

The Relationship between Culture and ELT: The Representation of Aesthetic Sense Culture in “Oxford Progressive English”

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Abstract

The present research is basically a qualitative study using also quantitative methods which involve the role of culture in English language teaching (ELT) mainly focusing on Pakistani context. The research makes hypothesis that the Pakistani learners of English (especially from religious and rural cultural background) are demotivated to learn English because the textbooks developed for them by foreign textbook writers are culturally irrelevant. The study involved evaluation of “Oxford Progressive English” (OPE) textbook series for cultural relevance. For evaluation the data was collected from “Oxford Progressive English” series designed especially for Pakistani learners of English. An evaluation model was developed for the content analysis of the OPE textbooks for cultural relevance from Adaskou, Britten and Fashi (1990) and the data has been analyzed to explore in the textbook series the cultural gaps between the target culture and the learner’s culture in the aspect of aesthetic sense culture. Various instances regarding cultural contrast in these textbooks have been highlighted and their irrelevance to Pakistani culture has been explored. The findings of the research show that the OPE textbooks by the foreign authors mainly focus on the target culture with little knowledge and information of the indigenous or learner culture. Moreover, the learner culture is presented as negative stereotypes. The OPE textbooks are culturally biased and based on hidden curriculum to impart Western values among the young learners to westernize them.

Key words: ELT, Aesthetic sense culture or high culture, colonialism, hidden curriculum, motivation, textbook evaluation,

1. Introduction

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic where English is taught as a foreign language. Before the establishment of Pakistan, the Muslim community neither welcomed nor accepted the establishment of the British government in the Sub-continent. For them, the foreigners were usurpers, so they distanced themselves from their new masters and always approached them with suspicion and regarded their establishment of government in the Sub-continent as a missionary adventure. With the appointment of Lord Macaulay, a missionary from the British government, the suspicions of the Muslims turned into belief. He was deputed here as an education reformist, to preach the innocent souls of this region the Christian beliefs and the Western thoughts through English language. As a result, very few Muslims families were attracted towards English language, especially those who were closely attached with religion. The Muslim religious scholars of the age also found English language as a potential threat to their culture and social values. Moreover, no place was given to it in the syllabus of Muslims’ religious institutions (*Madrassas*).

The British developed their language policies to replace Persian language; the official language of the Mughal empire with English as the official language of the government. This was done for extra-linguistic purposes of colonization and imparting christian values. The purpose defined was to ‘civilize’ the heathens of the sub-continent. The British policy in this regard was highly effective as over fifty years after the end of British rule in South Asia, the English language flourishes and now it is considered a passport for entry into high governmental offices. Apart from this, there are certain pedagogical and social factors which are the root cause of prolonged antagonism against English. The English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks represent English, American and foreign culture and society. This foreign culture is the biggest hurdle in learning English for most learners from religious background. As this study also reveals, course contents of English course books are heavily imbued with the colours of Western culture and society. The writers and publishers of these books consciously or unconsciously transmit the views, values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings of their own society – usually the United States or the United Kingdom. The cultural contents of course books directly or indirectly communicate sets of social and cultural values, which are inherited in their make-up. So, the ambassadorial and ideological agenda of the ELT course books has been severely criticized.

The foreign language education has a long tradition of considering the cultural elements of the foreign countries. The purpose of the information about the foreign country and its culture is, of course, seen as an obligatory part of the cultural context of the language. This information helps students to understand the language in context. However, traditionally the focus is always on the very limited information about the foreign country and culture, often elitist aspects of the foreign culture (Nelson, 1995). In this elitist manifestation, the focus is on the country's 'high culture', often referred to as 'culture with a capital C' (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Sercu, 2002). In 1960s, it was 'big C' culture that was focused in the foreign language classrooms (Hadley, 1993).

Kitao (2000, as cited in Genc & Bada 2005) describes various benefits of teaching the target language culture in the foreign language classes.

