



## Investigating the Role of the Text by which Religious Practices are Projected in the Local and Imported Textbooks

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Abstract

*The current study is an attempt to notice and compare the results of foreign and local religious practices present in selected Pakistani and imported English textbooks prescribed for students of Punjab (Pakistan). The content analysis was employed to find out the percentages of categories and subcategories of reading passages and exercises of the prescribed English textbooks in this research. For relevant data collection, an eclectic model was devised as some of the major categories with slight modification were taken from Stern, H.H. (1983) model in which he proposed six aspects of culture teaching. While in the formation of sub-categories the researcher has employed his own teaching experience. Religious performances are separated into five subcategories equally in the two textbooks such as religious beliefs and rewards, politeness/courtesy/good manners, sacrifice, rituals/festivals and moral ethics. Results and findings of the study indicate that the Oxford textbook has not included a single text reference to a primary or secondary religious action occurring in contemporary target or native life and society.*

**Key Words:** Ideology, Foreign Language Education, Inter-Cultural Speaker.

### Introduction

The textbook is a western medium of instruction that has become an inevitable part of the education system in the whole world. Textbooks require the classroom and are the most used medium for knowledge transmission in the school system, particularly where financial resources are restricted (Altbach, Kelly, Petrie and Weiss, 1991). Prior to the western system of classroom education that relies heavily on textbooks, other organizations attended to the education system of the youth in each society. Katez (1976) indicates that schools existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century but that these organizations bear little resemblance to the institutions that developed in the mid-nineteenth century cities that were age-graded, hierarchically structured, primarily free often compulsory, and administered by expert and taught by trained staff.

In countries adhering to the Muslim religion education is conducted orally by mullah using the Quraan. In the African context, beyond education in formal institutions, there are secret societies that pass on the traditions and culture within groups. Societies worldwide have also used the apprenticeship system to transmit the traditions, culture and skills of each society (Rogoff, 1990). To these traditional pedagogies, the classroom is a modern western invention that is a mark of modernization. Though the western educational model has not entirely replaced traditional systems, it is being superseded by western texts which logically represent the values and culture of countries producing these textbooks. In the field of foreign or second language learning textbooks are fundamental to the classroom acquisition process. The existence of textbooks maintaining to offer the language learner with a new, modern, proficient or effortless way to attain capability in the language that he/she chose to study recognizes that textbooks are an important part of the educational contexts in which languages are studied. Some methods, such as community language learning (CLL) projected by Curran, advocate a break with

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the dependency on textbooks. In the context of CLL, learners would make their own stuff with the help of an analyst ([Stevick, 1980](#)). This does not reflect classrooms in general nor foreign language classrooms in particular. [Kramsch \(1988\)](#) suggested that textbooks are at the centre of the language learning procedure in the early years of second language acquisition as carried out in the classroom context. She points to the significance of the foreign language textbook as a cultural phenomenon in itself in that learners gain their understanding of the particular culture being studied from it. From the perspective of the second or foreign language teachers in different Inner Circle (IC), Outer Circle (OC) or Expanding Circle (EC) countries where teachers do not frequently have the time or resources to generate their own materials, the use of published materials is a solution to a very genuine problem ([Bartel, 1974](#)). This cultural occurrence may be interpreted to mean that from the outlook of the learner, the textbook provides an understanding of the culture via language that is being studied therefore allowing teachers and learners identical to attain their goals of teaching or learning a language. In terms of the textbook for common content areas and the EFL instructional materials, [Kramsch \(1988\)](#) conceives that they hold explicit commonalities. Features universal to all textbooks are that they systematize the knowledge to be learnt, are convincing, and consumers generally take them at face value. Venezky (1992) extends this idea and says that the function of the textbooks will diverge depending on the subject area. Based on Kuhn's (1987, cited in Venezky) analysis, Venezky recommends that in music or graphic arts, for instance, textbooks take on a secondary function in that the learner will deal in a straight line with the work under consideration. Venezky keeps on indicating that in the field of history, textbooks are the main source for students. Original works provide supplemental material in the classroom context. In the natural sciences, textbooks are used utterly. Within this construction, it would appear that the use of foreign language textbooks is parallel to the history texts in that student in the early stages of learning a language not only depend on instructional materials but also have contact to works of literature as their knowledge of the language increases.

