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Curricula as Ideology: A Study of Cultural Representations in Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) Textbooks

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by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, my wife, my brothers and sisters, and my friends. Without your heartfelt support and encouragement, this work would have never been possible. Thank you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Definitions
AFL	Arabic as a Foreign Language
AK1	Al-Kitaab 1
AK2	Al-Kitaab 2
AN1	Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1
AN2	Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2
C1	First Culture
C2	Second/Foreign culture
FL	Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second/Foreign Language
Lit.	Literally
QA	Colloquial Arabic
RQ	Research Questions
SA	Standard Arabic
TL	Target Language

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

The present study examines cultural representations in two widely used AFL textbook series, namely *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat al-Naas*. Fundamentally, three main issues motivate this study: (1) the cultural politics of language textbooks underlying the construction and dissemination of cultural knowledge and its prioritization of the latter on grounds of subjectivity, ideology, and power, (2) the politicization of Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) in light of the post 9/11 language advocacy, and (3) the prevailing standard language ideology of *al-Arabiya al-fuṣħaa* (العربية الفصحى) and the pedagogical challenges posed by Arabic diglossia. The data comprise five textbooks from the aforementioned series, aimed at beginning and intermediate levels of proficiency. These levels represent the highest AFL enrollments at U.S. postsecondary institutions, and are considered crucial for developing the foundations of linguistic and cultural awareness. Drawing upon a poststructuralist framework that interrogates structural analysis against the wider, conflicted discourses of sociopolitical and economic globalization of language and culture (Blommaert, 2010; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; McNamara, 2012), the present study examines cultural representations in AFL textbooks applying a revised content analysis approach of deductive and inductive coding, which attends to culture based on Moran's paradigm of cultural dimensions (2001). Such theoretical underpinnings allow for a systematic exploration of cultural meaning, which unpacks culture in both its objective and subjective manifestations. The findings reveal the prevalence of surface, objective culture (e.g., cultural product, places, persons) and the paucity of deep, subjective culture (e.g., cultural perspectives and practices) in both textbook series. Given the deep-seated and interdependent neoliberal discourses in language

education, cultural representations appear to cater to the demands of globalization and its capitalist ambitions, which not only commodify language and culture for access and participation in a global economy, but also risks the homogenization of world cultures by prioritizing cultural sameness at the expense of foreignness. Contributing to the scant research on AFL teaching materials, this study offers a critical understanding of the ideological discourses in language textbooks, illuminating cultural meaning as a contested political space.
KEYWORDS: Textbook Analysis, Culture, Ideology, Discourse, Curriculum, Pedagogy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Case for Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL)

The interest in Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) in the U.S. reached unprecedented peaks following the events of 9/11 (Abu-Melhim, 2014b; Al-Batal, 2006; Allen, 2007; Bale, 2010, 2014; Dahbi, 2004; Edwards, 2004; Scollon, 2004). According to Modern Language Association (MLA) data, AFL enrollments between 2002 and 2016 rose by 198% increase across all institutions (Looney & Lusin, 2019). After years of all-time low budget preceding the events of 9/11 (Al-Batal, 2007), Arabic in light of the threat of national security emerged as a critical resource that generated generous federal support to serve the U.S. hegemony over regions deemed critical for world peace (Bale, 2010). National security concerns fueled a federal interest in advancing Arabic language competencies to compensate for failed foreign policy, prompting governmental and academic efforts that included the creation of new language programs and curricular materials primarily aimed at the service of the state (Bale, 2010; Edwards, 2004; Scollon, 2004). Under the banner of national security, Arabic language learning became absorbed in finding solutions to the national concerns, which not only risks the homogenization of the Arabic language and its cultures as a static universe that can be solely approached through the lens of conflict, but also overlooks the needs of the ALF learner, whose interest in the language is not always politically motivated (Scollon, 2004). The post 9/11 political climate and its conflict with the East confined the language interest to a political rationality that dismisses the complex sociocultural nuances of the target language, whereby the need to learn the language led

to oversimplified assumptions about the language and its associated cultures as uniformly anti-West and/or religiously zealous.

The events of 9/11 not only rendered Arabic a politically laden language, but also raised the alarm regarding the national language policy. Those events exposed a grave national language crisis with program shortages, inefficiencies of Arabic trained professionals, and lack of instructional materials, particularly those at the intermediate and advanced levels that offer instruction on Arabic dialects (Al-Batal, 2007; Allen, 2007; Edward, 2004). Researchers have argued that such challenges are no anomaly of the U.S. foreign language education, reflecting a reality that often downplays multilingualism (see Al-Batal, 2007; Allen, 2007; Bale, 2010; Edwards, 2004; Kramsch, 2005; Scollon, 2004). Nonetheless, the exposed lack of Arabic resources in response to the threat of national security prompted substantial governmental support, including the creation and expansion of various programs (e.g., the STARTALK program, the National Security Language Initiative - NSLI, National Flagship Language Program - NFLP). However, while such initiatives were designed to enhance linguistic and cultural awareness of critical languages such as Arabic, they were essentially grounded in a circumstantial, reactive policy to political urgencies, which never promised long-term, productive strategies (Al-Batal, 2007).

Apart from the political rationality that treats Arabic as a language of conflict, Arabic as a foreign language endures its own intrinsic issues. Arabic instruction includes two forms: Standard Arabic (SA) or *fuṣħaa* (العربية الفصحى) - (lit. the language of eloquence – used interchangeably) and colloquial Arabic (QA). Standardization of Arabic suggests the structural processes of linguistic uniformity that reduces variance and facilitates interdialectal and intercultural communication and mutual intelligibility. In fact, Arabic has numerous dialects

(e.g., Maghrebi, Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Iraqi, to name a few), which as historical derivatives of *fuṣħaa*, serve the function of social communication in Arab societies. Given the diglossic nature of Arabic (see Ferguson, 1959), *fuṣħaa* enjoys the high status (H variety) as the medium of formal domains, including education, religion, and political speech, while QA holds the low status (L variety), limited to everyday personal conversation. Such diglossic partitions engender the authority of the standard variety as the form of correctness, religiosity, and intellectual refinement, while derogating colloquial varieties as debased forms of the language (see Albirini, 2016; Ennaji, 2005; Bassiouney, 2020). The attitudes towards the standard and colloquial varieties are in part cultivated by the hegemonic tendencies of the standard language ideology (SLI), which promises the religious and literary legitimacy of *fuṣħaa* by means of a linguistic uniformity, which equally compromises cultural complexity. Standardization restricts linguistic production to a uniform, conventionalized variety that commits itself to ensuring immunity for the sake of preventing linguistic shift or loss (Geeraerts, 2016; Milroy, 2001). Such practices entail serious ramifications on social and cultural representation. Given the inherent indivisibility of language and culture as two sides of the same coin, the practice of standardization raises questions about how to accommodate cultural complexity. More specifically, just like language, has culture also become uniform or *standard*? How do AFL material creators cope with the sociocultural nuances of the Arab world? To what extent are the diglossic practices reflective of Arab societies and cultures in these materials? The current study interrogates the effects of linguistic choices on cultural meaning in light of the prevailing standard language ideology and the challenges of diglossia.