- studying culture gives students reasons to study target language and making it meaningful.
- studying culture gives learners opportunity to study real people.
- studying culture helps learners to relate the abstract sounds and forms of language to real people and places.
- learning a foreign language requires high motivation on the part of learners and this can only be achieved by the inclusion of activities as singing, dancing, and role playing in the cultural context.
- studying culture provides learners a link with the native speaker.
- teaching culture develops tolerance for the other religions, ideologies, and cultures.
- studying culture makes us aware of the geography and history of the target culture (p. 74-76).

Although, there has been obvious need to include the cultural contexts in the foreign language education, there are raised several voices to argue against the teaching of culture in the foreign language pedagogy. In the English language teaching (ELT) challenges of cultural domination and cultural imperialism has been dominant and has received considerable attention. The reason is that English is generally associated with United States of America; a contemporary super power and United Kingdom; a former colonial power. Thus there is no surprise that the cultural values attached to these countries are not well received in the world (McKay 2002). Also there is some breach of logic when English taught for the purposes of international communication is taught in the guise of cultural contexts of some specific nations (Nelson, 1995; Alptekin, 2002). Some experts, however, approach the issue of teaching culture with some kind of reservation (Genc & Bada, 2005). And as we are often reminded of the fact that English is the most studied language and has got the status of lingua franca (Alptekin, 2002). Alptekin (ibid) refers about communicative competence instead of native like competence. The use of English in this globalize world is therefore for instrumental purposes such as professional contacts, academic studies, economic or commercial pursuits, etc. That is why Smith (1976, as cited in Genc & Bada 2005,) describing the status of English language, comments why there is no need of teaching foreign culture in the English language classes:

- it is not necessary for foreign language speakers to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language
- an international language becomes de-nationalized
- the purpose of teaching English is communicative so there is no need of teaching target culture in the foreign language classes
- mostly target language culture has different cultural values
- there is always a risk of 'cultural shock' or 'cultural assimilation' in the shape of target language culture teaching which engulfs source language cultural values
- there is always a risk of imparting a specific ideology of target culture through language
- through target culture teaching imperialists' or colonialists' designs are fulfilled (p. 75-77)

The learners' attitudes towards the foreign culture also play an important role in the learning or otherwise of any target language. This is clear from the Muslims' earlier attitudes and response to the coming of English language to their lands as a 'defensive suspicion'. They considered the spread of English language through the Western education system a means to propagate Christianity among the Muslims of those soils. Moreover, these countries at that time did not need English when their own languages like Arabic, Persian, Urdu, etc were fulfilling the required needs properly (Argungu, 1996).

Genc and Bada (2005) describes one major issue that is imparting of the English (the Western) values and ideologies in the guise of teaching culture. The Western onslaught in the shape of teaching culture through

literature, movies, etc. on the African, Asian, and the Arab values and cultures is very much obvious. The West has always tried to achieve its ulterior motives of imperialism and colonialism invading through language.

Phillipson (1992) sees the promotion of the British global course book as a government-backed enterprise with an economic and ideological agenda aimed ultimately at boosting commerce and the dissemination of ideas. Prodromou (1992) is also critical, but focuses more on what he sees as the alienating effects of such materials on students, and how they can produce disengagement with learning. Have neither foreign governments nor their state school employees been oblivious to the cultural content, which is found in materials, produced for global consumption. Hence, Moroccan teachers of English have expressed their concern about the danger of the erosion of belief in the ability of native culture and language to deal with the modern world (Hyde, 1994). Similarly, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have gone to the extreme of producing materials with almost no references to English-speaking cultures (Turkman & Celik, 2007).

Alkaire and Alkaire (2007) asserts that although most universities in the Muslim world publicly recognize and support the teaching of Western literature, the exploration of some Western literary themes (for example, self-determination, sexual liberation, and gender equality) is viewed negatively by authority figures as well as by some professors and students. This situation prevailed particularly in the Arab world which roused the Muslim scholars against the western onslaught on the Muslims' ideology, moral values and culture. But this situation was not confined to the Arab world only. Sililar reactions against English language and efforts to rise against the cultural onslaught of the Western education system have been taken place long before in many parts of Africa, and Asia. In these regions the language like Persian, Urdu and Punjabi, Malay, etc substituted the earlier vernaculars (Argungu, 1996). Describing the advantage of Arabic mixture in the English language for the Arab and Muslim world, al-Faruqi suggests that constant use of their Arabic form will help to shield the English speaking Muslims from the onslaught of materialism, skepticism, relativism, secularism, and hedonism that the last two hundred years have established firmly in English consciousness (ibid).

The earlier responses of the Muslims against English coming to their land was not welcoming one. The arrival of the English to the Muslim countries brought in the hearts and minds of the natives of the Muslim countries the suspicion of the missionary advancement (Argungu, 1996). Mazuri (as cited in Argungu, 1996, p. 3) "notes the dilemma of the English language in the Muslim societies in Africa". The Muslims were hostile to English in the very beginning. It was due to the severe opposition for the English language that the Muslims in the Northern Nigeria forced the architect of the British Imperialist Lugard to delay the enforcement of English language. He enforced the use of Hausa (the Muslim language used in the region), though later English was gradually introduced (ibid).

The policy of the British imperialists to spread their language and culture was not confined to Africa only. They planned to establish colonies in the Asian countries to utilize the vast range of resources here. The British introduced English language in Pakistan during the colonization of the Indian sub-continent. The British developed their language policies to replace Persian language; the official language of the Mughal empire, with English as the official language of the government (Rahman, 1991; 1996; Mahboob, 2002; Arshad, 2009). This was done for extra-linguistic purposes of colonization and imparting Christian values. The purpose defined was to 'civilize' the heathens of the sub-continent (ibid). The British policy in this regard was highly effective as over fifty years after the end of British rule in South Asia, the English language flourishes and "remains a passport for entry into high governmental, bureaucratic, military and social positions" (Mahboob, 2002, p. 16;).

Partition of the Indo-Pak Sub-continent in 1947 forced the British government to leave this region. But after the departure of the British government like many other ex-colonial countries, Pakistan also faced the issue of language policy. The issue of official language arose between two major languages, Urdu and Bengali. Urdu was the National language, and was recommended as an official language by the great leaders like Quaid-e- Azam (Governor General) and Liaqat Ali Khan (Prime Minister). Bengali was a provincial language like Punjabi, Sindhi and Pushto. Urdu- Bengali controversy was backed by some politicians to de-stabilize the new state (Mahboob, 2002). Before independence, as English was used as an official language and all the correspondence was done in English, it was an easy choice to avoid the conflict of language. So, English was given the status of official language. Haque (1993) notes that English was inevitable as most of the elite class was trained in English. Since 1958, Urdu was medium of instruction at primary level and English at the higher level of education (Mahboob, 2002). In 1969, Urdu was medium of instruction in East Pakistan and Bengali in the other part (ibid). In 1973, after the partition of Bangladesh, English was given once again the official status. In 1979, from Zia's regime of Islamization, Urdu was given an official status and medium of instruction (ibid). From 1988 to 1999 the medium of instruction was Urdu and English. The schools were given choice to opt English as

medium of instruction from class ‘ONE’ in the period of Benazir Bhutto (Rahman, 1991; 1996; Mahboob, 2002). In 1999, the president Pervez Musharraf “gave his first press conference in English and only responded in Urdu if the questions were asked in Urdu. This implies that status of English will be developed in his government” (Mahboob, 2002, p. 27).