[Apple \(1990\)](#) broadens Kramsch's analysis when he proposes that textbooks are a financially viable artefact and politically inspired as well as regulated by governmental agencies. He points out those twenty-two states in the United States which have central acceptance policies. Here although he is referring to an EC context and makes a parallel point on the political nature of textbooks. [Macian \(1986\)](#) investigates fourteen states adopted high school Spanish textbooks. She suggests that research has an effect "neglected orderly evaluation and description of foreign language texts". Within this framework, Macian analysed first and third-year university Spanish textbooks, using the Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (ACCS) that offer descriptors for her analysis. The ACCS was designed by Frymier in 1977 to establish the appropriateness of curriculum material at all levels. Macian (1986), on the other hand, utilizes a revised version of the ACCS to examine foreign language textbooks. This revised version narrates curriculum characteristics that are a manifestation of human existence, to learning, and it consisted of ten proportions. These dimensions are intelligence, previous experience, creativity, motivation, sociability, verbal expression, auditory expression, emotion/personality, and motor perception. Dimensions were elaborated to reflect learner characteristics. Macian established that these textbooks did not fulfil the requirements of students who used them, nor were they suitable for the ends they supposed to achieve, that is communication in Spanish. Issues that become appropriate within this particular study are that textbooks have been studied in an IC context and have not addressed students' needs in a cultural context. [Arizpe and Aguirre \(1987\)](#) have examined ethnicity in Spanish EFL textbooks. They suggest that the textbooks analysed the present distorted, confused, and at times incorrect information of Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban groups in IC contexts. In the same way, [Stern \(1976\)](#) analyses French, Spanish, Italian and German textbooks considered for elementary, high school and college students. She found that professional options for women were restricted to a stereotypical array of careers, conventionally reserved to and for women. She indicates that publishers update their textbooks periodically. Yet, the vital representation of women does not basically change.

In English as a foreign language or second language, issues of gender have been investigated by [Ittzes \(1978\)](#), [Grandcolas \(1978\)](#), Rees-Parnell (1978) and other researchers. Grandcolas focuses on women in Speaking-English, a series used in French schools. Rees-Parnell focuses on Kernell lessons Intermediate, used in English as a second language. [Grandcolas \(1978\)](#) investigates the content of SE from the perspective of a teacher and parent. She points out that the portrayal of women in this series does not reflect the lived experiences of her female students or herself as the teacher. This study does not, however, address the issues of religion, ideology, value

orientation and hegemony that are rooted in the text. In the present study, all these ideas are viewed as part of the procedure through which ideas in imported and local texts are brought into utilizing in the Pakistani language classroom. The unspoken or explicit approval of the dominated entity is necessary for hegemonic practices to succeed. Rees-Parnell (1978) in identifying issues of gender in Karnell lessons, pinpoints the established slots into which women and men are placed in these textbooks. Rees-Parnell suggests that although women from IC countries have been most vocal in advocating a more representative position in the society, EFL coursebooks keep on to symbolize women as “adjuncts” to the men in their lives. Men have portrayed in varied roles. On the other hand, women are secretaries, receptionists and sales girls. She recommends furthermore that if women are presented in these traditional roles, then men will also be confined to their conventional roles. One of the objectives of this research is to pinpoint male and female roles presented in the prescribed foreign and local English textbooks.

The focus of this study is to analyse the Oxford English textbook 5 and the PTB English textbook 5 prescribed for Punjab (Pakistan) government, semi-government and private students to identify religious practices projected in these textbooks. The extent, to which the religious practices of the countries in which the textbooks were written are present, would be analyzed, versus religious practices of the local (Pakistani) community. Contrastive religious practices would be examined for their significance in the teaching process. Statements of religious practices usually transmit messages that are more related to international relations than to learning another language. The effect as stated above is that opportunities for strengthening national values may be lost and alternative values may be presented. In this study of imported and local instructional material and their historical aspect is also worth mentioning. In the Pakistani context, historical events of the past sixty or so have involved grave changes in the political and government. Since that time there has been a shuffling from a civilian to military and military to civilian government and elections have been held at all levels including two referendums of the military dictators for presidentship. During this period, schools have had to continually adjust within the political climate. Throughout this period, some contents were dropped, and some were included in the curriculum.

### Statement of the Problem

The textbooks that are used in primary schools of financially poorer countries for teaching EFL are principally imported from English speaking countries. Understandably, the religious practices of these countries are not reflected in the content and other presentations of the imported books. The rationale of this work is to investigate the accounts by which religious practices are projected in the local and imported textbooks printed in the context of the Punjab and to find out the impact of religious practices on the students of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, proposed in the local and imported textbooks.

### Research Questions of the Current Study

- How are religious practices projected in the local and imported textbooks printed in the context of Punjab (Pakistan)?
- What is the impact of religious practices on the students of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, proposed in the local and imported textbooks printed in the context of Punjab?

### Methods and Materials

The main purpose of the study was to analyze and compare EFL textbooks (foreign and local) prescribed for primary schools (fifth grade) in Pakistan to identify religious practices contained in them. To what extent religious practices of the countries in which the texts were written are present, will be analyzed, versus religious practices of the local community. Data were collected from the two English textbooks 5 (foreign and local) prescribed for the primary schools of the Punjab (Pakistan) province. Units of both textbooks were read in addition to exercises both written and oral as well as activities designed for listening comprehension. Reading passages were categorized by themes and sub-themes. Reading passages that did not fit the previously designed sub-themes were listed as miscellaneous. Content analysis will be employed to find out the percentages of categories and

subcategories of reading passages and exercises in these two books. For relevant data collection an eclectic model was devised as some of the main categories were taken from [Stern, H.H. \(1983\)](#) model in which he proposed six aspects of culture teaching, with slight modification while in the formation of sub-categories the researcher has employed his own teaching experience

### Themes and Sub-Themes

At the start reading passages of the two books were read and classified based on themes. Themes originally refer to the underlying thought or general impression of a reading passage, providing the reader with its general sense and implications. Statements regarding religious practices were recognized for analysis and its sub themes were identified

**Table 1.** Showing Frequency and Percentage of Religious Practices

Textbooks	Religious Beliefs & Rewards	Politeness, courtesy & Good Manners	Sacrifice	Rituals & Festivals	Moral Ethics	Total
Oxford textbook	00 00.00%	00 00.00%	00 00.00%	00 00.00%	00 00.00%	00 00.00%
The Punjab textbook	10 32.26%	02 6.45%	08 25.81%	04 12.90%	07 22.58%	31

Note: statistical figures in columns refer to the analyzed statements and their percentage about religious practices:

Based on the statistical analysis, there were two textbooks to be examined. Statements offering interpretation about religion in the Oxford textbook and the PTB textbook were analyzed. Religious performances were divided into five sub-themes or categories equally, and they were: religious beliefs and rewards, politeness/ courtesy/ good manners, sacrifice, rituals/festivals and moral ethics. The first notable finding of the research was that the Oxford textbook had not a single text reference to primary or secondary religious actions occurring in contemporary local or foreign life and society. Primary religious references are defined as those that refer in words or pictures to religious activities such as participating in a religious festival or event, praying, and giving religious instructions etc. secondary references are those that refer to religion in some indirect way such as mentioning the date of religious festival or event. On the other hand, in the PTB textbook, primary and secondary references to religious activities were found in abundance. This book suggested that religion plays an important part in Pakistani culture and society as the statements about *religious beliefs and rewards* were repeated 10 times in the book, with 32.26% of the total 31 statements. Similarly, 2 statements represented politeness/courtesy and good manners which were 6.45% of the total number. 8 statements were identified regarding the devotion of sacrifice with 25.81%. Likewise, 7 statements were examined to show moral ethics which were 22.58% of the total statements found in the PTB textbook.