1.2 Culture in Language Textbooks

Culture analysis in language textbooks has long been a subject of inquiry in second (L2) and foreign language (FL) research. Generally, this literature has identified three curricular prototypes of culture (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). In 1950's, culture in language materials was limited to factual knowledge, such as information about national cultures and aspects of objective or "Big C" Culture (e.g., geography, art, history). In this sense, knowledge of national culture primarily constitutes L2/FL cultural awareness, which claims the assimilation of the language learner into the L2/FL speech community, not necessarily as multiethnic and multicultural enclaves, but essentially as a national entity. In the early 1990's, the focus expands to include a more pragmatic approach to culture, which considers the communicative linguistic practice the locus of culture learning, focusing on aspects of subjective or "small c" culture (e.g., communicational practices, social interactions and conventions, conscious cultural behavior). In this context, culture centers on conformity and reciprocity to the L2/FL cultural behavior and appropriateness. Such pedagogical goals are maintained with the notion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997), which contends that the development of ICC cannot be isolated from the goal of language learning, leading to successful communication, mutual understanding, and crosscultural tolerance. More recently, current trends in culture analysis in language textbooks account for the pivot of globalization and transnationalism (e.g., Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Risager, 2018, 2021), which places focus on critical reflexivity in light of the ideological, political and economic interdependencies of globalization.

Enjoying an institutional legitimacy, language textbooks construct, disseminate, and naturalize knowledge about society and the world. They deliver the implicit and explicit linguistic and cultural meanings enabled via linguistic and visual resources, which assign certain

norms and value systems to the represented speech community of the target language. These pedagogical artifacts situate their contents and learners within certain historical language pedagogies of global politics and power dynamics, which render the demand for their evaluation and analysis imperative (Apple, 1992; Curdt-Christiansen, 2015; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Weninger & Kiss, 2015). Such pedagogical historicity lies in what Weninger and Kiss (2015, p.1) describe as "the time capsules", which rely on representational samples, carefully crafted to establish meaning and inculcate its value systems to preserve (or annul) certain existing institutional and social relations (Apple, 2004). In fact, these functions shape the unnoticed processes of the hidden curriculum, which continue to generate social and cultural inequalities and legitimize the ideological workings of those in position of power as uncontested truths (Apple, 2004; Ping, 2015; Wang, 2016). In effect, cultural meaning in language textbooks is not merely a matter of pedagogy, but critically concern the traces of political and ideological demarcations.

The rapid globalization processes that propel the authority of English as a world power in international communication have been central to the interest in culture analysis in language teaching materials. Globalization has accelerated the political amalgamation of knowledge and economy, especially as the ongoing technological developments and their amplified interconnectedness have assigned English a special value for the integration of information and economic activity. As such, English tends to enjoy more authority as the de facto world's second language, offering an ideological resource to maintain power relations. In fact, knowledge of English has long been advertised as a progressive force of openness to global society and a tool for social mobility. In many societies, such beliefs continue to shape institutional policies and social practices alike (Curdt-Christiansen, 2015). Kachru (1986, p. 1) characterizes the symbolic

power of English as the mythical "Aladdin's lamp", which absurdly promises access to knowledge and global economy at the expense of local languages and cultures. Such promises have imposed a dichotomous system of cultural politics, which situates Anglicism (Pennycook, 1994) as a legitimate authority that continues to redefine and restructure world societies and cultures. The unbalanced representations of the local and the Western (global) cultures (e.g., Davidson & Liu, 2020; Juan, 2010; Keles & Yazan, 2020; Nomnian, 2013; Song, 2019; Yamada, 2010; Yuen, 2011), the cultural bias and conflicted discourses in the value systems of those cultures (i.e., Gulliver, 2010; Ndura, 2004; Setyono & Widodo, 2019), as well as their ideological tensions (e.g., Aljuaythin, 2018; Block & Gray, 2017; Curdt-Christiansen, 2015; Gray, 2013; Ilieva, 2000) are a few examples of the hegemonic practices of the English language that researchers have decried in curricular materials. The ideological hegemony of English perpetuates global inequalities, cultural homogenization, and identity crisis by reason of linguistic and cultural imperialism (see Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992).

Analogous political and ideological effects of globalization have surfaced in the context of FL teaching materials. These cultural politics have not only been restricted to the structural incongruities in reference to the first (C1) and target culture (C2), but more critically to the deep-seated ideological and political worldviews to access a global economy, instantiated for instance in the prevalent tourism discourse and the elision of problematic political and historical questions (Kramsch, 1988, 2012; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Vinall, 2012). Such issues point toward the neoliberal, capitalistic longings that naturalize consumerist behavior as a fixed attribute of mainstream culture, underscoring the commodification of language and culture for a global citizenship, which often situates knowledge as a market prerequisite that exoticizes the cultural other and reproduces colonial logic. To this end, the tourist gaze is part of the challenges of

globalization and its political, economic, and social presuppositions, which fix language learning in service transaction and the quest for possession, rather than genuine conversational give-and-take (Vinall & Kramsch, 2015; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010).

Loaded with ideology (Weninger & Kiss, 2013), language textbooks put into work the cultural politics of knowledge construction and its legitimization. In this sense, cultural politics suggest the discursive strategies through which cultural subjects, objects, events, and their sociohistorical processes are prone to ideology and power dynamics. By design, cultural politics in language textbooks are embedded in the meaning-making processes that inform economic accessibilities in the age of globalization, which keep the dominant political, social, and cultural paradigms at work (Fairclough, 2015). Empirical studies in the analysis of culture in language textbooks have evidenced several issues pertaining, but not limited, to the disproportionate cultural representations of global/majority and local/minority group identity (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen, 2015; Juan, 2010; Ping, 2015; Sun & Kwon, 2020; Yamada, 2010), blanket omission and erasure techniques of minority and local cultures (e.g., Azimova & Johnston, 2012; Gray, 2013a; Hong & He, 2015; Porreca, 1984; Wang, 2016), the prevalence of the tourist-consumerist gaze and product culture (e.g., Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Nomnian, 2013; Yuen, 2011), forms of stereotypical and monolithic conceptualizations of culture (e.g., Aljuaythin, 2018; ;Ilieva, 2000; Ndura, 2004; Or & Shohamy, 2015; Uzum et al., 2021), as well as the discursive patterning of the ideological square ('Us Vs. Them': positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation) (Gulliver, 2010). Thus, researchers (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; McNamara, 2012) propose a poststructuralist approach to interrogate curricular practices, paying critical attention to the broader discourses and ideologies of the educational philosophies at work (e.g.,

internationalized education, monolingual/multilingual education), institutional authority (e.g., publishers, universities, school boards), as well as the political and economic urgencies in the era of superdiversity and globalization (e.g., historical events and rationalities informing FL education).

1.3 Research Direction

Against the backdrop of AFL as a politically loaded language (Bale, 2010; Diao & Trentman, 2016; Edwards, 2004; Scollon, 2004; Trentman & Diao, 2017), the ideological practices of language standardization and the pedagogical challenges of Arabic diglossia (Geeraerts, 2016; Milroy, 2001), and the cultural politics of curricular martials in the context of globalization and power relations (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Risager, 2018; Weninger & Kiss, 2013), the present study adopts a revised content analysis approach (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorff, 2002; Ping, 2015) to examine cultural representations in AFL textbooks, drawing upon Moran's (2001) framework of cultural dimensions. As such, the study accounts for the representation of objective, "Big C" culture (e.g., cultural products, places/communities, persons), as well as subjective, "small c" culture (e.g., cultural practices, perspectives), interrogating the discursive constructions of cultural meaning and their underlying ideologies in light of the political and economic interdependencies of globalization.

While content analysis has long been praised for its objective assessment and robust measures in line with learning objectives, studies utilizing this framework rarely attend to the discursive and ideological processes that inform cultural meaning in language material (e.g., Davidson & Liu, 2020; Juan, 2010; Keles & Yazan, 2020; Nomnian, 2013; Song, 2004; Yamada, 2010; Yuen, 2011). The current study, however, incorporates a poststructuralist approach that questions the conflicted discourses of globalization and political space underlying language and

culture knowledge (Blommaert, 2010; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; McNamara, 2012). AFL curricula occupy such a space, being designed for an American AFL learner, whose interest in the language is preconditioned by a political rationality to serve the national interest following the events of 9/11 (Bale, 2010; Diao & Trentman, 2016, Trentman & Diao, 2017). As such, the study examines cultural contents, interrogating the critical links between the orientation of cultural knowledge with the larger discourses that encircle AFL in its global, political and pedagogical contexts.

A number of studies have addressed instructors' evaluations and learners' needs and expectations via means of survey questionnaires (e.g., Abuhakema, 2004; Badr, 2019; Tamimi, 2014; Wahba & Chaker, 2013), but, to my knowledge, only three studies critically analyze cultural contents in AFL textbooks, which reflect different temporal and institutional contexts (Brosh, 1997; Or & Shohamy, 2015; Uzum et al., 2021). Taking a critical approach to culture analysis, these studies contend that Arabic curricular materials often deploy discursive practices that suggest the prevalence of political and/or religious ideology. The present study thus aims to fill the gap in the scholarship by paying critical attention to cultural representations and their intended knowledge, discussed against the broader discourses and ideologies underlying the language status in U.S. education. This research direction promises important pedagogical implications that aim to counter the monolithic and homogenizing conceptualizations of Arab cultures and societies.

1.4 Researcher's Positionality Statement

I, the researcher, am a native speaker of Arabic, born and raised in Morocco until I left the country for my graduate studies in the U.S. Being a native Moroccan surely offers an insider perspective on certain aspects of Arabic language and culture but does not equally guarantee an

extensive awareness of the different Arabic linguistic and cultural nuanced (sub)variation. As someone who grew up internalizing localized values of Arab culture in a relatively small part of the Arab world, I consciously acknowledge the limitations of the blind spots another researcher from a different part of the Arab world might not have. The Arab world comprises twenty-two states stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Indian Ocean, covering the region of MENA (Middle East & North Africa) and parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Those countries encompass Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. All these countries comprise a wide array of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious affiliations. Indeed, the mosaic nature of Arab culture is rooted in its space and time, in its territory and civilizations, through its individual and collective memory, which thrives on the grandeurs of its past and the dreams of its future (Barakat, 1993).

As a native Arabic speaking teacher, I have had the chance to use the proposed materials in my former AFL classes in U.S. institutions. When I first embarked on this journey as an AFL teacher, the school required the use of *Al-Kitaab* series, which as a novice teacher, I tremendously enjoyed given its innovative approaches to vocabulary acquisition and grammar learning. Considering the lack of choice caused by the scarcity of AFL teaching materials, I applauded the multimedia resources that the book offered, and its underlying, instructional philosophy for the integration of Arabic dialects. During these early stages of my career, this series played a pivotal role, offering a fundamental tool for my early teacher's training (Richards, 2001). However, I had my personal reservations about the textbooks.

In comparison with other language textbooks that I used to teach ESL or French for instance, I realized that the *Al-Kitaab* series was severely lacking a visual appeal with its

unauthentic pictures and illustrations. More critically, I started to question the rationale behind its cultural presentations, as well as the vocabulary and illustrations proposed to generate certain themes. I was for instance baffled by the presence of corporate America as a part of cultural representations and by the heavy focus on transnational terms and secularist instantiations. For instance, was the logo of KFC fast-food chain in *Alif Baa* aimed to cater to the English learner's cultural reality or was it merely designed to evoke a sense of modernity and openness about Arab societies and hence instantiate cultural relatability? How about those English learners who do not identify with fast food culture? Are KFC restaurants any representative of food culture in Arab societies? As I went on to elicit more of my students' perspectives on such issues and started to develop a critical approach to cultural representation, I started to realize that these pedagogical artifacts are burdened with ideology (Weninger & Kiss, 2013), offering raw material for empirical, critical research to examine the construction of cultural knowledge and the way cultural meaning is inculcated and legitimized.

After several years of using *Al-Kitaab* series, the school I worked for decided to shift to *Arabiyyat al-Naas 1*. Many of my teacher friends and colleagues expressed their appreciation of the new material and saw in its inception a groundbreaking direction in the teaching and learning of AFL, particularly with its take on the pedagogical dilemma of SA and QA. The realistic visuals, new entertaining contents, and relevant, authentic scenarios in video and audio material (e.g., songs, intercultural dialogues, writing demonstrations) as well as its PowerPoint slides have, to some extent, remedied the lack of choice in AFL resources. However, I was also alarmed with its light coverage of literacy and vocabulary, assigning only two chapters in the book for the letters and sounds, as opposed to *Alif Baa*, which is entirely designed as an introduction to literacy practice. The *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series was also limited to one dialect

(i.e., Levantine Arabic), different from the *Al-Kitaab* series, which included both Levantine and Egyptian Arabic beside the standard variety. More importantly, *Arabiyyat al-Naas 1* offered a different approach to culture, integrating cultural learning in different tasks of the language material. My students and I were always excited to start our lessons watching Emily's videos and her cultural journey in the Levant (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine), to set up the groundwork for linguistic and cultural learning. The relevant experiences as a Western student traveling and learning abroad played a crucial role captivating the students' attention and boosting their interest in the language. Still, I thought the material was overwhelmingly loaded with geographical foci, national landmarks, and literary work. As I began to critically question the efforts of the material constructing cultural knowledge about the Arab world, it started to dawn on me that knowledge is grounded in discourse; perspectival and socially situated (Foucault, 2013; Gee, 2005; Risager, 2018), informed by the interest of numerous stakeholders within the political bargain of its own educational system and curricula (Dendrinos, 2015; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015).

Lastly, I should once again acknowledge that my interest in this research project lies in the descriptive processes of the construction and naturalization of cultural meaning in curricular materials, rather than its appropriateness or suitability. My aim is not to advocate for certain types of cultural representation or adjudicate on certain cultural foci in the language material. Rather, I endeavor to explore cultural meaning and critically examine the discourses and links with ideology. With prudence, I ensure in empirical evidence my main tool to explore the multifaceted nature of meaning and its verisimilitude, paying critical attention to the current cultural politics and power relations that connect the Arabic language learning with the directives of globalization.

1.5 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured in the following manner. In the current chapter, I have argued for the focus on AFL in the context of U.S. postsecondary education, the research direction of culture analysis in language textbooks, and the aim of the study. In the first section of Chapter 2, I present the literature, discussing the development of AFL in the U.S. educational context, the language status, and the pedagogical challenges posed by Arabic standardization and diglossia. In section two, I focus more closely on culture in language textbooks, establishing foundational definitions of culture, language textbooks, and the construct of representation. Later, in section three, I provide a review of empirical studies of textbook analysis and major research directions in the field, namely content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and semiotic (multimodal) analysis.

In Chapter 3, I present the methodology of the dissertation, starting with the aim of the study and the research questions in the first section. Afterwards, in section two, I discuss characteristics pertaining to the data, such as the data collection and rationale, and provide details related to the pedagogical features of the textbooks in light of culture learning. Next, in section three, I introduce the analytical procedures guiding the study. In section four, I outline major analytical adaptations within the adopted analytical framework and methodological limitations. Finally, in section five, I provide a chapter summary of the methodology adopted in the study.

In Chapter 4, I report the findings of the research questions, starting with a brief background in the first section of the chapter. In the following section, I provide the findings focusing on each textbook individually. In section three, I conclude the chapter with a summary and significance of the findings.

Next, in Chapter 5, I start the discussion of the findings against the ideological underpinnings that motivate the study. That is, in the first section, I reassess the textbooks' representations of the Arab world and cultures in section one, attending to the ideological practices of these curricular artifacts. In section two, I revisit the degrees of criticality of AFL as a politically loaded language in connection to the present findings. In section four, I discuss the current linguistic choices and their effects on cultural representations, offering alternatives to expand and enhance diglossic practices. In section four, I offer implications for research methods and pedagogy. And finally in section 5, I close the dissertation with a summary and propose directions for future research regarding the analysis of culture in AFL.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) in the U.S.

Scholars trace the history of Arabic as a foreign language (henceforth as AFL) in U.S. institutions to three main stages, notes McCarus (1987): theological, philological, and archeological. The emergence of AFL dates back to the 17th century in Ivy League universities such as Harvard in 1654, Yale in 1700, the University of Pennsylvania in 1788, Dartmouth in 1807, and Princeton in 1822. During this stage, Arabic presented a supplemental subject to support Semitic studies, including the Old Testament and Hebrew. In the 18th century, the interest in Arabic became part of the emergence of the methods of comparative Semitic philology. However, with the rise of Egyptology studies in the early 20th century, the interest in the language shifted to support archeological fieldwork, and hence considered a fundamental resource to navigate and understand Arab societies (McCarus, 1987). Up until this time, AFL offered an academic endeavor with different applications to understand religion, ancient history, and a slim part of language and society, yet dismissed the political nuances of the East.

Following major world events, the interest in Arabic shifted drastically. The U.S. intelligence efforts in WWII exposed a dire unpreparedness in terms of traditionally neglected languages, known as Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) or Critical Languages (CLs) (Allen, 2007; Bale, 2010; Scollon, 2004). This alarming realization prompted a political rationality that renewed the interest in foreign languages, posing new challenges for accelerated linguistic and cultural training, and designs of language programs at numerous government

agencies, such as the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Defense Language Institute (DLI), National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as early as the 1950's. In 1958, the U.S. Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and its Title VI to support the development of foreign languages in U.S. higher education. As the title suggests, this language advocacy was motivated by a national mandate to address the issue of national security and ensure the U.S. geopolitical interest worldwide. Like other languages, Arabic under this policy benefited from Title VI in terms of academic fellowships and research, material development, study abroad programs, professional training, and departmental budget (Bale, 2010). However, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the national linguistic preparedness exposed even further shortcomings in terms AFL linguistic and intercultural resources.

2.1.1 The Demands for AFL as a Critical Language

The events of 9/11 exposed a dire need for AFL resources, which was documented in a number of reports. For instance, those reports include the 2002 U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report, probing linguistic preparedness in federal agencies (e.g., State Department, Defense, NSA), the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in U.S. House of Representatives, and the bipartisan Iraq Study Group report. Following those studies, the American Council on Education called for immediate action to address the dearth of Arabic competencies among U.S. government officials (mainly SA and Iraqi Arabic) to serve America's interest abroad (Bale, 2010). In 2006, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), which was coordinated between the departments of State, Education, and Defense, and the Director of National Intelligence, also emphasized the objective to increase the number of students learning critical languages such as Arabic in a number of educational programs (US Department of State, 2006). This pledge was key in the inception and expansion of various Arabic programs in many

government agencies and universities. Most notably, programs such as the Fulbright exchange sponsored by the Department of State, and the Department of Defense's National Security Education Program received significant expansion.

Acknowledging the political and military demands for AFL in the post 9/11 climate, Abu-Melhim (2014b) suggests that familial and academic obligations warrant equal considerations. As discussed earlier, the political and military demands are paralleled, for they are both invested in addressing the threat of national security, which necessitate a skilled workforce in governmental agencies and intelligence (e.g., Department of State, NSA, US Navy, US Army), including teachers, cryptologic linguists, combat interpreters, and translators. However, the U.S. is also home to a minority of speakers with special interest in Arabic as a heritage language (i.e., heritage speakers), which includes AFL learners of Arab descent, who strive to preserve and cultivate their linguistic and cultural bonds. Lastly in these demands, academic considerations concern the cadre of Arabists such as linguists and orientalists in U.S. universities and colleges, conducting Arabic research, either within the 9/11 framework or otherwise. Nonetheless, triggered by political events, the language crisis revealed critical inadequacies in AFL resources, which failed to address the issue of infrastructure hindering Arabic and foreign language education as a whole.

The urgency for a topnotch AFL education increased funding for several governmental language programs; however, fundings for other students' programs such as the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), which supports elementary and secondary FL education under Title VI decreased significantly (Bale, 2010). The Title VI promotion of AFL was heavily invested in its Part A (focusing on higher education), rather than its Part B (K-12 infrastructure programs), which unsurprisingly affirms the political language ideology that prioritizes language

as a resource strategy for national security (Petrovic, 2005). This sort of language advocacy is an alarming reminder that the promotion of AFL relied on the political needs of the state; a rationality that thrives on the U.S. hegemony in areas deemed critical for world peace (Allen, 2007; Bale, 2010; Edwards, 2004; Kramsch, 2005; Scollon, 2004). Rethinking AFL education solely in terms of political demands obscures the humanistic value of language and intercultural learning, which others the linguistic and cultural East, exerting a colonial framework that only exacerbates power asymmetries and denies access to the wider cultural reservoirs (Said, 1978). In fact, if this national language crisis proved anything other than the shortage of AFL resources, it has exposed an imperial arrogance that discounts the linguistic and intercultural awareness of countries the U.S. seeks to invade (Edwards, 2004 cited in Bale, 2010).

2.1.2 AFL Enrollments in U.S. Colleges and Universities

More than any other time in U.S. history, the interest in AFL proliferated in the wake of the events of 9/11. While other foreign languages like Spanish and French have long dominated U.S. foreign language education as the Most Commonly Taught Languages (MCTL), Arabic enrollments between 2002 and 2009 witnessed a significant growth of 232%, according to data supplied by the Modern Language Association (MLA). The number of institutions that reported completed bachelor's degrees in Arabic doubled between 2009 and 2016, from 14 institutions granting 118 degrees in 2009 to 28 institutions, granting 215 degrees in 2016 (Looney & Lusin, 2019). In the following, Figure 1 (Fahmi & Liska, 2024) illustrates Arabic Fall enrollments in light of the overall MCTL enrollment in selected years from 1958 through 2016. The selected years represent the only available data provided in the 2016 MLA report at the time of the data collection.

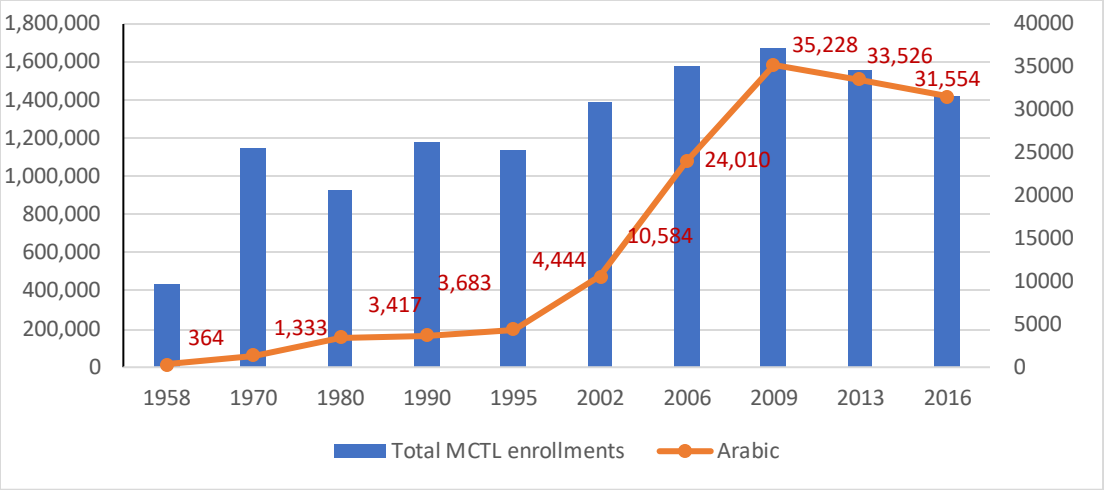

Figure 1: Fall enrollments for the Most Common Taught Languages (MCTL) and Arabic. From "Promoting Arabic as a Foreign Language in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA): Host-Grounded Study Abroad Discourses," by Zakaria Fahmi & Dacota Liska, 2024, Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, Issue 36, Volume 1. CC-BY-NC. Used with permission (See Appendix B for permission).

As reported in the 2016 MLA data, despite the overall drop in the MCTL enrollment by 9.2% between 2013 and 2016, averaged across all levels, Arabic enrollment witnessed a 5.9% decrease, with 51.5% of all Arabic programs recorded either stable or increased enrollments of 36.7%. Arabic, along with other languages such as Chinese and American Sign Language, displayed notable growth for the decade-long span from 2006 to 2016 (Looney & Lusin, 2019). Over this course span, Arabic remarkably moved from 364 enrollments in 1959 to 31,554 enrollments in 2016. Also, the percentage of institutions with Arabic enrollments increased significantly from 5.7% in 1990 to 25.6% in 2016.

Considering the reported numbers, it is also vital to account for the various AFL programs which include both SA (Standard Arabic) and QA (Colloquial Arabic). Compared to SA, QA such as Egyptian or Levantine Arabic, outside government programs, did not receive much attention following the 9/11 attacks. Instead, the academic focus was placed primarily on SA programs and Iraqi dialect in particular within government agencies, given the post 9/11 Iraq war. However, it is important to note that those SA program are often inclusive of the Egyptian

and Levantine dialects as the two most prioritized varieties to teach alongside SA. Only 158 enrollments reported for Fall 2013 and 188 for Fall 2016 for Egyptian Arabic, while Levantine Arabic was reported at 248 enrollments for Fall 2013 and 154 for Fall 2016, compared to 573 for Fall 2013 and 869 for Fall 2016 for SA (Looney & Lusin, 2019). In the following, Table 1 outlines Arabic programs and enrollment at the associate, bachelor, and graduate levels in the years 2009, 2013, and 2016. Derived from the same data source (2016 MLA report), the presented data was the only available data at the time of conducting this research.

Table 1: Fall Arabic programs for the years 2009, 2013, 2016 in U.S. institutions.

	Year	Two-year institutions	Four-year institutions	Graduate Programs	Total
Arabic, Egyptian	2009				0
	2013	45	113	0	158
	2016	38	150	0	188
Arabic, Gulf	2009				0
	2013		4	0	4
	2016	0	0	0	0
Arabic, Iraqi	2009	60	1	0	61
	2013	159			159
	2016	25			25
Arabic, Levantine	2009				0
	2013	200	48	0	248
	2016	56	98	0	154
SA	2009				0
	2013	4	548	21	573
	2016	183	666	20	869
Arabic, Moroccan	2009				0
	2013				0
	2016		1		1
Arabic, Quranic	2009		20	1	21
	2013		0	0	0
	2016		1	1	2
Arabic, Sudanese	2009		0	3	3
	2013		4	0	4
	2016	7	1	0	8

The popularity of AFL is not inherent of the number of its speakers or the size of its landscape. There is no connection between the number of Arabic speakers worldwide and the popularity of the language or its numbers of enrollment. As one of the six official languages of the United Nation, a language of roughly 527 million speakers worldwide, and a vital construct for the fastest growing religion with 1.8 billion Muslims making 24% of world population, Arabic does not appear to enjoy the same popularity as Spanish or French for instance (Lipka, 2017; Looney & Lusin, 2019; World Population Review, 2021). However, in the post 9/11 climate, the striking emergence of Arabic from a LCTL (i.e., its early orientations as theological, philological, or archeological) into one of the MCTLs is the result of a language advocacy that was focused on U.S. economic and geopolitical hegemony (Bale, 2010; Brosh, 2013; Husseinali, 2006). As such, Arabic as the fifth most spoken language in the world has managed to gain a renowned utility in today's increasingly globalized political economy. Specifically, Arabic has become more in demand than ever because of the designation of 'criticality', instilling promotional discourses that the latter can secure careers in diplomacy, intelligence, military, or petroleum industry (Abu-Melhim, 2014b; Dillon, 2003; Howe, 2002).

Despite the promising growth, the status of AFL in U.S. education endures a lack of comprehensive enrollment data, which continues to impede systematic assessment of the national capacity in language programs, as well as the development of efficient planning for AFL and foreign language education in general. The absence of consistent data hinders the analysis of local and national trends, especially during the renewal of interest in AFL education. The inconsistencies in reporting enrollment data point towards further problematic structural and systemic deficiencies that bear the potential to conceal underlying monolingual ideologies by sufficing with the need for foreign languages to serve the political interest (Looney & Lusin,

2019). Within the resource-orientation framework of AFL as a language of national security, Bale's (2010) analysis of Title VI and Arabic programs raises important questions as "to what end and in whose interests these language planning policies are?" and "do some ends and interests count more than others?" (p. 268). The general impression that Title VI fundamentally serves the national interest seems paradoxical with the conventional attacks of neoconservatists on bilingual education, who tend to cherish foreign language education only in time of conflict and political turmoil. This political double-standard in critical language advocacy exposes the irony in the AFL resource approach, which showcases the urge for a bilingual education neoconservative politics long sought to fight (Bale, 2010; Scollon, 2004).

2.1.3 The AFL Pedagogical Dilemma: SA, QA, or both?

Standard Arabic (SA) or fuṣḥaa (العربية الفصحى) (used interchangeably) dominates the teaching of Arabic in most world institutions, including U.S. colleges and universities. This variety, being a derivation of Qur'anic and classical Arabic, represents the medium of formal domains such as education, religion, literature, and news media. In fact, the prevailing ideology of fuṣḥaa derives its authority from religious and literary capital. This purist pedagogy celebrates the status of the standard variety as the idealized form of correctness and eloquence, taking partial interest in the sociolinguistics and multiculturality of the language, such as the role and degrees of diglossia, interdialectal variation and intelligibility, or identity work. In principle, the standard language ideology prioritizes form over meaning, focusing on literary expressivity and grammatical correctness, while overlooking the ever-evolving nature of language and the way it shapes social and cultural identities. However, understanding the SA-QA dilemma in the AFL context requires revisiting the concept of Arabic diglossia first.

In 1959, Ferguson reintroduced the French concept of diglossia (i.e., *diglossie*) to refer to the alterable use of language varieties within Arabic speech communities, based on situational factors. His main argument centers on the diglossic use of Arabic, examining the linguistic and social intersections of the H (high) variety Standard Arabic or fuṣḥaa, which govern formal domains such as education, religion, and media, and the L (low) colloquial varieties (e.g., Egyptian Arabic, Levantine Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, among others), used for ordinary social communication. In essence, Ferguson's analysis sheds light on nine descriptive and historical features of diglossia, including function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology. Fuṣḥaa, in his proposal, represents the superposed variety of prestige and supremacy, enjoying a much higher status than colloquial Arabic.

Though Fergusson's seminal work should be viewed as a descriptivist effort for a general linguistic situation, it should be noted that his observations are historically and geographically situated. As Bassiouney (2020) points out, his description of the standard variety as the *only* medium of personal letters or instruction to workers and clerks for instance insinuates that diglossia is stable, contradicting the fact that linguistic situation is in flux. In this modern day, many native Arabic speakers and heritage learners prefer to write personal letters, email, social media posts and messages in QA. Also, his observation of fuṣḥaa as the sole medium for political speech cannot be generalized for all Arab societies. Political speech can also rely on local dialects, most notably in North African countries. Ferguson's terms have been largely decried for their simplification of diglossia and standardization. His lacking argument of the possible existence of numerous standard forms or high varieties in Arab speech communities, or a conclusive proximity between H and L varieties for a situation to be considered diglossic have received much of these critiques (see Albirini, 2011; Bassiouney, 2017, 2020).

Given its discourse of eloquence, scholarship, and formality, SA has long been the dominant pedagogical model in U.S. universities. This prevalence is informed by the conventionalized pedagogy of the Arab world, which treats fuṣḥaa or SA as the target language, considering the fact that QA is only limited to the oral practices of everyday life (Al-Batal, 2017; Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006; Cooke, 2019; Ryding, 1995). However, in the context of AFL, new pedagogical inquiries started to surface regarding the practical integration of QA to complement the teaching of fuṣḥaa to ensure sociolinguistic awareness (Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006; Isleem, 2017; Youness, 2014). This alternative approach adopts the integration of different Arabic varieties in the classroom, constituting a multidialectal model to address the communicative demand for social interaction and access cultural capital (Palmer, 2008; Shiri, 2013; Younes, 2006). Even in Arab countries, there have been controversial attempts to institutionalize QA in language education, contending that the latter represent the mother tongues of young learners, and thus promises invaluable potential for primary education and the promotion of cultural identity (see Caubet, 2017, 2018; Fahmi, 2023).

Developing proficiency in both SA and QA has become a primary concern in AFL pedagogy. In light of these pedagogical negotiations, the focus has been placed primarily on two QA varieties, Egyptian and Levantine Arabic. As illustrated earlier with the 2016 MLA enrollment data, Egyptian Arabic emerged as the most studied QA variety, followed by Levantine Arabic, while SA was the only variety available for graduate programs and the highest in the overall Arabic enrollment (Looney & Lusin, 2019). The predominance of these two colloquial varieties has been maintained by the underlying concern of mutual intelligibility, which views Egyptian and Levantine Arabic as the most widely intelligible dialects in the Arab world due to their purported linguistic proximity with fuṣḥaa. However, the choice of a dialect

and the instructional balance between Arabic varieties should be essentially informed by the linguistic research, learner's objectives, and market demands. Attending to the learner's motivation should guide instruction, curricular development, and evaluation (Kuntz & Belnap, 2001). Despite the expansive interest in Arabic over the years, given its relevance to critical issues in the U.S. context, AFL still remains in a dire need for empirical research to address the challenges of its pedagogies and ensure the best teaching practices (Lo, 2019).

2.2 Culture in Language Textbooks: Theoretical Underpinnings

Culture in language textbooks has long been a subject of inquiry in second (L2) and foreign language (FL) research. Generally, studies have focused on the representational and discursive practices in English language teaching (ELT) materials, decrying the pervasive acts of Anglocentrism and the uneven systems of knowing. For instance, researchers have examined issues related, but not limited to, group identity (i.e., Canagarajah, 1993; Ducar, 2006; Mahboob, 2015; Ndura, 2004), ideologies of mono- and biculturalism (i.e., Adaskou et al., 1990; Hong & He, 2015; Nomnian, 2013; Ping, 2015), diversity and migration (i.e., Gulliver, 2010; van Dijk & Atienza, 2011; Yamada, 2010), as well as gender and sexism (i.e., Alemi & Jafari, 2012; Gray, 2013a; Porreca, 1984).

Due to the transmitted forces of cultural politics in language materials and the global power of English influencing the teaching practices of other languages, FL textbooks have also been at the center of scrutiny. In part, this direction aims to examine the way these pedagogical artifacts are representative of a political economy in the context of globalization, and unpack the power asymmetries underlying the dominant discourses and ideologies (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; McNamara, 2012). Dissimilar to the structuralist approach, which limits itself to issues of inauthenticity and simplification strategies, the poststructuralist approach

in textbook analysis integrates the microlevel analysis of content and structure, and the macrolevel of discourse and ideology (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015). However, to recognize the assumptions and research applications of these studies, I shall first discuss critical attributes pertaining to language and culture in the following.

2.2.1 Situating Culture: Pedagogical Definitions

Culture is a dynamic and performative construct. It encompasses the ever-evolving norms, values, and sociopolitical relations, within which worldviews are created, shared, and transformed by groups of people (Nieto, 1992). Bounded by a series of factors such as geography, history, religion, or language, these groups represent the members of the community as socio-temporal participants of a cultural reality. Through cultural agency, culture not only emerges as a behavior of a collective memory with an exceptional value (Nieto, 2010), but fundamentally as a doing word; a verb of conformity and reciprocity (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2012; Street, 1993). This poststructuralist definitions place prominence on the meaning-making processes of cultural performance, which captures the communicative acts of cultural subjects, whereby amalgamated collective perspectives, practices, and artifacts shape cultural meaning (Barker, 2010).

As a shared construct, culture entails manifold, interrelated phenomena. Moran (2001) suggests a comprehensive model of culture grounded in the pedagogical awareness of cultural dimensions. As a definition in this direction, Moran (2001) proposes culture as the ever-evolving way of life of cultural informants, which entails a shared set of practices, associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts (p. 24). Moran (2001) argues that people alone and with others create and use cultural artifacts, carry out actions, and bear cultural meanings in their flows of mobility

(Moran, 2001). Fundamentally, this definition assigns a conceptualization of culture grounded in the categorization of five cultural dimensions, including cultural products, perspectives, persons, practices, and place or communities, to discern the re/productive and communicative functions of culture, focusing on definitive patterns and deterritorialized practices of cultural agents.

Proposing a social constructivist approach, Kramsch (2011) asserts that culture lies in meaning-making, mainly in the way we cultivate our social bonds and make sense of the world around us. Importantly, such processes entail the pivotal utility of language as a medium of communication, which renders the linguistic practice a sociocultural practice. In this sense, culture is not a matter of static artifacts, but essentially the reproductive, communicative processes of cultural subjects reflected in the discourse of social communication (Kramsch, 2012). Within such an approach, culture emerges as a manifestation of language use, in which members of the community strive to make sense of their lived experiences, reflecting active cultivators of a cultural meaning (e.g., Agar, 1994; Gumperz, 1992; Roberts et al., 2001; Risager, 2007). This proposal rejects the reduction of culture to the fixed, product-oriented view, and suggests a productive and interpretive framework that allows to interactively negotiate meaning in socially and culturally informed contexts.

Central to the idea of linguistic practice as a cultural practice, cultural authenticity occurs in the way we naturally use language in communicative social settings. At its core, authenticity is not a static construct that merely lies in curricular contents, but a cooperated social meaning, enabled via the dialectics of contextual components, such as meaning producer, receiver, and their relational negotiations (Kramsch, 1993). Kramsch (1993) rejects the problematic view that reduces authenticity to fixed textual properties, without any provision of critical tools to make sense, and hence *authenticate* the material in its natural social context. Cultural authenticity thus

is relational, views Kramsch (1993), which relies on the correspondence of the speaker's intentions and the receiver's interpretation; an agreement mediated by a shared knowledge of social and cultural conventions (see Widdowson, 1979). Therefore, like culture, authenticity is rooted in meaning-making, which is shaped and enacted by the connections of different contextual social actors.

Inspired by early works in linguistic anthropology (e.g., Agar, 1994; Friedrich, 1989), Risager (2006, 2007, 2018) reintroduced the term languaculture to underscore the interactional discourses of culture and language, focusing on meaning-making. According to her (Risager, 2018), culture is meaning, and "all languages contribute to the production and reproduction of meaning, and are thereby cultural practices, although they may in some situations be less culturally dense than in others" (p. 134). As such, language offers an infinite universe for cultural (re)production in the way the linguistic practice features certain degrees of meaning-negotiation and fluidity, which mark individual variability and the unpredictability of cultural bearings. That is, language speakers are cultural informants through the way they make sense of the world around them, by means of both shared and personalized communicative practices. While such an approach to culture focuses on the (re)productive meaning-making processes, there are however problematic views that confine culture to static parameters.

The view of culture as predictable or universal stems from the uncritical, romanticized understanding of culture, contends Nieto (2010). For example, up until the late 1970s, the national paradigm dominated cultural understanding in language teaching. Limiting culture to the implicit awareness of the national as the organizing principle and frame of reference, the nationalist model reduces society and the world into fixed, definitive delineations of the nation-state. In this respect, Michael Billig (1995) introduced his seminal notion of 'banal nationalism'

to explain the implicit "ideological habits" (p. 6), which frames culture in political designations. Such practices go unnoticed in our daily life as a matter of everyday routine to *flag* the nation, invoking a sense of tribalism through national identity (Billig, 1995). Limiting the cultural to the national entails the organizational and discursive patterns that, for instance, assign the standard language as the norm, sustained by the guardianship of the native speaker ideology and the discourses of majority culture.

Culture extends far beyond the ethnonational or political configurations. Such acts produce the essentialist learning models that continue to normalize power relations and exert social and cultural inequalities. Culture in language materials should steer clear from the ideological practices of sterilized realities and glamourized expectations that discount minority and indigenous cultures. Particularly, as issues of cultural obscurantism and inequality become increasingly prevalent in the context of globalization, approaching culture in language textbooks necessitates an adapted, comprehensive approach that recognizes the sociocultural tapestries and annul monolithic conceptualizations. This becomes imperative especially as language textbooks offer access to sociocultural and political information about society and the world.

2.2.2 Language Textbooks: A Gateway to Society and the World

Kramsch (1988) views language textbooks as a distinct genre; a curricular construct that interlinks five aspects of culture: the target culture (C2), the first culture (C1), the educational culture where the textbook is published and assigned, the language classroom culture where the book is used, and the inter-culture, defined as the learning processes of C2 made possible by the relativized negotiations of C1 and C2 structures of meaning. Language textbooks serve to create deliberate social and cultural realities that are designed to shape the learner's perception with long-term applications, ultimately naturalizing cultures of privilege and cultures of subservience

(Apple, 2004; Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015; Fairclough, 2015). These materials convey the explicit and implicit (hidden) meanings of positive and negative experiences, aimed at the construction of cultural knowledge of the self, the other, and power.

More than just pedagogical artifacts, language textbooks are ideological resources (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). The ideological artifacts rely on the deliberate organization of cultural knowledge, aimed at the perception of the language learner to meet certain curricular ends and contribute to the constancy of constructed world realities (Liu, 2005). Language textbooks do not only convey the ideologies of the local, institutional, and selective processes of language policy and its cultural readings, they also reflect the global systems of power relations, with overt and covert preferences for certain beliefs, values, and attitudes (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015). Within such cultural politics, the legitimization and conventionalization of cultural knowledge becomes the question of interest. Apple (2004) contends that this legitimacy often serves the interest of those in position of power and their quest for capital. More precisely, the ideological workings of language textbooks are activated within the meaning-making processes and knowledge legitimatization, which are guided by the economic accessibilities and the dominant sociocultural, political, and pedagogical paradigms (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). These ideological artifacts suggest the discourse trends that link the complexities of social, political, and cultural phenomena at the local and global scales, lending themselves to a reliance on history and society as available resources to pursue their ideological enterprises.

Lacking ideological neutrality, language textbooks depend on a hierarchical arrangement of social relations between horizontal structures (i.e., the division of labor) and vertical structures (i.e., separation of power between the ruled and the rulers), designed for identity politics (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002). Language textbooks reinforce the order of social and political

relations between different stakeholders, between the different members of society, between those members and the value of the nation-state, and between the latter and global powers. For instance, within the national model, these artifacts offer a list of practical resources and strategies aimed at the construction and sustainment of national identity (Risager, 2018). More ubiquitously, language textbooks reenact the global politics mandated by the neoliberal capitalistic internationalization of knowledge and the renewed linguistic and cultural imperialism of English in particular, in which local values and traditions of world minorities and non-dominant cultures become subject to the hegemony of Western value systems and epistemologies (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992).

Culture analysis in language textbooks requires a comprehensive, critical approach to address the issues of representation and meaning making. This should allow one to rethink the intended intercultural competence and develop critical awareness of cultural politics, by unpacking the linguistic and visual resources in curricular materials. As such, issues pertaining to representational practices and power relations of first (C1) and second/foreign (C2) cultures in light of globalization and its political and economic systems should constitute the linchpin of the inquiry. However, before addressing the analytical toolkits of this research direction in further detail, I shall first discuss the theoretical constructs of analysis and representation in the following.

2.2.3 Analysis of Cultural Representation

First, it is important to distinguish between textbook evaluation and textbook analysis, suggest Weninger and Kiss (2015). Textbook analysis entails the theoretical systematic approach, which extends far beyond the suitability or appropriateness of a particular curricular material, in a particular educational context, for particular learners. According to Weninger and

Kiss (2015), "analysis is concerned with identifying general trends using different theories as the framework of investigation, while evaluation is situated in the practice and context of the language teacher to offer practical and immediately applicable answers" (p. 3). Textbook analysis attends to the universal structures that establish cultural meanings and value systems in curricular materials, lending itself to the descriptive and principled measures that examine cultural representation and cultural meaning, rather than the prescriptive pedagogical tasks that focus solely on offering direct solutions to teachers and institutions (Littlejohn, 2011; Tomlinson, 2012; Weninger & Kiss, 2015). Also, different from evaluation, textbook analysis prioritizes the ideological practices of cultural politics in the larger context of globalization, which remains heavily informed by the applications of a centralized interest in capital (Blommaert, 2005; McNamara, 2012). Understanding these definitions is foundational to the design and objectives of each endeavor.

Central to the notion of analysis, the poststructuralist definition of discourse proposes two levels of the latter: (1) lower case "d discourse" that concerns language use, and (2) upper case "D Discourse" that refers to the deliberate ways of thinking, evaluating, believing, and being; linking language use to the broader social, cultural, and political contexts (Gee, 2005). Language does not merely convey meaning in talk or text, but importantly constitutes a discoursal system aimed at the construction, maintenance, or cancellation of certain cultural, social, or political realities. On the other hand, ideology concerns the underlying system that inform those beliefs and evaluations, and thus deploys both forms of discourse for dissemination and naturalization of certain meanings; a system oftentimes charged with moral and/or political interest (Kroskrity, 2004). Noteworthy, discourse offers a means to ideology, to maintain social relations, value systems, and identity work.

Cultural representation in language textbooks attends to the abstract phenomena underlying cultural information about a community or a group of persons, guided by a global political economy that governs the networks of capital and power. In essence, cultural representation is about the processes of differentiation in power domains (Bourdieu, 1989). These processes operate in specific historical, social, and ideological contexts (Canale, 2016), incorporating complex interdiscursive features that suggest an organized model of perception, via which social and global realities are re/construed (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983). Representation is hence the conceptual structures of internalizing world realities, providing the learners with the reading tools to derive meaning (Weninger & Kiss, 2015).

According to Hall (1997, cited in Risager, 2018), there are three types of cultural representation: reflective, intentional, and constructionist. First, reflective representation offers a direct reflection of reality, "deriving its authority from the reality itself" (Risager, 2018, p. 5). Under this lens, language textbooks rely on objective, transparent illustrations of the target culture (C2), as lived and experienced by the members in its community. Questions related to the authors/publishers, or the circumstances of the material production are irrelevant in this approach. Second, intentional representation places prominence on the author, and suggests that the textbooks' representations are exclusively expressive of the authors' individual views of world. The authors, publishers, and the circumstances of content construction become the center of inquiry in this approach. Finally, constructionist representation centers on the fluidity of meaning as constantly open to interpretation and negotiation. In other words, readers possess their own agency to derive and negotiate cultural meanings, despite the fixed representations in the textbook. Given this taxonomy, meaning cannot be conclusively attributed to the textual or visual properties of the cultural representation alone, without the contextualization of other

situational factors related to knowledge producers, receivers, and learning conditions. Therefore, Hall (1997) and Risager (2018) recommend a balanced integration of the three considerations and not limiting the focus to a single framework. Representational practices in language textbooks are part of the textbooks' cultural politics, and therefore examining such construct should account for the multilayered issues of neutrality and bias, the deliberate designations and legitimization of knowledge, and subject positioning.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies of Culture Analysis in Language Textbooks

The review of the literature has yielded three key approaches to culture analysis in language textbooks, which are mutually open to synergy: (1) content analysis, (2) critical discourse analysis (CDA), and (3) semiotic analysis (see Canale, 2016; Weninger & Kiss, 2015). These approaches involve quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. As the most frequently applied approach, content analysis relies on the examination of the textual and pictorial resources, focusing on the frequency of cultural phenomena and topical or thematic foci. On the other hand, CDA centers on the role of discourse and ideology in producing, maintaining, or shifting models of power relation in social, cultural, and institutional practices. And finally, the semiotic (multimodal) approach focuses on the unitized interaction of multimodal features in constructing cultural meaning. These three approaches assume dissimilar definitions of culture and treats the construct of representation differently. However, all of them share the interest in the way culture is treated in language textbooks, arguing for the ideological workings underlying the construction of knowledge and its legitimization.

In the following, I present example studies of culture analysis including the three indicated methodological approaches. A full list of the reviewed culture analysis studies in language textbooks is tabulated in Appendix C.

2.3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis involves the systematic analysis of texts and images applied in fairly large corpora to investigate different techniques of meaning construction and forms of cultural communication. Relying on the quantification and tabulation of frequency (i.e., categories or units) of cultural sources and/or phenomena, either diachronically or synchronically, content analysis studies operationalize the construct of culture as acts of representations and frames of explanation or understanding. Oftentimes, these representations are organized in topical or thematic categories of cultural aspects (e.g.,, cultural products, practices), source of culture (i.e., first culture, target culture, or other/international cultures), compilation of historical facts, or dynamic processes of identity work, among others (see Canale, 2016). Doing so, this framework adopts replicable, valid, and reliable interferences, reinforced with explicit documentation of procedures and optimal descriptive theorization of content and context (Krippendorff, 2004; Weninger & