

EXPLORING CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN ESL TEXTBOOKS IN PAKISTAN: A CRITICAL LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses textbooks from a cultural point of view. It focuses on investigating shared and contrasting perceptions of culture and values in a selection of literary texts, broadly written in the Western and Asian contexts, presented in ESL textbooks in Pakistan. Using a critical discourse analysis approach, the study examines the texts from field and tenor angles to emphasize how underlying themes in both groups of texts sharply contrast despite portraying apparently similar social, economic and religious circumstances. The analysis stresses upon the needs for cultural sensitivity on the part of authors. Also, it highlights how a critical perspective on the texts helped discover a different worldview of the respective contexts. The paper also refers to the major pitfalls of teaching foreign culture in language classroom in terms of language, identity, power and learners' schematic background.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; social practices; language and culture; textbook evaluation, ESL/EFL textbooks in Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are the most researched among language learning materials. According to Cortazzi and Jin, a textbook is useful if learners, teachers and textbook authors share the same cultural values. If they do not share the same cultural values, then at least they should be familiar with the cultural norms of one another (1999), making cultural representation in textbooks a very sensitive issue. Hence, stakeholders and teachers should be careful while recommending or designing textbooks that are used to teach foreign language and consequently foreign culture. In fact, culture provides grounds for contents, materials and class-discussion and also creates the practical situation in language learning and teaching (McKay, 2003). In Pakistan, most of the schools follow the textbooks which makes the teacher and the textbooks the most authoritative learning tools, and the culture transmitters in the classroom. For this reason, textbook evaluation is potentially helpful for both learners and teachers to achieve their goal of language and culture learning. The present study investigates the cultural representation in a locally designed ESL textbook used in Pakistan from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) view. Fairclough (1992) views CDA as a collaboration of strategies and techniques to examine texts and language use as social and cultural practices in a society. Taking the similar stance on CDA, the analysis in this paper draws on the differences in the representation of culture within a group of two groups of texts composed in different social and cultural contexts included in the textbook.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language and culture are interrelated, and it has been long argued that teaching a language involves teaching a set of cultural norms embodied in the target language. Byram et al. (1991) advocates that foreign language should introduce the target culture as well so that the

learner may be able to understand and use the language in its original context (p.18). However, many scholars (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Pennycook, 2010; Mahmood, Asghar & Hussain, 2012; Bahrami, 2015) have challenged this view by arguing that language learning would be motivating if learners are able to express their own culture using the target language. Hence, EFL/ ESL textbooks play a vital role in transmitting culture. For example, English language is taught in the traditional way in Pakistan, where the teacher and the textbook are seen as the primary source of information (Asghar, 2013), by that the students' cultural awareness mainly depends upon the textbooks available to them. For this reason, evaluating the cultural contents in EFL/ ESL textbooks is crucial in such contexts.

With the movement of 'World Englishes', Kachru (1985) proposes a model describing the spread of English worldwide based on the historical context, status, and functions of English (see Figure 1).

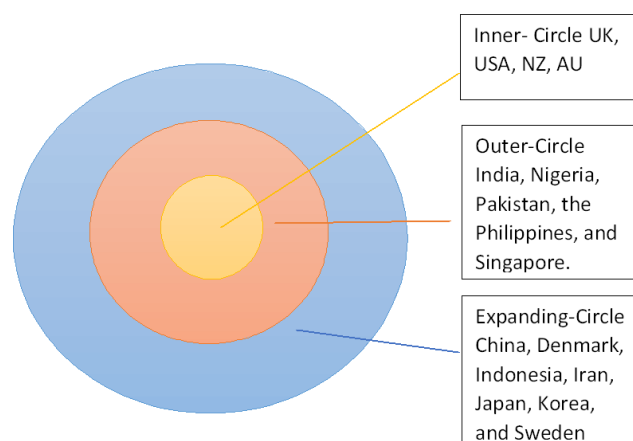


Figure 1. Three-circle model of world Englishes (Kachru, 1985)