*He [Hazrat Ismail] thought it was the will of Allah (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*His [Hazrat Ibrahim's] son was standing alive before him (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*The Muslims follow the Sunnah of their great prophet (AS) (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*They [Muslims] do so to keep the memory of that great sacrifice fresh in their minds (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*He [God] will give us a great reward in return (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*He [Hzrat Ibrahim] could not do against it (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*He thanked Allah (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*He saw that he was slaughtering his beloved son, Hazrat Ismail (AS) for Allah (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*Hazrat Ibrahi had a great love for his son. But he decided to sacrifice him for Allah (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*On the day of Eid-ul Azah, they [Muslims] slaughter animals in the name of Allah (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) was successful in it (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*Eid-ul-Azah is celebrated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Zilhajj according to the Islamic calendar (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*What do the Muslims do on Eid-ul-Azah? (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*This day [Eid-ulAzah] remind us of the great sacrifice of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*He [Hazrat Ibrahim] covered his own eyes with a piece of cloth (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

*They [Muslims] distribute the meat of the animals among their relatives and the poor (PTB textbook 5, p. 04).*

## Discussions on the Results with the Aid of Research Questions

One of the evils of colonialism was the defamation of the Sub Continent cultures and traditions. Young people are particularly defenceless when they are bombarded with cultural attributes of other people that are supposed to be superior to their own. The present investigation has reported the research findings of the two English textbooks prescribed by the Provincial Ministry of Education for the Punjab government, semi-government and private schools at level five are examined to identify religious practices contained in them. For this purpose, these two textbooks are classified into two sections: textbook published by the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB) and the textbook published by the Oxford University Press. These findings are further discussed below in response to the research question, which is devised using the research objectives as a cue.

### Research Question # 01

How are religious practices projected in the local and imported textbooks printed in the context of Punjab (Pakistan)?

Religious performances are separated into five subcategories equally in the two textbooks such as religious beliefs and rewards, politeness/courtesy/good manners, sacrifice, rituals/festivals and moral ethics.

The first notable finding of the study is that the Oxford textbook has not included a single text reference to a primary or secondary religious action occurring in contemporary target or native life and society. Primary religious references are defined as those that refer in words or pictures to religious activities such as participating in a religious festival or event, praying, and giving religious instructions etc. secondary references are those that refer to religion in some indirect way such as mentioning the date of religious festival or event. This omission reflects a seriously declining position for religion in the presentation by the Oxford textbook. In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, religion holds the supreme authority and has the upper ladder in the law of the country. The purpose of basic education in Pakistan is to encourage the child has absolute trust and faith in the Almighty God so that it works as a permanent source of inspiration for all his/her actions and helps him/her to develop moral, spiritual, social and human values.

However, in the PTB textbook, a few direct and indirect references to religion are found in the form of text and images showing the contemporary Pakistani society.

### Research Question # 02

What is the impact of religious practices on the students of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, proposed in the local and imported textbooks printed in the context of Punjab?

Statements offering interpretation about religion in the Oxford textbook and the PTB textbook were analyzed. Religious performances were divided into five sub-themes or categories equally, and they were: religious beliefs and rewards, politeness/ courtesy/ good manners, sacrifice, rituals/festivals and moral ethics. The first notable finding of the research was that the Oxford textbook had not a single text reference to primary or secondary religious actions occurring in contemporary local or foreign life and society. Primary religious references are defined as those that refer in words or pictures to religious activities such as participating in a religious festival or event, praying, and giving religious instructions etc. secondary references are those that refer to religion in some indirect way such as mentioning the date of religious festival or event. On the other hand, in the PTB textbook, primary and secondary references to religious activities were found in abundance. This book suggested that religion plays an important part in Pakistani culture and society as the statements about *religious beliefs and rewards* were repeated 10 times in the book, with 32.26% of the total 31 statements. Similarly, 2 statements represented politeness/courtesy and good manners which were 6.45% of the total number. 8 statements were identified regarding the devotion of sacrifice with 25.81%. Likewise, 7 statements were examined to show moral ethics which were 22.58% of the total statements found in the PTB textbook. The study

shows that the PTB textbook stated 31 primary and secondary references about Islam and Muslims. The findings of the current study are in line with [Dweikat, K. A., and Shbeitah, G. \(2013\)](#) where they also found that the maximum religious and cultural values were related the American cultural and religious views which clearly pointed out bias towards the foreign cultural values in general and the American cultural values in particular at the expense of the Arab–Islamic culture as no unit talked about Arabs or Muslims. The impact and role of religious content in every student’s life were the most frequently agreed-upon feature of the contents present in the PTB textbook as these statements provide students with fundamental knowledge and guidelines about their views, opinions, beliefs and generates opportunities for the learners to inquire about and explore issues concerning their religious beliefs. The analysis of the local and Oxford textbooks publicised that there is an obvious partiality towards OCC cultural values and religious practices in general.

## **Conclusion**

The current study has its starting point to view and compare the religious practices suggested in the two English textbooks written in the Pakistani context. The most notable finding of the study is that the Oxford textbook has not included a single text reference to a primary or secondary religious action occurring in contemporary target or native life and society. Primary religious references are defined as those that refer in words or pictures to religious activities such as participating in a religious festival or event, praying, and giving religious instructions etc. secondary references are those that refer to religion in some indirect way such as mentioning the date of religious festival or event. This omission reflects a seriously declining position for religion in the presentation by the Oxford textbook. In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, religion holds the supreme authority and has the upper ladder in the law of the country. The purpose of basic education in Pakistan is to encourage the child has absolute trust and faith in the Almighty God so that it works as a permanent source of inspiration for all his/her actions and helps him/her to develop moral, spiritual, social and human values and PTB textbook satisfies these elements. It can be concluded that there is a lot of potential for improvement in future textbooks and curriculums with respect to religious practices in the local context. In the same time, it can be proposed that the instructional material requires to be presented in a way that delivers clearly what the national objectives are.

## **Contribution of the Study**

The contribution of the present study lies in the fact that through the analysis of religious practices contained in both the textbooks, an instrument in the form of recommendations will be established to classify and assess these features as they are found in a Pakistani EFL context. The current study would therefore develop such an instrument and guidelines that would be applicable for researchers, teachers and administrators who deal with the production and use of textbooks at the primary school level.

## **Policy Recommendations**

The curriculum is the blueprint that presents the guide for learners throughout Pakistan. In my judgment, it dictates the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are most valued by the province’ schools in which it is approved. In order to employ all students, it should offer learners a chance to view all content parts from several points of view. Learners ought to be given the opportunity to look over, examine and value the contribution in a multicultural context. If the learners are merely exposed to the contribution of people that they cannot identify with, we cannot succeed to provide them with the role models that they can attempt to follow. We cannot succeed to connect them in the curriculum. We fall short of giving them the educational experiences that allow them to become creative citizens. As a result of this study and its findings, the following are recommendations for the future.

## **Recommendations for the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Wing and the Punjab Textbook Board (PTB)**

- Teachers, instructors and trainers should be consulted when selecting the textbook material, and they

should take part in any kind of improvement or adjustment in these textbooks.

- As the Oxford textbook is written in Pakistani context so it should include sufficient reading material in Pakistani perspective to foster moral and religious practices, values and attitudes, promoting their practice and developing an understanding of Allah Almighty.

### **Limitations of the Study and Research Gaps**

- The present research is restricted to discover the religious practices presented in the texts of Oxford English Textbook Grade 5 and the English Textbook 5 published by Punjab (Pakistan) Textbook Board (PTB). But in future, research on such kind of materials taught in elementary, high and higher schools can be accomplished for a diffident view of the said sample.
- Make a comparative study of the English textbooks prescribed for other provinces located in the country with respect to foreign English textbooks to find out the religious practices.

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