

National Symbols and Linguistic pedagogy: A Critical Examination of Patriotic Elements in First- Grade Intermediate English Textbooks in the Iraqi Educational Context

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Abstract:

This research delves into examining how Iraqi national symbols and elements of patriotism are portrayed in textbooks used in Iraqi first grade intermediate schools. The study utilizes a mixed method approach incorporating both quantitative analyses to assess the presence and nature of content, in these educational materials. The key findings reveal a lack of national symbols and stories in these textbooks, which could have a significant impact on students perception of their national identity and cultural heritage. Emphasizing the importance of including elements in language education to in still pride and strengthen ties to one's background the study also explores the implications of this cultural gap within linguistic teaching methods. It stresses the necessity for an educational content that respects and represents both global and local cultures equally. This balance is crucial for cultivating a worldview among students while upholding their sense of identity. Providing suggestions for curriculum developers and educators the study advocates for an approach that reflects cultural perspectives in language education materials. By addressing this disparity in content it aims to enhance learning experiences and reinforce students connection, to their national identity alongside promoting global awareness.

Keywords: *National symbols, patriotic elements , Linguistics Pedagogy ,Iraqi Schools.*

الرموز الوطنية والتربية اللغوية: دراسة نقدية للعناصر الوطنية في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية للصف الأول المتوسط في السياق التعليمي العراقي

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الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة فحص كيفية تصوير الرموز الوطنية العراقية وعناصر الوطنية في الكتب المدرسية المستخدمة في المدارس الإعدادية للصف الأول في العراق. تستخدم الدراسة نهجاً مختلطاً يدمج تحليلات كمية لتقييم وجود وطبيعة المحتوى في هذه المواد التعليمية. تظهر النتائج الرئيسية نقصاً في الرموز الوطنية والقصص في هذه الكتب المدرسية، مما قد يكون له تأثير كبير على إدراك الطلاب لهويتهم الوطنية وتراثهم الثقافي. من خلال التأكيد على أهمية تضمين عناصر في التعليم اللغوي لتعزيز الفخر وتعزيز الروابط بالخلفية الشخصية، تستكشف الدراسة أيضاً تداعيات هذا الفجوة الثقافية ضمن أساليب التدريس اللغوي. تشدد على ضرورة وجود محتوى تعليمي يحترم ويمثل كل من الثقافات العالمية والمحلية بالتساوي. هذا التوازن أمر حاسم لتنمية رؤية العالم لدى الطلاب مع الحفاظ على إحساسهم بالهوية. من خلال تقديم اقتراحات لمطوري المناهج والمربين، تدعو الدراسة إلى اعتماد نهج يعكس وجهات النظر الثقافية في مواد التعليم اللغوي. من خلال معالجة هذا الاختلاف في المحتوى، تهدف إلى تعزيز تجارب التعلم وتعزيز ارتباط الطلاب بهويتهم الوطنية بجانب تعزيز الوعي العالمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرموز الوطنية، العناصر الوطنية، تدريس اللغة الانكليزية، المدارس العراقية.

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Introduction

The areas of study for the national symbols and patriotic elements being integrated into educational materials, specifically English language textbooks, are very critical in the Iraqi educational context. This introduction will then go on to survey some of the findings from these researchers in relation to the representation of these elements in first-grade intermediate English textbooks within Iraq. In analyzing the studies, it is established that surface culture was given maximum emphasis, with only little emphasis on deep culture and national identity. This is shown clearly in the study by AL-Obaid et al.(2019) in which the "English for Iraq" series gives prominent attention to the features of the surface culture that has minimum integration of deep cultural elements. The study done by Jameel and Mohammed (2019) drew a conclusion that this national identity of Iraq is no longer stretched in textbooks that were reported in their papers. Based on Razzaq et al. (2021), these textbooks often look like they take more of the focus on the international culture rather than the Iraqi culture. Al-Akraa (2013) mentioned that the overall presentation of ethnic culture and national identity of Iraq is not as much a topic as he thinks it should be in these educational resources. Moreover, like that patriotic symbols possess on lingual pedagogy in addition to being placed onto textbook, are the multitude effects. Based on two studies conducted by (Nikonova and Zalutskaya, 2022; Muslim ,2017), these factors or variables are on very high ground when concerning students' self-perceptions of their national identity and culture. For instance, as the research by Nikonova has suggested, that to the intercultural dialogue can cause the level of the Patriotic education of the bilingual student. While, from a different perspective, the investigation clarifies the application of national heritages and history in the learning of the English language as a foreign one and also to build motivation among learners and increase sense of national culture. This research has far-reaching implications for the use of textbooks in shaping students' understanding of culture. As García (2005) has noted, textbooks are not only relevant in language learning but also in the spread of cultural values. Given that these places such an essential role in shaping students' understanding of culture, there needs to be some form of review of what content they have so that it reflects a balanced perspective of culture. Various frameworks, such as those made by (Cortazzi and Jin in 1999; Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi in 1990), are useful for evaluating the cultural content inside EFL textbooks. These models come up with different ways of categorizing cultures into source, target, and international, thus aiding in making a structured analysis of cultural elements in the textbooks. Several researchers, for example, (Aliakbari in 2004), often reveal that within the textbooks there is a predominant representation of either local or foreign cultures, which affects the acculturation process and learners' exposure to different cultural views. This brings into doubt much more the accumulation process and the face-to-face face with various cultural understandings. Furthermore, one will be able to answer in detail the aspects in which EFL textbooks are providing culture integration through different dimensions