As the figure illustrates, the societies where English is the first language are shown within the Inner-Circle, for example, the USA, the UK, and Australia. While the Outer-Circle includes the postcolonial Anglophonic contexts where English is considered one of the official languages (ESL). Pakistan is an example of a country in the Outer-Circle. It is worthy to highlight here that variations of English have emerged from these countries (Maftoon & Esfandiari, 2012, p.44). Finally, countries in which English is used as a foreign or international language (EFL) are placed in the Expanding-Circle, for example, Japan and Russia. Regarding EFL/ESL textbooks, the Inner-Circle countries are considered “norm-providers” (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006). That is, they publish ELT textbooks while the Expanding-Circle societies (EFL) are “norm consumers” (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006). This division in ELT material publication made researchers (e.g. Tiplady, 2003; Pennycook, 2010; Shakouri & Esfandiari, 2015) question the suitability of ELT materials to the Expanding-circle contexts. In fact, EFL textbooks would be considered a threat to the national identity of students in the Expanding-Circle contexts. Shakouri & Esfandiari summarize the concerns of cultural representations in EFL textbooks used in the Expanding-Circle contexts in a nutshell: “Overemphasizing the cultural weights and values [of the Inner-Circle societies] behind English textbooks and materials endangers the local beliefs of EFL learners” (2015, p.3). Consequently, some countries in the Outer-Circles started to establish their own local norms by publishing their own culture friendly ELT materials and became “norm developers” societies (Shakouri & Esfandiari, 2015). In the light of this phenomena, Tiplady (2003) and Khondker (2004) called for a Glocalized approach in ELT material. The approach urges ELT practitioners to “think globally and act locally” (Tiplady, 2003, p.4) which encourages ELT practitioners to adapt global ideas and structures to the local realities.

As a country which is placed in the Outer-Circle, Pakistan established provincial curriculum and textbook boards in the government sector to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the textbooks used in the educational contexts in Pakistan. The boards are responsible for producing, publishing, and evaluating textbooks. All textbooks used in the educational levels, whether published by the boards or private publishers, must be approved by the curriculum and textbook boards after a careful evaluation of the textbook (Mahmood, 2006; Mahmood, 2011).

Despite the spread of the curriculum and textbook boards in the four provinces of Pakistan, many studies emerged questioning the quality of the evaluation process in the boards (Mahmood, 2006; Mahmood, 2011; Asghar, 2014; Naseem, Shah & Tabassum, 2015). Mahmood, Asghar, & Hussain investigated cultural representation in ESL textbook *Step Ahead1* (2012). The textbook is published by a private publisher and is taught to grade 6 students at a school in Pakistan. Even though it is approved by the ministry of education, the textbook inadequately represented the Pakistani culture which alienated learners from their own culture as a result. The textbook failed to represent the culture of the Inner-Circle also, instead the textbook presented the Singaporean culture. This failure in representing a suitable culture to the learners made the researchers question the real audience/learners the textbook was written for; “Pakistani ESL learners do not learn English as Singaporean learners and they have nothing to do with Singaporean culture in the ESL learning process...The textbook *Step Ahead 1* has not been written as ESL textbook for Pakistani learners” (Mahmood et.al., 2012, P.40). Thus, the study suggested that ESL textbooks should have equal amount of the local culture and the foreign culture. Ahmed & Narcy-Combes claimed that there is a cultural gap between ESL learners in Pakistan and the foreign ESL textbook authors (2011). In consequence, their study investigated cultural reflection in three ESL textbooks (*English Alive, New Oxford Modern English & Oxford Progressive English*) written by foreign authors and taught in Pakistan. The results revealed that the three textbooks presented cultural stereotypes of the Pakistani society. The cover pages of two books revealed poor people. One picture showed a family in which the clothes of the children were full of patches, which indicated extreme poverty. Also, women were positioned in the stereotypical role of farming. The researchers recommended foreign textbooks authors to work together with local authors in designing ESL textbooks. Hence, both studies Mahmood, et. al. (2012) & Ahmed & Narcy-Combes (2011) suggested glocalization as a solution to the cultural gap in the ESL textbooks in Pakistan. This study tries to contribute to the field by investigating an ESL textbook written by local authors and published by local publishers in Pakistan.

RESEARCH DATA

The Textbook

The textbook is edited by the official textbook board and curriculum, and published by Punjab Textbook Board which is a government owned department solely responsible for publishing textbooks for all levels. The textbook is taught at higher secondary level in Pakistan, and it includes fifteen literary texts taken from English, American and Urdu literature. The literary texts have been abridged/simplified and/or translated from famous short stories written by known authors of English, French, Persian, Urdu and probably from some other languages.