English language has been established firmly in Pakistan and is being taught as a foreign language from primary to graduate level as a compulsory subject. The teaching materials used for this purpose are the textbooks, mostly written by the British and American authors. These authors explore mostly the positive aspects of the target culture in the teaching materials and the negative aspects or stereotypes of the learner culture are represented. Due to the biased presentation of the local culture and exploration of the target culture, in Pakistan, the learners from religious and rural cultural backgrounds are already suspicious towards English. They have stock negative responses and historical hostility towards it. When they find a representation of English culture through English course contents, they become more hostile towards it and begin to hate the language. The learners of English as a foreign language have no integrative motives to know about the culture, society or literature of the native speakers. The writers of the course of “Oxford Progressive English” (OPE) textbook series, which is being currently taught at the schools in the primary, elementary and secondary / O level, have tried to localize the teaching material in the course and apparently the contents of the books show a local colour. However, when the textbooks material was thoroughly studied, it was found that it is not only Western in nature but also sometimes totally opposite to the learners’ social and religious values. The writers have incorporated their thoughts, social values and worldviews, despite their claims that they prepared the material according to the needs, values and social background of the learners. The study shows that there is a lack of research for understanding the learners’ culture among the foreign writers of English course books.

To meet the different challenges posited by the English textbook writers, there is a dire need to check these textbooks against the cultural and pedagogical needs of the learners. For this purpose the textbooks evaluation is recommended by several theorists to meet the contextual needs of the students (Sheldon, 1988; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997). In this situation, there is a dire need to establish a wide and contextually relevant criteria to evaluate the textbooks to check their appropriacy or otherwise in a given context.

2. Results, Findings and Discussion

2.1 Aesthetic sense culture in OPE

Among the four definitions of culture used in foreign language teaching posited by Adaskou, Britten and Fashi (1990), the first definition is called aesthetic sense culture or high culture or capital (C) culture. In this definition there are four aspects of *media*, *cinema*, *music* and *literature*. Table: 22 shows that in the *media* aspect of aesthetic sense culture, there is total number of 48 instances of occurrence in all the four books of OPE related to learner culture, target culture and international target culture.

Table 1. Total numbers of entries of Aesthetic sense culture in the OPE textbooks

Description of the sense of Culture	Aspects of culture	Representation of the Learner culture in the Text	Representation of the Target culture in the Text	Representation of International culture in the Text
Aesthetic Sense or capital (C) culture	Media	4	30	24
	Cinema	1	7	0
	Music	1	2	7
	Literature	27	77	46
	Other etc.	0	1	3

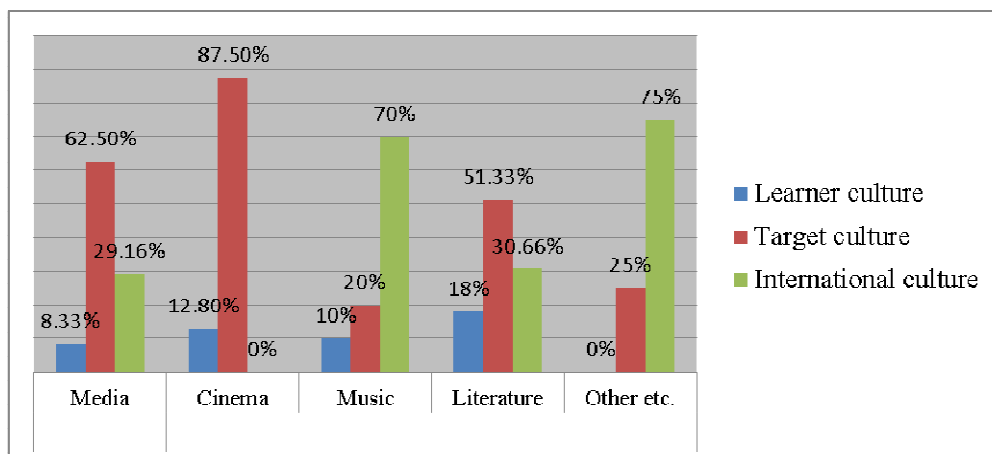


Figure 1. Representation of Aesthetic Sense Culture in the OPE textbooks

Table 1 shows that in the *media* aspect, the learner culture representation and number of occurrences in the text are 4 in number which form 8.33% of all the data in the *media* aspect of aesthetic sense culture. The target culture related texts of media are 30, comprising of 62.50% of the total while the international target culture related reading texts are 14, which form 29.16% of the *media* aspect in all the four books of OPE.

As Figure 1 shows, the representation of the learner culture related texts is minimum (8.33%) against the target culture (62.5%) which is highest and the international culture (29.16%) which is even greater than the learner culture representation. For example, in Oxford Progressive English (OPE) level 6 (Redford, 2005a), there is description of “Monsoon floods bring devastation” and “Rain decimates Sindh’s cotton crop” (p.79). The three texts in the reports mention bitter condition of the people as well as the crops that have been ruined by the floods and rains. In the Unit 4 titled Natural Disasters of OPE 6, the report says:

It has not stopped raining. It is terrible. Badin is totally ruined. There is not a morsel of food for thousands of people stranded here for the last two days. They are all at risk because no relief has yet reached them. Thousands of people who have been rescued from the floods are in desperate need of food and medicine. Many are crying for lost relatives (Redford, 2005a, p.79).

The purpose of this type of negative representation is to highlight the negative picture of the Pakistani society. They want to establish that the governmental and administrative institutions are unable to facilitate the public in a proper way. When the young readers come across such types of teaching materials, they develop negative feelings towards their own country.

On the contrary the representation of target culture or the international target culture is highlighted in the positive sense in order to promote good feelings and attitude towards the target culture and the international culture. For example there is a newspaper report in which Amy Johnson, English solo flyer is mentioned. In Unit 7 of OPE 6, the text ‘Amy Johnson---Is the 60-year search over’ starts as follows:

Amy Johnson was once known all over the world for her achievement in solo flying. In 1930, at the age of twenty-six, she became the first woman to fly ten thousand miles solo from England to Australia in her little green aeroplane, a de Haviland Moth. It took her twenty days. The first part of the journey from southern England to Karachi took her six days, which was a record (Redford, 2005a, p.153).

Now, the description of the lady solo flyer Amy Johnson is made as hero-figure who rendered a great job as a record holder, who died during a flight. She belonged to English community so she has been considered important enough to be entered in the textbook.

Next aspect in the aesthetic sense culture is *cinema*. In the OPE textbooks there are a few instances where the cinema aspect is presented. But the important fact is that there is not a single entry or reference in all the four books of OPE 5, 6, 7 and 8 where learner culture related *cinema* aspects are mentioned. For example in OPE 6, Unit 1, there are presented some highlights of the city of London. In this article there is mention of theatres and cinemas of London. “The city [London] has many theatres and cinemas” (Redford, 2005a, p.2). In OPE 7, Unit 5, there is made a reference of a film *Touching the Void* by the Hollywood director. In this true story of “British

climber, Joe Simpson, aged 25 and Simon Yates, aged 21, set out to climb the previously unclimbed west face of the notorious Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes in South America” (Redford, 2005a, p.134). There is also a reference of Robin Hood in the film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. “Robin Hood stole from the rich to give to the poor. Do you remember the film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*?” (ibid, p. 277).

2.1.1 Literary texts in the OPE textbooks

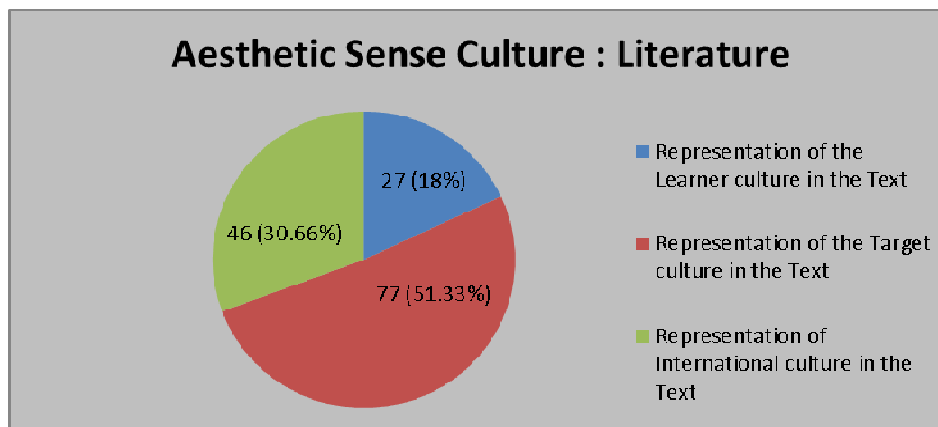


Figure. 2. Use of Literary Texts in the OPE Textbooks

The learner culture representation and number of occurrences in the texts are 27 in number which form 18% of all the data in the *literature* aspect of aesthetic sense culture. The target culture related texts of literature are 77, comprising of 51.33% of the total while the international target culture related reading texts are 46, which form 30.66% of the literature aspect in all the four books of OPE. It is clear from the figure no. 4 that the representation of target culture in the aesthetic sense literature, in all the texts of the four books of OPE 5, 6, 7 and 8 is greater than the learner culture literary texts. Even the international target culture representation of literature in all these books is greater than the learner culture representation. It shows that the learner culture has given lesser importance and space while choosing literary texts as compared to the target culture and the international target culture.

Literary texts are a great source of imparting cultural knowledge in the ELT contexts. These literary texts primarily convey the knowledge and information of the target culture or the international culture which is a hidden agenda and mission not only to impart but also to inculcate in the young learners the knowledge and information about the target culture. As OPE textbook series designed for the Pakistani learners of English is written and published by the British authors and publishers, there are many literary texts which are either based in British or American setting or the literary texts are from British or American authors which form 51.33% of the total literary texts. Same is the case with the international target culture related literary texts where the setting and content of the text basically deal with the load of international target culture representation which form 30.66% of the total literary texts used in these books. Both these aspects, target culture and the international culture carry greater number of reading texts as compared to the learner culture related literary texts (18%). That is why most of the literary texts carry cultural, political and religious load. Moreover they seem away from the pedagogical and cultural needs of the students. This information of the target culture and the international target culture is included on some agenda and is not necessary at all at this stage, for the local learners.

If we go through the OPE books, we come across many English and American writers, poets and dramatists whose texts have been included in these books. If we read through the OPE level 6, 7, and 8 there are a great numbers of excerpts and references from the dramas of Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of British origin like, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Tempest*, *Cymbeline*,. There are also references and extracts from the novels of Charles Dickens like *Hard Times*, *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Bleak House*. Moreover, the biography and a brief introduction of their works are also described in these textbooks to make the students aware from them. Thomas Hardy, S.T. Coleridge, Stevenson, Sherlock Holmes, John Mansfield, H. G. Wells, S.T. Coleridge, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Browning, Geoffrey Chaucer and many others have been included in the texts to facilitate in learning the structure, content, grammar and different aspects related to English language learning. Along with the American and British authors' works, many texts have been included from different countries like China, Canada, Russia, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Africa, Australia, etc. These texts

from target and international target culture form 51.33% and 30.66% respectively of the whole texts and references (see Figure no. 4).

The texts written by the foreign authors represent their outlook in content, themes, and setting of the texts. The contents of most of the texts represent the cultural outlook of the authors of that community and describe the events and achievements of their own heroes and legend figures. For example the plays of Shakespeare like *Hamlet and Othello* present the picture of the British environment and the political and cultural scenario of that time. The hero figures of Othello and Hamlet represent the kingdom and the Army of that time. Similarly all the novels of Charles Dickens and Hardy essentially tell us about the social conditions prevailing in England in the Victorian age. They tell us in the novels like *Hard Times, Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, Bleak House*, about the education problem, industrial problem, labour problem, and many more at the time of Queen Victoria. They are, in fact, the documentaries written on paper about the social life of England and hence representing the British cultural, political and social life. Moreover, the texts by the international target culture related authors or folk tales or myths of these countries also represent distant cultural values that are not easy to grasp by the young learners of Pakistani environment, due to the different cultural contexts. For example there is a story in the Unit 1: 'Great Inventions?' of OPE 8 that is set in China. China has a different belief from that of the Pakistani learners; China is a communist nation whereas we are a Muslim state.. The text *Sun Swallow* is taken from '*The Kite Rider* written by Geraldine McCughrean, which is set in China in the thirteenth century' (Redford, 2005c, p. 2). It is about a circus company whose star important member is a young boy named Sun Swallow. The Circus Master addressed the people gathered there in these words, "I bring you now Sun Swallow, who rides the wind, who soars with the birds, who can travel among the spirits of your ancestors" (ibid). The crowd was silent and stunned, looking the Circus Master distrustfully. Soon a kite taking the boy Sun Swallow in the air rose higher and higher. The text further says,

Meanwhile, high in the sky, the turbulence around Sun Swallow was fearful; a torrent of wind flowed like the river below. The lining of his stomach seemed to him to be screaming, and it was a long time before he realized that the noise came from the bamboo howlers attached to the kite: a desolate, ghostly howling which seemed to echo off the dome of the sky, It was a dismal, mournful, supernatural noise...They thought they were hearing the voices of their ancestors (ibid, p. 3).

Sun Swallow, feeling miserable, landed on a nearby hill, and the people followed him to ask about their ancestors. They asked him:

"Did you see my mother?"

"Did great-grandfather Xian give you a message?"

"Did Hop Li Yung poison my chickens?"

"Who did Chang want to inherit the business?" (ibid, p. 4).

Then Sun Swallow, who had flown in the air once again, dropped down the earth due to the crack of rope. Then voice of Mipeng, Sun Swallow's cousin raised in the air saying, "The spirits speak a language of their own! The dialect of Heaven is not the dialect of Earth. My messenger does not know the tongue of the spirits. But I, Tongue of Fire, will translate for you!" (Redford, 2005c, p. 2)). Further she said that their ancestors told about good time, "They say that a time of great peace is coming... but that there is danger in the river!"

It highlights that the writer in this story has tried to convey the young readers the Chinese beliefs about spirits, different gods and their direct interaction with the people. In a Pakistani society and culture, where Islam holds its firm position in everyday matters, such beliefs are wrong to inculcate or impart in the young learners. According to the teachings of Islam, the dead can only rise on the day of judgement. There they will be questioned for their good deeds and bad deeds, and due reward will be given them. According to the teachings of Islam the dead cannot speak. In this light to impart and inculcate such type of feelings and knowledge to the young learners of English, seem to put intentionally before the learners such questions which their religion does not appreciate. All this seem to impart the cultural beliefs as a hidden curriculum, so that the young minds can be spoiled, to make them tedious of their own religion and culture.

The cultural contents of course books directly or indirectly communicate sets of social and cultural values, which are inherited in their make-up (Stapleton, 2000). Eliot (1948) states, "Even the humblest material artifact which is the product and the symbol of a particular civilization is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes" (p.92). The literary texts in the OPE textbook series convey such themes that mostly do not focus on the learner culture. They have some hidden agenda to impart cultural, political and religious values among the learners. If there is representation of the learner culture in the texts, it basically focuses on certain stereotypes or negative

aspects present in the learner culture. The foreign language textbooks are a great source of imparting religious beliefs and values. In the OPE textbooks there are such contents that promote the Christian beliefs and values at length and cause the promotion of the authors' and publishers' beliefs in the guise of imparting international attitudes. This is done through a hidden curriculum so that the unwanted information may float easily and steadily in the minds of the innocent souls of the Muslim community of Pakistan.

3. Conclusion

The English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks like OPE represent English, American and foreign culture and society. This foreign culture is the biggest hurdle in learning English for most learners from religious background. As this study also reveals, course contents of English course books are heavily imbued with the colours of Western culture and society. The writers and publishers of these books consciously and as a hidden curriculum transmit the views, values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings of their own society – usually the United States or the United Kingdom. The cultural contents of course books directly or indirectly communicate sets of social and cultural values, which are inherited in their make-up. In Pakistan, the learners from religious backgrounds are already suspicious towards English. They have stock negative responses towards it, and have a historical hostility towards it. When they find a representation of English culture through English course contents, they become more hostile towards it and begin to hate the language. The learners of English as a foreign language have no integrative motives to know about the culture, society or literature of the native speakers. The writers of the course of “Oxford Progressive English” textbook series, which is being currently taught at the schools in the primary, elementary and secondary / O level, have tried to localize the teaching material in the course and apparently the contents of the book show a local colour. However, when the material was thoroughly studied, it was found that it is not only Western in nature but also sometimes totally opposite to the learners' social and religious values. The writers have incorporated their thoughts, social values and worldviews, despite their claims that they prepared the material according to the needs, values and social background of the learners. The study shows that there is a lack of research for understanding the learners' culture among the foreign writers of English course books.

It is due to all these reasons that the use of target culture in the foreign language pedagogy is criticized. Moreover, one major issue that has always been attached to the teaching of target culture in the foreign language classes, like English, is imparting of the English (the Western) values and ideologies in the guise of teaching culture (Genc & Bada, 2005). The Western onslaught in the shape of teaching culture through literature, movies, etc. on the African, Asian, and the Arab values and cultures is very much obvious. The West has always tried to achieve its ulterior motives of imperialism and colonialism invading through language (ibid). That is why the use of target language culture in the foreign language pedagogy was strictly criticized. The use of learner language culture in the foreign language classes on the other hand increases the confidence of the learners. They can apply background knowledge or ‘schematic knowledge’ in learning a foreign language in their own cultural context (Ariffin, 2006). There are many countries which use learner language culture in their teaching material. Giving examples from Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, Turkan and Celik (2007) describe various course books which are used in the language classes.

The present study proposes indigenous culture to replace foreign culture in English course contents of OPE textbook series as well as the other books taught as core textbooks for teaching and learning of English. The reason behind this proposal is to restore the confidence of the learners in English language and to make them less hostile towards it. It would be like replacing the stranger with familiar.

The results of the study and the evaluation of the contents of the books reveal that the books have been selected for the learners without taking the learners needs, objectives and attitudes into consideration. The themes of the book are not related to the learners' social environment, their history and religion. The themes of the book are less familiar to the learners and represent a different social set up. The setting of the book is also unfamiliar to the learners and shows a physical gap between the learners and the world presented in the book. The objects, scenes and social environment of the book represent a Western social milieu. The characters, which are given roles in this Western social set-up, are also western. Their habits, likes and dislikes, whimsicalities and attitudes are taken from the world of the authors not from the learners. The overall analyses of the contents expose that the authors of the book are very unaware of the learners' social, geographical and educational needs. They have depicted their own social world in the book and have neglected the learners' world.

As the learners of the courses under discussion have little interest in learning the Western culture and attitudes, therefore, the essentialization of target language culture does not seem convincing in this case.

The findings of the study highlight certain major and minor issues related to the compilation of English language textbooks for the Pakistani learners of English by the foreign authors and their irrelevance to the Pakistani context. This will, in turn, open new horizons for the English language textbook writers to come up with such teaching materials that best suit the pedagogical, political and religious needs and requirements of the Pakistani learners of English language.

The present study proposes indigenous culture to replace foreign culture in English course contents of Oxford Progressive English (OPE) textbook series as well as the other books taught as core textbooks for teaching and learning of English. The reason behind this proposal is to restore the confidence of the learners in English language and to make them less hostile towards it. It would be like replacing the stranger with the familiar.

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