like products, practices, perspectives, and persons, using models of (Cortazzi and Jin,2001; Yuen,2011), in the context of multiculturalism. The above studies generalize that a balanced representation of cultures in EFL textbooks must be found. When relying on one culture more or focus on superficial cultural elements, it may limit the exposure of learners to the target language culture and lead to problems in the development of intercultural competence. There is a need to adjust textbook content so that it becomes inclusive and rich enough for different cultures. For example, comparing studies like (Alptekin, 2002; Mahmood et al., 2012), this will lead one to realize how much cultural presentation differs within textbooks used in various geographical and cultural contexts. These studies illustrate that approaches for the integration of culture in the teaching of EFL are varied and may be interpreted in favor of local culture over foreign culture. This study aims to provide a foundational analysis of textbook content, which would form the basis for further research. Further research in this context, probably by another team, can make use of the insights obtained from the above discussion. For instance, it is the researchers' belief that the integration of teachers and experts' points of view into a deeper study would further their findings and depend on it to develop the questionnaire for that study.

Problem Statement

One aspect of concern is the national symbols and patriotic elements found in educational materials, more so in language textbooks, especially among intermediate English learners in Iraqi schools. The fact that this practice can be extremely impactful in shaping the notion and perception of national identity and culture among young learners becomes more applicable given the country context. However, not much has been done to effectively shed light on a detailed analysis of how the patriotic elements are presented in terms of language pedagogy within the Iraqi educational system.

Research Gap

Most previous researches, have dealt with the general content and pedagogical approaches within English language textbooks, and most focus on the general type of these elements rather than their specific role in Iraq. There is a noticeable gap in understanding how these elements are integrated into language teaching materials in Iraq and, as a result, how they shape the educational experiences and linguistic competencies of students. Overview of the Researcher: Learner Engagement and Motivation: Engagement in aspects known to these individuals from their own culture increases the comprehension of being shown through the English and the learning attitude. Cultural Understanding: Language acquisition slowly turns into a means of a more profound level of appreciation for culture and building identity. National symbols are very rare in English textbooks but provide a framework for the language being learned to be associated with understanding the underlying culture. Interdisciplinary Connections: Although both history and other subjects directly address national

symbols, such as emblems, English language learning allows students to analyze these symbols indirectly, encompassing them in the diversity of the discourse.

Research Objectives

- To check up on how extensively and in what way national symbols and patriotic elements are observed in the textbooks.
- To determine whether these elements can potentially impact students' language learning and their understanding of national identity.

Research Questions

- How are national symbols and patriotic elements incorporated in first-grade intermediate English textbooks in the Iraqi educational context?
- What kind of impact do these elements have on linguistic pedagogy and the building of students' perceptions on national identity and culture?

Literature Review

It is fostering national identity through presenting students' culture, heritage in written in English language educational materials particularly textbooks that process involved this essential component. This literature review aims at examining the chosen articles that has presented the way national identity is represented in English textbooks that are used at secondary level in Iraq, and the broader implications of this on language education and cultural representation.

Regarding the Representation of Iraqi National Identity in College Textbooks

The research Jameel & Mohammed (2019) characterize the "English for Iraq" educational series that is eyed for students at the prep levels of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades by engaging deep analyses on the existence of Iraqi national identity in the book. In their approach, they analyzed the following: themes which they employed, paragraphs that were their main discussion area, as well as examples which they used to strengthen the argument. Investigations of them gave results in which Iraqi national identity was relatively missing and the subject usually relates to only the cultures of other countries. Zacharieas' idea fits with the notion that learning a foreign language often the same as taking the cultural identity of that language, but not losing national identity. Sometimes, according to Zacharieas' idea, cultural identity of a language is more interesting way for learners than national identity. Through her research on the conflict that is engendered by educators' national identity and the cultural values of a foreign language, Pavlenko (2003) comes to the conclusion that immigrants may undergo some considerable shifts in the manner in which they perceive themselves or their identities. Here is where development pattern in Iraq is emerging as an issue where the impact of foreign impacts through English language teaching could eat away its national identity. This also highlights that a somewhat grave error has been made

in the production of the student learning materials, leading to grave implications on the formation and development of students' identity both individually and collectively as a nation. National identity features having the merely few mentions in these textbooks is an unveiling of gaps in the curriculum. While the social and political ramifications of this issue might have some influence on the population's perception on nation symbols, this study examines the explicit presentations of the symbol(s) within the textbooks, not necessarily as a consensus. Such revision can thus emphasize ideas and topics that already turn to be common matters and contain modes of the continuous comprehension growth. there is more than that, as social and political dynamics may be responsible for the creation of the national symbols as well. however, usually terminology remains in common understanding.

Regarding the Cultural Representation in the Textbooks of "English for Iraq"

It is indicated by the outcomes of Obaid's et al.(2019) study of the "English for Iraq" books that are taught in Iraqi intermediate schools, that the culture of the country, which is referred to as the source culture, is assigned the main area of focus. A program that was written for the target audience, which is the English-speaking community, and the other cultures of the world are just barely prevalent. This reason can be noted as one of the important factors that can be a source of worry as it can be an obstacle in accessing a global outlook and intercultural interaction. Several issues have been highlighted, as follows: namely, the first is the excessive focus on the external factors of culture without paying much attention to the deeper core of culture that makes it unique and valuable.