The texts are comprised of two groups of texts (foreign and local texts). The size of the data is about 24000 words. Asghar (2013) has given a summary of the texts of the textbook by dividing the texts into two main groups: foreign and local texts (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of short stories in textbook (Asghar, 2013)

Foreign Texts		
1.	Button Button	A couple comes across an offer of a getting a big amount for pressing a button, which would result in killing a person somewhere in the world. The wife accepts the offer and gets insurance of her husband who apparently dies as a result of pressing the button.
2.	Clearing in the Sky	A father narrates to his son how sheer out of his dedication and hard work, he cultivated a piece of land at a very difficult mountainous location.
3.	Dark they were and Golden-Eyed	The earth has been destroyed and the mankind has started a new life at the Mars. One man keeps trying to go back to the earth despite the opposition of everyone, but one day decides to stay where he is.
4.	Thank you Ma'am	A woman treats a child with love and affection who tried to snatch her handbag to buy suede shoes.
5.	The Piece of String	A poor villager is falsely accused of stealing money. He spends all his life in clarifying his position but nobody believes in him until after a flood sweeps away everything except his grave.
6.	The Reward	A boy wants to be an acrobat, and is successful in achieving his goals after consistent efforts and after facing a lot of difficulties.
7.	I have a Dream	An abridged version of Martin Luther King's speech about freedom and equality for all mankind.
8.	The Use o Force	A sick child is not willing to let the doctor examine her throat. The c=doctor has to use force to examine the child's throat and prescribe the medication.
9.	The Gift of the Magi	A poor young girl sells her beautiful hair to buy a strap of watch which was the most valuable asset of her husband. On the other hand, the husband sells the same watch in order to buy golden hair clips for his wife.
10.	The Angel and the Author – and Others	At a Christmas eve, the writer humorously and sarcastically talks to the Recording Angel about the details of his trivial acts of charity in order to be rewarded hereafter.
Local Texts		
11.	The Gulistan of Sa'adi	Short stories in classical Iranian context to highlight wisdom of everyday life.
12.	The Foolish Quack	A foolish villager tries to treat people without using common sense and receives punishment by people after killing sick woman.
13.	A Mild Attack of Locusts	Apparently in a colonial context, a white family, with the help of local population, tries to save the crops from the attack of locusts. They could not save completely but still they are contented that they could some part of their assets.
14.	God be Praised	A poor clergyman finds it hard to keep both ends meet. He spends whole of his life expecting God to sort out his difficulties – especially the marriage of his daughters. Apparently it seems to happen.
15.	Overcoat	A well-dressed young man meets his end while he was strolling on the Mall. During his postpartum, it was discovered that under his precious overcoat he was in rags.

By foreign texts, Asghar means the texts were written largely in Western background including American, British, French and few other European contexts. The local texts comprise of short stories mainly written in Asian contexts, most probably in Pakistani, Iranian and Middle Eastern contexts. Since the textbook does not make geographical or historical references to the texts, these assumptions were made either because the author or the title of the short story was well-known (texts 1, 3, 5, 7, 9) or because there were clear references to the specific cultural contexts as in case of text (texts 11, 14, 15). In some cases, it was possible only to guess the cultural context through certain clues in the texts (text 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13). we base our analysis of the texts following the same division of texts.

Approach and framework of the analysis

This study examines a collection of literary texts from Western and Asian cultural contexts following Fairclough's (2003) views on representation of social events. Fairclough (2003) points out that when representations are generalised or abstract, we need to look particularly closely at how things are being classified at the 'classified schemes' to classify a particular vision (p.138). He elaborates that classification schemes include an implicit division between economic progress; social cohesion and social fragmentation; a division of the world. He also claims that like the choices in the representation of processes, there are choices in the representation of social actors who are usually participants in clauses, though all of the participants may not be social actors (p 145). In order to discover a vision of the social perspectives in the texts, we broadly consider similar classified schemes in our analysis.

