire that is demanded for the communications purposes. Their demand for the electromagnetic radiation for receiving and transferring the data in the air; either it is a network or a sound data. Apart from other damages on health, such devices in today’s world make humans away from each other and they are harmful for the foundation of the families. In the pictures and texts of the mentioned textbooks, people were using such harmful devices in different occasions. This aspect was also apparent in many images as well.

In a further attempt for authenticating the results, based on the interviews with some experienced teachers, some concerns seemed to be common among most of them. Some teachers believed that there are some passages concerning the western culture that seems quite unfamiliar to the students and introducing them into our culture also is inappropriate. In such situations the teachers have to teach them superficially without elaborating on such topics leaving curious students' queries unanswered. Another common concern was the pictures that were considered inappropriate in our culture and the teachers just have had to ignore them with students noticing the trend in class, which had created curiosity to recheck for themselves, as some teachers noted. One teacher asserted that he often beat around the bush when facing with them. "Handling such great differences between THEIR culture and ours is so difficult for us.",

Mr. Reihani mentioned.

Another teacher, Mr. Mohammadi, cited teenagers as the situation getting worse when one was teaching through such books. He said some students were greatly curious about this unseen, strange and different culture in their books and no way was left for them but to face with such differences. Nevertheless, Mr. Mohammadi continued that family is not emphasized but not rejected in such books. Also, the elderly people are not disrespected, rather, respecting them is not that much emphasized and both of which are not desirable.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to prove that in the sampled course books, there were diverse mismatching topics and images. Within explored images, A) boy-girl relationship, B) imbalance of religious norms as opposed to other religions, C) incongruent lifestyles, and D) the proportion of the male vs. female images in the two books were conspicuous as contrary to our local cultural norms. As to topics included in the books, mismatching items were detected within seven main categories including A) Cross-gender relationship, B) disregarding the importance of family, C) excessive Use of Internet, D) Mobile Phones, and Computers, E) food and drink prohibitions, F) forbidden or inappropriate habits) incompatible jobs and professions, and H) showing disrespect for older people.

In this status quo, there might also be many other stances of incongruity as discussed by a number of ELT educators and researchers regarding the place of culture in EFL contexts. This study was in line with some other similar research studies inside the local contexts. In a recent attempt by Fatemi, Ghahremani Ghajar, and Bakhtiari, (2018), possible reasons behind marginalization of localized English language teaching materials were debated. Then a detailed account was given behind the attempts by the western governments in the colonial era to bring a gap between the glorious Islamic achievements in the past and present. This had been mainly projected through exclusion of Islamic heritage within language education system for the globe.

Considering the fact that lack of cross-cultural awareness may lead to misunderstanding in foreign language classrooms, however, we cannot have the total inclusion/exclusion of other cultures. It is observed that the cultural foci or contents of these textbooks are mainly western lifestyles rather than fulfilling an international audience outside the inner circles (Kachru, 2006).

What we see in the most commonly used language books in Iran could possibly indicate the mismatch between the common issues in books and the topics that are important for Iranian learners. Sadeghi (2001), in an adaptation, tried to examine the correlation and compatibility of the topics discussed by the Iranian and those that are commonly found in English books (including 10 collections of ELT materials in Iran). In addition to presenting a list of common topics in two groups, he showed that the most modest topics among Iranian youths had been either not available in the books or are among the least important issues. In this respect, the cultural orientation of these textbooks is based on the single culture in which there is a direct and explicit inclusion of western ideas which might negatively be transferred in the language classrooms. In this connection, localization of certain aspects of culture by adopting the target language culture without neglecting local cultural values is needed. Nevertheless, in another attempt by Abbasian, Kouhpayehzadeh, and Asgharpour (2015), it became evident that Iranian students at both under and post graduate levels had a positive view over inclusion of both source and target cultures within Iranian language instructional programs.

In another attempt, Seidi, Khatib & Maftoon (2018) acknowledged a similar cultural

survey on values embedded in the two ELT series- New Interchange and Passages textbooks- to examine their content in terms of global, local or global values and the impacts on the learners' social identity. Their findings specified that the most recurrent cultural values were 'U.S. superiority' emphasizing 'friendship' and 'party', and 'accomplishments through success'. Interestingly, they indicated that this had had a positive impact on the learners' opinion in that the majority of Iranian learners had maintained a positive cultural view in terms of social identity scores, which showed a stronger agreement with global cultural values in the imported textbooks. Now the argument here is that if the view of English as an international language is to be considered, therefore there is no need to have inclusion of western culture only and teach them in our language classrooms.

Many language teachers assume that the inclusion of culture is beneficial to language proficiency, therefore, they believe in the view that language is intermingled with culture and in this respect ideology on culture is transferred to language learners (Llosa, 2007). For example, signs of cultural invasion is regularly seen in teenagers and young learners, as for the customs, festivals, dressing, etc. On the other side, overemphasis on the target/foreign culture may have a negative impact on language learners who do not acculturate and as a result may quit language learning. In this case, fortifying the learners' intercultural communicative competence is an urgent need accordingly as current research has also suggested during the last decades (Koester & Lustig, 2012) due to this overloading of textbooks with western topics.

To protect the local culture from the conquest of foreign cultures, an appropriate nationwide cultural policy, including language policy is needed. The good example can be Japan and Chile educational officials who rejected the inclusion of western culture in their English teaching materials and they have separated teaching English from western cultural values. In Iran, most of English language textbooks used in language classrooms fall into the category of international/global textbooks and few are local. It is suggested that in Iran, not just in public schools but in all private centers/sectors for teaching the language design, some new series of textbooks and localized materials be developed to motivate learners to focus on their own cultural values as well as having a sound cross-cultural understating of the target culture. As contended by Tajeddin and Bahrebar (2017), localized course books lacked essential features as to aesthetic and sociological aspects as compared with global series. Even the Ministry can order special localized English books revised by native experts and publications. Moreover, language teachers need to be trained over what aspect of culture to teach along with their language teaching and to consider the age of learners because the differences between local and target culture may cause conflicts and paradox that may result from these differences and may have negative influence on identity or cultural identity of teenage learners.

The present study was done based on only two coursebooks, Four Corners and Impact Values Series and because of the shortage of time, *Four Corners* 1&2 and some chapters from Impact Values were selected for analysis. Future studies might be conducted on other recently imported coursebooks to extract a more realistic picture of what is still hidden in such teaching materials that might target the highly honored future youth of the Iranian community.

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Appendix A: A Coding manual for the emerged categories