In the field of English Language Instruction, nationalism

As a result of the investigation conducted by Meadows & Muramatsu (2007) on nationalism in relation with the English Language Teaching (ELT) settings, which was based on the opinions of the ELT educators, the result yielded some practices that reflect both national reproduction and national transformation. The study which utilizes the concept of discursive nationalism indicates that the teaching centres of English Language (ELT) is a space where moral undercurrent circulates. Nationalism as the organizational ideology has much broader implications in these contexts. Thus, it can be deduced that the English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers are basically involved with the negotiation of various social ideologies, among them nationalism, and in turn, they are capable of providing meaningful change in their educational practices and representation of culture.

Integrating Iraqi national symbols and elements has several potential benefits:

Enhanced Engagement Some known elements maybe; make language learning more relatable and creating enthusiastic in learning which would encourage English. Cultural Identity and Pride Integrating a national symbol into the process of language learning

can help the students to appreciate their cultural uniqueness, which makes the sense of belonging stronger. Deeper Understanding Place names can be locally acquired ones and bring cultural detail, look up the ways in which they increase understanding and admiration of English.

Educators' Contribution to the Formation of Cultural Perceptions

Inside ELT context, where relevance of biased nationalist history is questioned, the study shows an important contribution of the instructors in reproducing or reshaping nationalism. Educators' choices involving the manner national culture is portrayed can be of cultural separatism or by problematizing national culture, challenge institutionalized cultural boundaries. This implies that educators can literally model positive ways of employing nationalism for generating learned overviews rather than simplifying the understanding of cultural communities, which even exceed national borders.

Methodology

The paper conducts a critical analysis of national symbols, patriotic attributes and the Ba'athist ideology in the English textbooks of the first-grade intermediate English courses that are in use in the Iraqi educational system. The current methodology will examine how these issues are brought to students when they are getting especially sensitive in developing immediacy in terms of patriotism, morality, and cultural values. The study pursues multimodal critical discourse analysis by integrating Fairclough's three-dimensional model with Ledin and Machin multimodal Leadership in 2020.

Selection of Textbooks

The choice of elementary-fiction books, including the "Iraq's English" series, is tactical. In this stage national identity, patriotism, and cultural values of students only get strengthened through the comprehension and experiences that they go through in their day to day life. This is the student age that makes their study materials the most prone to investigate the ways in which they convey the national and central beliefs.

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

The study employs a detailed multimodal critical discourse analysis framework, blending two essential methodologies: 1. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model: This model is used for a comprehensive examination of the text. It includes text analysis, interaction analysis, and social analysis. With this model, one is able to understand the content of the text and also the wide social, cultural, and educational issues that are generatively addressed and articulated through it in relation to national identity. 2. Ledin and Machin's 2020 Multimodality Approach: This method is applied for making critic analysis of the whole semiotic means, which are the visuals, typeface, placement and color, combined with writing text. Scholars Ledin and Machin come up with a

modern view of multimodality as a factor of the formation of implied meaning and influence perceptions of a message.

Data Collection

For this study the researcher determines the textbooks to be analyzed. Being a content analysis, the given work will comprehensively investigate both textual content and the different semiotic modes seen in the books. This dual focus of theme emphasizes the study's peculiarity of being multimodal critical discourse analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, three approaches will be used:

- Linguistic Analysis: look into the content, the way, how the national and patriotic themes are portrayed in national books.
- Multimodal Analysis: This approach focuses on images, layout, and other non-verbal elements of the textbooks. It aims to understand how these elements contribute to shaping national identity and cultural values.
- Sociocultural Context Analysis: This approach involves interpreting the findings in the context of the Iraqi educational system and the cultural background where these textbooks are used.

Results and Discussion

Student Book

Unit One

Unit one of the English textbook is crafted to facilitate first-grade intermediate students' English language proficiency through a variety of didactic approaches. Each lesson is structured to incorporate various aspects of daily life, aiming to engage students with relatable content while also providing a platform for the acquisition of language skills. Herein, considering both the textual and visual content of the lessons, using Fairclough's three-dimensional model for discourse analysis alongside Ledin and Machin's approach to multimodality.

Lesson 1: "The Holidays"

In the first lesson, the visuals and conversation prompts about holiday activities are culturally neutral. While this approach is inclusive, it omits direct engagement with the students' own cultural contexts. Fairclough's model would suggest that integrating Iraqi cultural references could deepen the connection between language learning and students' lived experiences.

Lesson 2: "Richard in Iraq"

The lesson utilizes photographs, which include Iraqi landmarks, potentially acting as a springboard for discussions about national heritage. However, the integration of such cultural elements is not fully realized within the linguistic aims of the lesson, indicating

a gap that could be bridged with a more focused discourse on local culture, as suggested by Ledin and Machin's multimodal analysis.

Lesson 3: "You were watching the flamingos..."

This lesson's narrative and visuals are broad, with generic images that do not specifically root the conversation in the Iraqi context. The lesson applies universal themes, which, while effective for general language practice, miss the opportunity to reinforce cultural identity as part of the language acquisition process.

Lesson 4: "Whose scrapbooks are these?"

Students match characters to scrapbooks based on hobbies, utilizing images that reflect a wide range of activities. The visuals support a narrative that is globally recognizable and does not prioritize cultural specificity. This is an area where Fairclough's model would suggest the potential for a richer discourse, incorporating national symbols that resonate with the students' identities.

Lesson 5: "How often?"

Adverbs of frequency are taught using contextually neutral activities, accompanied by visuals that are universally applicable. The lesson's multimodal elements are designed to reinforce the grammatical structures being taught, rather than cultural nuances.