In the critical analysis of the texts, our major concern is to look at various participants as social actors. We look at them in terms of their economic, societal and religious perspectives. We also look at the texts through the participants and circumstances as well as various processes associated with them to explore the following themes and sub themes which emerged from the analysis:

- Social fragmentation in the texts – rural/urban perspectives
 - What are the underlying themes in both settings?
 - What are the aspirations and problems in both settings?
- Economic circumstances in the texts
 - What are the economic circumstances/problems/issues?
 - What solutions are available?
 - How does economic division influence the moral outlook of individuals?
- Religious circumstances in the texts
 - How are the concepts of God and divinity reflected in the texts?

The analysis uses the framework of *field* to look at the contents of the stories in order to investigate what kind of participants are important and what kind of processes have been associated with them. At times, the analysis also takes into account dialogue patterns through a *tenor framework*. However, instead of using *tenor* between writer and reader, it looks at *tenor* between the characters by focusing on the relation among the characters. For reason of space and to concentrate on the social aspect of the discourses of the texts, the analysis generally digresses from the textual level analysis and mainly focuses on the discourse and social practices as constructed in the texts. We also find it more convenient for readers to analyse and discuss the arguments in the same section rather than traditionally postponing our analytical comments in a separate section under the heading of discussion to avoid unnecessary repetition of facts and arguments.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Social Fragmentation: Rural Life vs. Urban Life

Two foreign texts, *Clearing in the Sky* and *The Piece of String*, represent the rural life in the foreign texts. *Clearing in the Sky* depicts American rural life whereas *The Piece of String* is in the French rural background. As it is shown in Table 2, there are four male active participants in these texts and one female non-active participant in *Clearing in the Sky* who is only verbally mentioned by the main participants.

Table 2. Rural life- foreign texts

Texts	Active participants		Non-active participants		Power relation (high)		Power relation (low)		Financial circumstance s (high)		Financial circumstance (low)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>Clearing the Sky</i>	2			1	1		1		2	1		
<i>The piece of a string</i>	2		1		2		1		2		1	
<i>Total</i>	4	0	1	1	3	0	2	0	4	1	1	0

In text 5, there is a large number of non-active male participants with no involvement in the action of the plot. Therefore, they have not been included in (Table 2). There are only fewer and vague references to female participants in these texts. Table 2 shows that the rural setting in the foreign texts is comprised of mainly male dominance with only one non-active female referred in contrast to 4 active male participants. Out of 4, three participants maintain high power relation with other participants; 5 out of 6 participants hold high financial status in the society.

Content analysis of the texts confirms these statistics. The inhabitants of rural society in both texts appear to be prosperous and happy. The family in *Clearing in the Sky* does not seem to have any worries regarding their living, rather they are quite settled and satisfied with their life. The father did have a tough life as countrymen may have in an agricultural profession, however, he always had the reward of his toil and had been successful all his life:

We raised corn, beans, and pumpkins here,” he continued, his voice rising with excitement – he talked with hands too. (387-9).

And we raised more than a barrel of corn to the shock. (392-3).

The first sentence of *The Piece of String* indicates a significant social factor that there are rich people in the village:

At the end of market day, the rich people with vehicles of all kinds, carts, gigs, wagons, and dumpcarts gathered at a great big hall for a great meal. (777-9)

The theme of the sentence in above example is “at the end of the market day”, which refers to the accomplishment and end of a task, followed by the theme of the sentence which is mainly related to the details of the accomplishments made at the end of the day. The syntax structure denotes optimistic tone of the whole market day’s productivity. The rich people are

associated with “vehicles of all kind”, another symbol of resourcefulness and independence in transportation; reference to people’s gathering, in “a great big hall for a great meal” reflects some sort of celebration to enjoy the end of a day which made people rich.

Similarly, the topics of discussion in *The Piece of String*, refer to the rural life and its issues, which probably, might be universal in rural areas all over the world. However, like the American dream of success, French villagers are also very optimistic about their lives and circumstances. They make references to their success and weather which is not favourable for wheat, but still favourable for “green things”. Such an optimistic view is rare in the rural society depicted in the local texts. In *the Piece of String* there are references to a variety of foods available in the dinner, which echoes the general prosperity in the society:

There were chickens, pigeons and legs of mutton in the roast and an appetizing odour of roast, beef. Beef and gravy dripping over the browned skin, which increased the appetite and made everybody’s mouth watered. (779-782).