Lesson 6: "Bassem's scrapbook"

Here, the dialogue about Bassem's scrapbook of historical sites includes a potential connection to Iraqi heritage, yet the visuals do not explicitly depict these sites. Ledin and Machin's multimodality analysis would highlight the importance of aligning the visuals more closely with the cultural references made in the text.

Lesson 7: "A special day"

The narrative involves leisure activities with visuals that are universal in nature, such as a beach ball and a giraffe, indicating activities like going to the beach and the zoo. Though these images are not culturally specific, they serve as prompts for students to potentially reflect on similar experiences within their own cultural contexts.

"Story Time"

A storytelling exercise, "My new friend, the swift," includes an image of the bird, serving as a visual anchor for the narrative. The image supports the text by giving a visual representation of the story's subject, aligning with Ledin and Machin's approach to multimodality.

"Project 1: Me and my holidays"

In this creative project, students are encouraged to make a poster about their holidays, with sample images that include a tennis racket and a giraffe. The visuals are suggestive rather than prescriptive, allowing students the freedom to infuse their cultural experiences into the project. In summary, while unit one provides a solid

foundation for language acquisition through its varied content and activities, it could be further enriched by incorporating more Iraqi cultural elements, both in text and imagery. A multimodal approach that aligns visual content with cultural discourse, as recommended by Ledin and Machin, alongside Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, would enhance the relevance of the material to the students' own cultural experiences, thereby reinforcing the development of language skills within a context that celebrates their national identity.

Analysis of Unit One in Relation to the Research Questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent and in what manner are national symbols and patriotic elements included in these textbooks?

Unit One includes minimal explicit reference to Iraqi national symbols or patriotic elements. The lessons predominantly utilize culturally neutral images and activities that, while relatable on a global level, do not offer a distinctive representation of Iraqi culture or national identity. The inclusion of Iraqi cultural references is primarily textual and implicit, seen in Lesson 6's mention of historical sites and the conversational references in Lesson 2. However, the visual elements throughout the unit do not reinforce these textual mentions with images of national landmarks or symbols. Thus, the extent of cultural representation is limited, and the manner of inclusion tends toward implicit rather than explicit integration.

Research Question 2: What is the potential influence of these elements on students' language learning and their perceptions of national identity?

The unit's approach to cultural elements has a subtle potential influence on language learning and perceptions of national identity. By not explicitly integrating Iraqi national symbols or patriotic narratives, the unit may miss opportunities to deepen students' connection to their national heritage through language. However, the open-ended nature of prompts and the universal activities discussed could serve as a canvas for students to project their own cultural experiences into their language practice. Therefore, while the potential to influence perceptions of national identity is present, it relies heavily on the students' and educators' initiative to bring cultural context into the conversations and projects within the lessons.

Here's a table summarizing the presence of indications about Iraqi national identity, national symbols, or patriotic elements within Unit One's lessons:

Table (1):

Lesson	Indications of Iraqi National Identity	National Symbols or Patriotic Elements Included
Lesson 1: The Holidays	No	No
Lesson 2: Richard in Iraq	Yes	Textual mention

Lesson 3: You were watching the flamingos...	No	No
Lesson 4: Whose scrapbooks are these?	No	No
Lesson 5: How often?	No	No
Lesson 6: Bassem's scrapbook	Yes	Textual mention
Lesson 7: A special day	No	No
Lesson 8: A letter from Australia	No	No
Lesson 9: Round up	No	No
Story Time	No	No
Project 1: Me and my holidays	No	No

The table clearly shows that explicit references to Iraqi national identity and related symbols or patriotic elements are largely absent from Unit One, with only minor textual mentions in Lessons 2 and 6. The content does not extensively incorporate these aspects, suggesting an area for potential enhancement in terms of cultural representation within the curriculum.

Analysis of Unit Two

Unit Two of the textbook provides an array of lessons that introduce students to various aspects of English language and culture, with a focus on seasons, dates, and significant cultural events as experienced in England. The analysis of those lessons is based on Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model and Ledin and Machin's Multimodality Approach to discourse analysis.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model:

Text Analysis:

In this unit one of the themes is presented through many specific examples. The first lesson will cover four different seasons of England, comprising the attributes and value each holds culturally. Whilst allegations have been made, the Story Time Section presents a particular view about an experience on the London Eye on the New Year's day. The speech style in these classes is mainly objective and provides instruction through casual language which is intended to broaden the vocabulary and make comprehension better.

Discursive Practice:

The study unit of the course that reveals to learners global cultures including those lived in England such as the seasons and the festivals/holidays. Illustrating this, the learning segment "New Year's Eve in London" involves a student reading a story which is a personal tale of a family going through a cultural event.

Social Practice:

The unit indirectly aims to familiarize students with cultural contexts outside of their own experiences, as in the "Story Time" narrative and the lesson on "Life in Boronuk" (Lesson 5), which describes life in a town with extreme weather conditions.

Ledin and Machin's Multimodality Approach Visual Semiotics:

Visuals are used throughout the unit to reinforce vocabulary and concepts introduced in the text. For instance, the image of the London Eye in the "Story Time" lesson provides a tangible connection to the cultural setting of the narrative.

Use of Color and Layout:

The layout of the lessons is designed to facilitate understanding, with sequential presentations of seasons and their associated weather conditions. The color coding, such as the use of cooler colors for winter, aids visual differentiation and learning.

Choice of Activities and Settings:

Activities and settings within the unit's lessons are selected to illustrate the content. For example, the "Round Up" lesson consolidates language skills related to discussing future events and writing dates, with prompts for students to talk about Iraqi festivals, thus bridging the cultural gap.

Analysis of Unit Two in Relation to the Research Questions:

Based on the analysis of Unit Two, addressing the two research questions of the article.

1. To what extent and in what manner are national symbols and patriotic elements included in these textbooks?

Unit Two incorporates national symbols and patriotic elements, but to a limited extent. The inclusion is predominantly through the celebration of seasons and cultural events from an English perspective. National symbols and elements from Iraq are minimally integrated into the curriculum, with some lessons making specific references to Iraqi culture, such as the mention of "Iraqi Armed Forces Day" (Lesson 4) and the discussion around Eid al-Fitr (Lesson 8). The references to culture are meant to give Iraqi kids a sense of national identity and let them feel connected to their culture. However, most of the information and pictures are about English culture and experiences, like the London Eye and typical English holiday activities. The Iraqi kids' own cultural symbols and traditions aren't as emphasized, so there's a chance to include more cultural and national symbols that are important to them.

2. What is the potential influence of these elements on students' language learning and their perceptions of national identity?

The English national symbols and limited use of Iraqi cultural references impact students' perceptions of national identity by providing them subjects familiar to

English-speaking audiences. This may add a certain appeal to study because these topics are not typically common for Iraqi students to study in English. These cultural elements, mostly from western countries, may expose them to other cultures and expand their linguistic and cultural understanding, but they do not reflect or address Iraqi national identity. This simplification of language can lessen the sense of connection between the students and their national identity, which can impact their language learning. The impact is two-fold: students may learn vocabulary and grammatical structures, but may not have a sufficiently strong connection to the content to focus and maintain attention. Furthermore, the content can miss opportunities to extend students' learning by not having enough personal or cultural relevance. Regarding perceptions of national identity, the text currently emphasises or moves towards an English cultural identity at the expense of affirming the students' national identity. One potential solution is to incorporate more Iraqi national symbols and patriotic elements, such as more detailed discussions of Iraqi history and heroes, and more traditional narratives.

The researchers believe that by asking students to share how open their families or friends are about cultural differences and by asking them to express their own differences and discuss those differences in the medium of English, they will be more interested in the material and feel a greater sense of pride in their own nationality and view of the world.

Table (2):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Indications of Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: Our four seasons	No	No	No
Lesson 2: What will we do?	No	No	No
Lesson 3: The months of the year	No	No	No
Lesson 4: What's the date?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lesson 5: Life in Boronuk	No	No	No
Lesson 6: Different schools	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lesson 7: Bobsleighing: the fastest winter sport	No	No	No

Lesson 8: Eid al-Fitr	Yes	Yes	Yes
Round Up	No	No	No
Story Time	No	No	No

Analysis of Unit Three

This unit takes a holistic method to language acquisition by connecting various thematic lessons centered around daily routines, expressing emotions, and imparting life lessons. The unit is organized to aid both the grasp of grammatical rules, such as the present perfect tense, as well as augmenting the students' word bank regarding sentiments and adverbs describing ways of doing things. The incorporation of multimodal substances, such as visual aids and storylines, backs the linguistic goals and accommodates diverse studying approaches. While the unit structure helps learners obtain grammar structures and expand their vocabulary on feelings and manners of action, the use of images and narratives supporting the language targets helps engage students with different learning preferences. However, this approach leaves one wondering whether addressing additional aspects could further enrich the learning experience.

Thematic Cohesion and Pedagogical Objectives

The unit initially centres around lessons focus on everyday activities and duties, strongly emphasizing the present perfect tense, which is key for conveying recent past actions. Subsequent lessons advance to exploring feelings and portraying deeds, capitalizing on both storytelling and individual contemplation. This step-by-step advancement makes certain that students are not just gaining knowledge of the language's mechanics but are also applying them in contexts that are applicable to their real-life experiences. The lessons start by acquainting students with routine chores before delving deeper into more complex topics. In this way, students start with familiar concepts and gradually build their skills, ensuring a solid foundation. This approach allows them to comfortably understand and use the present perfect tense in their own lives before expanding their knowledge further.

Narrative and Moral Lessons

There are several units that use great stories and fables such as 'The bear that wasn't a bear' and 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' so that the students interact with narrative structures embedded with implicit moral lessons. This is illustrated by images and text, and a dual function occurs: teaching language embedded in text for comprehension through context and embedding moral values through stories.

Emotional Intelligence and Self-expression

Notably, a unit called 'My moods and feelings' includes a project where students are asked to 'create posters that focus on them reflecting on how they have felt during certain activities'. The children are encouraged to 'explore and express their

experiential responses given to task... with appropriate emotive imagery'. These are personal accounts of experiences that students can share with their peers. The classroom thus becomes one in which talking about feelings and moods is not only permitted but almost encouraged. This process helps children build their vocabulary, but it will also facilitate emotional learning.

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity

Cultural sensitivity is evident in the choice of universally relatable topics, such as household chores, hobbies and emotional reactions. Helping students to reflect complex ideas can also prompt misguided (and even inhumane) applications in the real world. That said, the Shared Hope lessons were clearly designed for a diverse global student population. The choice of universally relatable topics (such as household chores, hobbies and emotional reactions) leave ample time for bringing culture into the classroom in students' reflective comments on homework ("Project 2"), for instance.

Analysis of Unit Three in Relation to the Research Questions:

Unit Three's multifaceted approach to teaching English provides the context to address the research questions posed in the article.

1. To what extent and in what manner are national symbols and patriotic elements included in these textbooks?

Finally, in Unit Three, explicitly national symbols and patriotic content, which are thematically absent in the content, are not prominent. The focus of the unit is on universal experiences, everyday activities, and emotional literacy. For example, the lessons involving storytelling (eg, 'The bear that wasn't a bear' and 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf') are drawn from universal folk tales not national folk tales, patriotic animations, or national legends. The project on moods and feelings is more culturally neutral; it provides, in addition to psycholinguistic vocabulary (eg, shy; lots of energy), a means where local cultural elements could be expressed by students as ... they elaborate the linguistic meaning of the vocabulary in dialogue with their own mental landscape and cultural experience. This means that, in the second and third units, materials that, depending on the cultural context, could include national cultural elements, patriotic content, national history and politics, and national icons, do so by students incorporating that meaning. It is not the curriculum that prompts (or provides) all that, which would be overt in the text.

2. What is the potential influence of these elements on students' language learning and their perceptions of national identity?

Because of its universal themes, combined with explicit or implicit directives to explore rather than generalise, and its lack of direct national or patriotic reference, the content of the years' third unit alone is likely to be constrained in its potential influence on students' views of themselves as a nation. Yet the manner in which students are invited to respond to the material, in their own voices, potentially allows them to infuse that

learning with their own cultural and national identities. For example, following a unit in which students must discuss what they like to do in the evening, and what they think of chores, and decide whether they like waking up early or late, they may feel at liberty to use culturally or nationally identified examples to make their points. The emotional and self-reflective engagement the lessons may facilitate could also, indirectly, bolster students' capacity toward developing a nuanced view of themselves. By engaging, according to explicit directives, with universal themes and narratives, students may also be in a better position to appreciate the human experience in a wider frame that transcends the national. This may in turn facilitate their cross-cultural communication, and potentially influence their capacity to see themselves as citizens of the world as much as their nation.

Table (3):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Indications of Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: I've finished my work	No	No	No
Lesson 2: Many hands make light work	No	No	No
Lesson 3: Good Gwen and Lazy Len	No	No	No
Lesson 4: The Hippo Roller	No	No	No
Lesson 5: What's the matter?	No	No	No
Lesson 6: Helping Gran	No	No	No
Lesson 7: The hungry fox	No	No	No
Lesson 8: Once upon a time ...	No	No	No
Round Up	No	No	No
Story Time	No	No	No
Project 2: My moods and feelings	No	No	No

Unit Four Analysis

Unit four as the result of a thematic study which allows to improve students' art by using interactive and reflective activities. Every session contained with the Lesson is carefully orchestrates not just the acquittal of grammatical elements but also a growth of critical thinking and creative writing.

Thematic Diversity and Instructional Strategies

The class opts for the first lesson which is all about "Lazy Len's Day," images, and textual cues which are mixed in order to define the adverbs of manner. Through it, students can use the distinction between negative and positive R and S to describe processes more precisely. Moving on vocabulary, the lesson then shifts to "Khalid's birthday present, " a conversation skills' lesson coupled with punctuation marks which are used to show emotions. In the process, this reinforces the students' narration ability. Indications of this strand run through the next lessons, including "The Monkey in the Café" and "Writing a story," which can be understood in context and get a short story from a series of illustrations. The class employs an amazing way of combining reading comprehension tasks with creative writing assignments all aimed at developing a student's ability to form coherent and imaginative narrations using the language they have acquired as they read.

Visual and Interactive Learning

Unit Fourth becomes an being image-centered, where the images serve as some visual points for the language concepts that are being learned. Besides others, "Write a story" elaborates the ability of narrating kind of story which could interconnect the seemingly unconnected pictures. This contributes to visual comprehension. This interactive approach is one that caters to different learning styles of in particular visual learners. This aspect of the interactive unit is highlighted in the game of "Word chains" originating from the segment "Lazy Len's Day," which in addition to rapid recall skills, practice vocabulary enrichment as well in a fun, team-building environment.

Cultural Sensitivity and Practical Application

Each lesson is designed to respect cultural diversity and promote inclusivity. It follows that "Other Countries" establishes the basis for worldwide consideration of geography, traditions and mental models sought in the environment of international cooperation.

Analysis of Unit Four in Relation to the Research Questions:

1. To what extent and in what manner are national symbols and patriotic elements included in these textbooks?

In unit Four (in the textbook) there is no explicit incorporation of national symbols or patriotic elements within its lessons. The unit's content is structured around everyday activities, storytelling, and intercultural awareness, with a focus on developing language skills that are applicable universally rather than specific to any single national identity i.e. Iraqi nationality. The lessons are culturally neutral and designed to be

relevant in a broader sense, which allows them to be used in various educational settings without promoting any particular nationalistic perspective.

2. What is the potential influence of these elements on students' language learning and their perceptions of national identity?

The absence of direct references to national symbols or patriotic elements in Unit Four, which leads to the result that the influence on students' perceptions of national identity through this unit would be minimal. However, the inclusion of a lesson like "Other Countries" in this unit, could indirectly contribute to students' understanding of national identities through encouraging them to explore and discuss the cultural and geographic diversity of different countries. This could affect and enhance students' global awareness and understanding of their own place in the world, potentially influencing their insights of their own national identity in the context of a global community.

Table (4):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Indications of Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: Lazy Len's day	No	No	No
Lesson 2: Khalid's birthday present	No	No	No
Lesson 3: The monkey in the café	No	No	No
Lesson 4: Writing a story	No	No	No
Lesson 5: Other countries	No	No	No

Unit Five Analysis

In Unit Five, it appears that the unit is centered on expanding students' cultural awareness and enhancing their geographical knowledge throughout a diverse range of activities. Each lesson is constructed to not only improve the learners' language skills but also to cultivate their global perspective.

Cultural Exposure: The lessons integrate images and discussions about different countries, from the iconic Japanese landscape and the historical significance of Iraq to the natural beauty of Indonesia. Students are engaged with these images and encouraged to identify and appreciate global diversity.

Language Skills Development: The design of the Activities aims enable students to practice various language skills. For example, Lesson 7 focuses on the present perfect and past simple tenses, employing historical and cultural references to Iraq,

which allows students to practice grammar in contextually rich scenarios that enhances their patriotic values at the same time.

Analytical Thinking: Many lessons requires students to analyze photographs and texts to conclude information, fostering critical thinking. For example, in the "Round Up" activity, students compare countries, requiring them to deal with information about different places.

Interactive Learning: In the lessons like "Story Time" and "Have you ever been to Indonesia?" those lessons include interactive elements, such as listening exercises and class discussions. These activities are designed for improving listening comprehension and spoken fluency.

Creative Expression: In the project sections, such as "Project 3: My experiences," they invite students to create and present their own narratives, which helps in developing creative thinking and self-expression.

Practical Application: It is apparent that, in various lessons, asking and answering questions about personal experiences, mirror real-life situations, providing practical language use cases. This is good especially for a nation wide curriculum in which real life practice is difficult to achieve.

Inclusivity and Accessibility: The book also uses themes of inclusivity, as observed in the "Story Time" lesson featuring Carrie in the jungle. This story includes a character that uses a wheelchair, intelligently teaching students about diversity and inclusion. Unit Five stands out for its holistic approach to language teaching, integrating cultural education with language skills development, and promoting both personal growth and global social responsibility among students.

Analysis of Unit Five in Relation to the Research Questions:

How does exposure to different cultures through language learning materials affect students' global awareness and attitudes towards other cultures?

Unit Five introduces students to various countries in addition to their cultural elements, possibly to enhance their global awareness and raise open-mindedness which is a very important action towards the students of a country that suffered from isolation for a long period of time. Activities encourage students to investigate and discuss cultural differences and similarities, which could lead to a more positive attitude towards multiculturalism (Iraq's one of the most important issues that is in need to deal with).

What is the impact of integrating cultural content into language learning on students' motivation and language acquisition?

In Unit Five, the cultural content may increase students' motivation by connecting language learning with real-world topics that gain their attention, such as travel and

global attractions. This relevance to students' lives could enhance engagement and, accordingly, language acquisition. Furthermore, the integration of cultural information can provide a rich context for language use, encouraging the maintenance and understanding of new linguistic structures presented within the unit.

Table (5):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: Other countries	No	No	No
Lesson 2: Our world	No	No	No
Lesson 3: Granny's box of memories	No	No	No
Lesson 4: We've been everywhere	No	No	No
Lesson 5: Four countries (Part A)	No	No	No
Lesson 6: Four countries (Part B)	No	No	No
Lesson 7: Things to do in Iraq	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lesson 8: Have you ever been to Indonesia?	No	No	No
Round Up	No	No	No
Story Time	No	No	No
Project 3: My experiences	No	No	Yes

Unit Six Analysis

Unit Six appears to be designed around the theme of cultural exchange, safety awareness, and personal experiences. The focus on the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English is not neglected. The lessons integrate various aspects of everyday life and practical situations that students might meet, and uses these situations to teach English language structures, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Evaluating the Inclusion of Iraqi National Symbols and Patriotic Elements:

The lessons in Unit 6 do not seem to focus on the Iraqi national symbols or patriotic elements, rather, the content focuses more on developing global awareness and cross-cultural communication. Conversely, by contrasting Iraqi students' own experiences with those from other cultures, such as the Japanese context in Lesson 1, there may be an indirect reflection on the students' own national identity. Students could naturally make comparisons between their own lives and those of their international peers, possibly initiating discussions about national identity in an indirect manner.

Assessing the Influence of These Elements on Language Learning and Perceptions of National Identity:

Unit Six impacts language learning by providing students with a means to explore different cultural contexts, and accordingly enriching their understanding of the world and improving their ability to communicate across cultures. The absence of direct national symbols or patriotic elements does not weaken the unit's educational value; instead, it highlights the universal application of the English language as a tool for international dialogue. The engagement with various cultural settings all through the unit encourages students to think about their own national identity within the larger global community. This may lead to a more obvious understanding of what indicates their national identity and how it fits into the diverse tapestry of global cultures.

Holistic Analysis of Unit Six :

Unit Six effectively uses the theme of cultural exchange and students' personal safety to develop English language skills. Each lesson is built upon the previous ones, which gradually increases the complexity of the language structures and concepts being taught. The unit seems to achieve the following educational objectives: Improves students' ability to communicate in English about a wide range of topics, from personal interests to safety measure. It develops critical thinking skills as students analyze and compare different cultural practices and safety measures. It also encourages global awareness by introducing students to the lives and experiences of people from different cultures. It even provides a comprehensive review of language structures such as question formation, use of conjunctions, and descriptive language.

Table (6):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Indications of Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: A Japanese Penfriend	No	No	Implicit
Lesson 2: Linking Things	No	No	No

Lesson 3: Penfriends	No	No	No
Lesson 4: Identifying People	No	No	No
Lesson 5: Fuad meets Yuki	No	No	Implicit
Lesson 6: Fuad's first meal in Japan (Part A)	No	No	Implicit
Lesson 7: Fuad's first meal in Japan (Part B)	No	No	Implicit
Lesson 8: A postcard from Fuad	No	No	No
Round Up	No	No	No
Story Time: A wolf in the forest	No	No	No

Unit Seven Analysis

From the topics provided in Unit Seven, it seems that it focuses on the theme of safety, presenting a variety of contexts in which safety is centered and focused upon, from personal and home safety to safety in the community and while traveling. Each lesson within this unit aims to develop both language skills and an understanding of safety procedures, developing awareness of probable dangers and teaching appropriate responses.

Evaluating the Inclusion of National Symbols and Patriotic Elements:

The lessons throughout Unit 7, do not directly deal with national symbols or patriotic elements. Instead, the lessons present safety as a universal concept, relevant to students regardless of their cultural or national backgrounds. The addressed themes are common to all students and include safety measures that are applicable worldwide. By focusing on safety in various settings—home, outside, travel—the unit implicitly supports the development of students' sense of personal responsibility and community awareness, which are fundamental to the concept of national identity and global and social responsibility.

Assessing the Influence of Safety Elements on Language Learning and Perceptions of National Identity:

The unit's emphasis on safety is another language learning influencer. Learning from familiarity and creating relevance to something very important allows students to remain motivated and become involved in the learning process. The safety instructions, warnings, and scenarios provide an implication whereby imperative forms, conditional sentences, and relevant vocabulary to daily life become part and parcel of an activity with language learning. As students learn about safety precautions and emergency responses, they get practical language skills they can apply in real-life situations. In regard to national identity, while the unit does not directly focus on national symbols, it can act as a platform to explore how safety is taken care of within different cultural contexts. Students may compare the national safety standards and practices within their country with those given in the course lessons, maybe discussing national policies, cultural norms, and community values concerning safety.

Holistic Analysis of Unit Seven :

Unit Seven combines linguistic learning with life skills education by focusing on safety, giving attention to the practical relevance of safe living. Structured to build upon the safety understanding they have in their homes; it extends the scope of concepts that they develop into generalization of human life. The students apply English language use in the very practical ways of reading, listening, and working on projects, so as to impart the communicative competence of them. The unit, therefore, also encourages students to be able to think critically and solve problems while students understand the implications of safety warnings and apply safety guidelines. Upon completion of the unit, students are expected to: speak and write in English in safety-related situations, be able to follow instructions and warnings using appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary; practice discussing ideas in class, showing their individual perspectives on safety practices; compare their own cultural background of safety with broader, possibly international, contexts. This design is an appropriate means to provide for the English objectives of language learning, which are to enable learners to communicate effectively about real-life issues, as well as think critically about the world around them. The safety theme acts as a channel for these objectives, providing content which is meaningful and educational.

Table (7):

Lesson	National Symbols	Patriotic Elements	Indications of Iraqi National Identity
Lesson 1: Instructions	No	No	No
Lesson 2: Warnings to children	No	No	No
Lesson 3: Watch out!	No	No	No

Lesson 4: Going fishing	No	No	No
Lesson 5: If you do that ...	No	No	No
Lesson 6: What will we do if ...	No	No	No
Lesson 7: Danger!	No	No	No
Lesson 8: Road safety	No	No	No
Round Up	No	No	No
Story Time: Danger at sea	No	No	No

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study, in terms of the two central research questions, have drawn as follows: Inclusion of National Symbols and Patriotic Elements: The study indicates that there is little coverage of Iraqi national symbols and patriotic elements in the English textbooks. The cultural content, at a general level, reflects the global or international view, and most parts of the Iraqi culture and national identity are clearly viewed. This lack of a particularly national cultural viewpoints can thus be deemed as a missed opportunity for eliciting national identity and cultural pride among the Iraqi learners. Impact on Linguistic Pedagogy and Students' Perceptions: The study shows that the current approach to cultural content in these textbooks might really hinder the formulation of students' perceptions of the national identity and culture. The textbooks actually do very well to make students understand global cultures in general, but their insufficiency in including more of the local content may render a weakened sense of national identity among the students. That is very concerning in the context of the teaching of languages in that the integration of national symbols and stories in the teaching materials can be really powerful in creating awareness among students of their own culture and history. In summary, the article reiterates the need for a more balanced and all-round approach to cultural representation in English language textbooks used in Iraq. Such a balancing should try to increase the emphasis given to national symbols and patriotic narratives in a bid to diversify the learning experience further and raise their attitudes towards their nation's heritage. This balanced approach is important for developing intercultural competence and a rich understanding of the global and local contexts in language education.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study makes a rich possibility for crossing the cultural divide in Iraqi first-grader's English textbook texts. Through the inclusion of the national symbols and presentation

of narratives, these materials can be turned into effective instruments for shaping young learners' national pride, urging them to live in the whole world interconnected.

Curricular Integration: Collaboration with the developers of curricula and teachers to systematically place Iraqi national symbols and narratives in American L2 textbooks. This may include the representation of visuals, historical characters, legends, myths, and songs through situation-specific, as well as respectful consideration of alternative opinions.

Global Learning: Content built on not just admiration of Iraqi heritage but even a comprehensive worldview. It cultivates the students' cross-cultural awareness and prepares them to see themselves as respected members of a global audience.

Teacher Training: To arrange appropriate training for teachers, teaching English language. It should be exposed to the cultural aspects of each country. This would enable them to adopt the use of the textbooks beyond their current competence and use them to develop meaningful discussions with their students on national identity.

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