On the other hand, there are four texts in the local texts that represent Pakistani/Eastern/Third world rural culture (Table 3). These texts include *The Gulsitan of Sa’di* (in Persian context), *The Foolish Quack* (apparently in Arab context), *God be Praised* (in Pakistani context) and *A Mild Attack of Locusts* (apparently in Asian/African context).

Table 3. Rural life- local texts

Texts	Active participants		Non-active participants		Power relation (high)		Power relation (low)		Financial circumstances (high)		Financial circumstance (low)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<i>The Gulsitan of Sa’di</i>	9			1	4		5		5		4	1
<i>The Foolish Quack</i>	5			1	3			1			5	1
<i>A Mild Attack of Locusts</i>	3	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	
<i>God be Praised</i>	3			3	3			3	2		1	3
Total	20	1	1	5	11	1	6	4	8	1	11	5

Table 3 shows that among 25 participants, 20 male actors are active as compared to only one active female actor which denotes the dominance of male members in this rural setting. Eleven participants maintain high power relation with other members of society in contrast to only one female participant with high power relation. She maintained this power relation mainly with domestic servants. In terms of financial strength, nine participants have material prosperity (and hence financial independence) which is more than 50% of those participants who belong to low financial group. This financial difference is remarkably contrasting with the rural setting in the foreign texts where ratio between rich and poor class is 4:1 respectively as compared to the ratio of 9:16 in the local texts.

Though, like the foreign texts, the texts in local texts also vary in terms of their geographical situation, these situations have certain cultural and financial issues common among all the

four texts. The rural life in *The Foolish Quack* is marked with people who are as poor and as ignorant as to rely on an unknown quack. This apparently suggests these people's inaccessibility to proper medical treatment even for serious illness. Unlike the vehicles in *The Piece of String*, there is no means of transportation except camels in *The Foolish Quack*. The text *God be Praised*, in the context of Pakistani rural setting, depicts the problems of a poor family. Poverty is the theme of the story and the main issue out of poverty is the marriage of two daughters for whom parents have to arrange a decent dowry. This problem is completely different from the problems discussed in the foreign texts. Basic problems as depicted in *God be Praised* show Abdul's (a male character) financial miseries where his family had to live on donations.

On Thursday, when each of the girls brought a small portion of sugar on bread, Zaibunnisa would arrange for at least two baskets. These small baskets were used to store morsels of home baked bread. (1628 - 30)

But, there was yet another problem. Besides bread to fill their bellies, they also needed clothes to cover their bodies. Chaudhry Fatehdad used to present new clothes to Maulvi Abul once a year after every harvest. Whenever these clothes came, a tailoring shop would spring up in Maulvi Abul's house. Zaibunnisa, with the assistance of Mehrun and Zabda and Shamsun, would cut them into smaller outfits for the younger kids. If he ever received some extra money, this bonus would usually be locked up in a tin box. (1632 - 39)

There is a high power-relation among various sections of society. Abdul, being a religious leader, enjoys respect and authority in the society. The shoe maker reduces the price of the shoes sheer out of respect for Abdul. Likewise, Shamim (a male character), an entrepreneur, requests Abdul to inaugurate his new shop sheer due to Abdul's leading religious position. Shamim does not consider the *Chaudhry* (a male character) who as the chief of the village enjoys supreme authority. However, Abdul's respect in the society is more superficial because the whole community does not support in his worries regarding his family unless the *Chaudhry* compels one of them.

The *Chaudhry* maintains a high power relation with everyone in the village. He can even reprimand them (1611 – 12) and can compel Shamim to send proposal for Abdul's daughter:

“Congratulations, sir. At last my efforts have proved fruitful, he said in a low voice. “Yes, Chaudhry Sahib. I am thankful to you and grateful to Almighty Allah.” (1779 – 80)

Thus it is the Chaudhry who convinces Shamim to marry Mehrunnisa (a female character). It also reflects how people can intervene in each other's personal life, and offer help in various forms. It is different from the social rural life in the Western texts where people may talk about others but they do not physically or practically take part in offering solutions to the problems. The father in *Clearing the Sky* had discouraging comments from his village fellows and it was only his wife who helped him in his accomplishments. In *The Piece of String* the villagers did not try to console him during his period of stress, and could believe in the truthfulness of the main character only after his death.

In *A Mild Attack of Locusts*, the text depicts a social set up marked with a strong hierarchical order, like in *God be Praised*, where there are servants, cook boy, houseboy and labourers, who are treated strictly according to their social and financial status. All of them constitute the local population with the white rulers who shout at them and order them. Despite having

“Western characters” as colonial masters in this text, the social system is very much Asian in its structure.

Hence, it might be inferred that the Western rural life depicted in the foreign group of texts is comprised of financial prosperity, social equality and circumstances which are in favour of the inhabitants providing them with an optimistic approach towards life. On the other hand, rural life in the local texts is comprised of poverty, ignorance and miseries where people suffer from issues such as law and order with survival issues in their everyday life. These texts depict a set up where a king can take life of a boy for his own life (*The Gulistan of Sa’adi*); where instead of consulting a doctor as in *The Foolish Quack*, people rely on a foolish quack for treatment of serious diseases.

Social Fragmentation: Aspirations and Problems

Different social fragmentation in both groups of texts resulted in different perspectives in social scenario. Table 4 gives an overview of the types of aspirations and problems the participants in both groups have shown.

Table 4. Aspirations and problems on the texts

Foreign Texts	Aspirations	Worries/problems
Button Button	Trip to Europe; buying a cottage on an island	Whether to push the button or not
Clearing the Sky		Nothing particular
Dark they were and Golden-Eyed	Returning to Earth	How to survive on Mars
Thank you Ma’am	Buying suede shoes	
The piece of String		How to declare oneself no guilty
The Reward	How to become an acrobat?	How to overcome hurdles on way to success
I have a dream	Achieving equality for everyone	How to overcome hurdles on way to success
The Use of Force		Have the child examine by the doctor
The Gift of the Magi	Buying expensive gifts for spouse	Possible reaction of husband on losing hair
The Angel and the Author	Charity on Christmas	
Local Texts		
The Gulistan of Sa’adi	Enforce justice	Curing the king; quieting the slave
The Foolish Quack	Curing people with self-devised method	Saving from public anger
A Mild Attack of Locusts		How to save crop from the attack
God be Praised	Getting two daughters married	Managing basic living expenses; poverty
Overcoat	To enjoy life as a carefree person	Poverty

In the foreign group of texts people have very different problems as compared to that of local texts. In one of the Western texts, *Button Button*, Norma’s dreams are a trip to Europe and buying a cottage on an island. In *the Gift of the Magi*, the biggest issue is buying a Christmas

gift which the couple cannot afford because of their low income. In *The Reward* though economic circumstances are not referred clearly, the way Gorgios chooses his career and succeeds in the long run reflects a strong economical set up where efforts and hard work always bring productive results. Having success with low resources indicates that even poor people can reach their desired destiny if they strive in the right direction.

In *The Use of Force* the parents seem to be poor because they cannot have proper heating in the house:

“You must excuse us, doctor; we have her in the kitchen where it is warm. It is very damp here sometimes”. (983-5).

However, despite this they do not seem to worry about their basic essentials as can be seen in *God be Praised* where Abdul has to make great sacrifice to buy shoes for his daughter:

If it was possible to get the necessities of life from the heavens through prayer, Maulvi Abul would have prayed to Allah for a pair of shoes for his Umda, the youngest in the family. At night he consulted his wife. But instead of replying, she silently lifted a corner of the quilt to expose Umdatunnisa's small, bare feet. Seeing those dainty feet, Maulvi Abul burst into tears like a child.

Next day, after his morning prayers, he went to the shoe maker and paid him five rupees and twelve annas and bought the shoes. Leaving his shop, he vowed, with Allah as his witness, never to use the powdered tobacco that he loved. (1595-1604).

The contrast between the young boy in *Thank You Ma'am* and the young man of *Overcoat* is also significantly sharp. The former tries to snatch a hand bag in the market, and instead gets food and money in the long run, whereas the later meets his final destiny with empty pocket and wretched clothes.

In the Western texts, we see poverty in different forms but the problems arisen from poverty are more or less similar. Considering the unfulfilled dreams of various participants in the foreign texts in table 1 reveals that poverty, in the Western texts apparently leads towards unethical and illegal actions as in case of Norma in *Button Button* who is willing to kill an unknown human being to fulfil her dreams or the young boy in *Thank you Ma'am* who is tempted to snatch handbag to buy suede shoes.

On the other hand, in the local group of texts the issues arisen from poverty are worries about food and everyday essentials as well as long term responsibilities like marrying daughters, having some funds for rainy days etcetera. This group of texts depicts societies with survival issues because of poverty, whereas the definition of poverty in the foreign texts is different from mere survival issues.

Role of Religion

The Western texts generally do not discuss religion. There is only one text *The Angel and the Author – and Others* which takes into account the issue of religion in the sense that it involves recording angel which is a religious concept. The text reflects certain moral behaviours of English society.

- i. People relate morality to religion due to which the narrator, on his journey to the heavens, thinks of his charity acts and meets the Recording angel. It is post-

Christmas period and he has been recording charity acts of people which made him look *weary* (2041).

- ii. People seem to be concerned with charity acts near some religious festival like Christmas:

“You see at Christmas time,” I went on, “all we men and women become generous, quite suddenly. It is really a delightful sensation.” (2047 – 8)

That’s what I like about Christmas, it makes everybody good. (2058)

- iii. Generosity is considered a noble act as the above quote shows.

- iv. At times people enthusiastically participate in charity acts:

“It is the first Christmas number that starts me off,” I told him; “those beautiful pictures --- the sweet child looking so pretty in her furs, giving Bovril with her own little dear hands to the shivering street Arab; the good old red-faced squire shovelling out plum pudding to the crowd of grateful villagers. It makes me yearn to borrow a collecting box and go around doing well myself. (2050 – 55)

- v. In general life, people do noble acts but may be just to pretend noble or to add number to their good deed list.

“Last week I sent a dozen photographs of myself, signed, to a charity bazaar.” (2081 – 2)

There were other noble deeds of mine. I could not remember them at the time in their entirety. I seemed to have done a good many. But I did remember the rummage sale to which I sent all my old clothes, including a coat that had got mixed up with them by accident, and that I believe I could have worn again. (2104 – 8)

In other texts, religion is not mentioned even indirectly rather the good social deeds are referred as moral and ethical side of ideal human behaviours. In *Button Button*, Arthur strongly resists Norma’s act of pressing the button on moral grounds, and does not show any concern with religion or consequences of such a cruel act in the life hereafter:

“How about some baby boy is Pennsylvania?” Arthur countered.
“Some beautiful little girl on the next block?” (146 – 7)

“The point is, Norma,” he continued. “What’s the difference who you kill? It’s still murder.” (149 – 50)

In *The Piece of String* the text contains a strong moral outlook of the society depicted in the story. It is a society which believes in strong moral values as referred in the text:

What grieved me as much was not the thing itself ----- as the lying.
There is nothing so shameful as to be called a liar.” (848 – 9)

Hubert left his shame and disgrace to his self esteem and character
(852)

The grave of Hubert withstood the havocs of the flood. (864 – 5)

The people do not believe in Mr Hubert because he could not prove his innocence transparently. He loses his respect, even in his own eyes because he is being viewed as a liar and all his life he keeps on clarifying. His grave remains intact in the flood which reflects the high moral value attached to truth in that society. However, considering this respect having sheer moral value rather than religious makes it ironic in the sense because it denotes that a person's truth is not reliable until proved by some divine signs. These divine signs may be related to religion but the general impression emphasizes that of morality rather than religion. In *I have a Dream*, the writer does talk about equality and justice but mainly in the perspective of humanity and social liberty, though there are few religious references such as ‘created’ or ‘God’s children’:

“...that all men are created equal.” (1360)

I have a dream, that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of
former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit
down together at the table of brotherhood. (1361 – 3)

Land where my fathers died (1393)

...we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children,
black men and white men, will be able to join hands ... (1411 – 3)

All these moral values are as natural and as familiar to any society as can be to that of Pakistani. The same zeal for good deeds around religious days and duality behind the noble acts is perhaps a universal trait of human behaviour. The same desire for equality can be observed in any social set up in the world. However, when we view these issues in the perspective of religion in the textbook, it shows how Western texts view religion as more related to social side of life by doing good deeds for human beings, with a slight or no concern for the church in the real sense. God in the Western text does not seem to be responsible for the benefits of earthly populace rather the populace themselves. If there is a concern for religion it is different from the traditional sense and is more individual and earthly than a collective or heavenly phenomenon.

On the contrary, in the Pakistani texts, the concern for religion seems to be pivotal and reflected in the background all the time. In *God be Praised*, the religion is one of the central themes, not only because of the religious position of the main character but also because it is reflected in the social life of the members of the society. There are frequent references to God and religion in this story:

After each such act, he used to say: "Please don't pray for me. Remember the Benevolent Almighty Allah. (1575 – 6)

But the same Maulvi Abul, who never made a single mistake, began straying one Surah of the Holy Quran to another. Sometimes, unconsciously, he repeated the same chapter twice in the same part of prayer. (1607 – 10)

If I am lying, the curse of Allah is on me and may I drown in some pond. May I even be deprived of a decent burial!" (1592 – 4))

But Chaudhry Fatehdad's censure was purely religious. (1616)

Conscious of the ever increasing responsibilities of her husband, Zaibunnisa too had started teaching young girls of the village the Holy Quran. (1626 – 8)

After each such act, he used to say: "Please don't pray for me. Remember the Benevolent Almighty Allah. (1574 – 6)

The gay songs that usually accompany wedding ceremonies were not sung for; after all, this was Maulvi Abul Barkat's residence. (1793 – 5)

In the textbook, though God has been referred in several ways, with attributes and in the form of unseen power. However, the reference to God or Allah in frequency count occurs 17 times. The context of the use of the word "God" or "Allah" generally shows a complete reliance on Him believing that He is active and responsible for everything regarding human beings. On the other hand, the word God occurs nine times in the Western texts. In these examples, God appears to be more static and aloof from human's life except in line 1489. People in the above examples do refer to God as Someone Who exists. But they do not take Him as the One who would shape their ends. This is in sharp contrast with Pakistani texts where God is literally as well as virtually treated as Almighty.

CONCLUSION

The study explored cultural contents in a locally designed ESL textbook used in Pakistan at tertiary level. The results revealed that even though the textbook has been composed by Pakistani editors, the textbook has failed to represent the local culture. Rather than globalizing the contents, the textbook was full of foreign texts, and only one text presenting Pakistani culture. More than that, the text presented a stereotypical view of the Pakistani culture i.e. a culture where people are so poor to the extent that marrying off girls is considered the first solution to poverty. The analysis above highlighted that although both groups of texts (foreign and local) seem to have presented similar situations of poor rural settings and everyday life of middle class contexts, there were number of remarkable differences between foreign and local texts. First, the social scenario in both groups of texts (foreign and local) largely differs with each other. The group of foreign texts depicts rural society comprised of prosperity and optimism, opposite to the rural society in local texts which is comprised of poverty, ignorance and miseries. Second, the problems arising out of low economic condition are also very different in both groups of texts. Apart from male actors having captured the dominant position in both groups of texts, a misery in the foreign texts is likely to be viewed as a luxury in the local context mainly due to financial

differences. Lastly, both groups of texts have very different approaches towards religion where the foreign texts view God as a static power who does not intervene in the human affairs, while the God in the Pakistani texts is actively involved to influence the human activities.

In pedagogical perspective, the readers of these texts are learners in teen years where they are consciously forming their own worldview. Such a contrast in social conditions and priorities may create power relation with the Western societies by placing it at an advantageous position as compared to their own, which is rather undesirable in many ways, particularly in financial terms. In consequence, the text created a gap between learners' knowledge of the worlds and the texts. From the viewpoint of glocalization, texts and activities should not offer a cultural clash with the learners' existing social knowledge of their own worlds. In fact, a glocalised textbook must blends or adapts two cultures, and one of the two must be local. Thus, lack of knowledge of cultural background may cause cultural inaccessibility to the texts and consequently learners may have false perception of the world. This cultural inaccessibility at times not only disempowers learners but also teachers and makes the learning process stagnant and lesser useful, if not completely futile. To this end, the researchers advocate that the textboard should give a careful attention to the representation of the local cultural suitability of the texts. It is agreeable that there should be a gradual exposure to foreign cultures, however, the local culture should not be altogether put aside in language textbooks. Thus, it is recommended that ESL textbooks contain comparable amount of local (i.e. Pakistani) culture of the learner if not equal amount to the foreign culture.

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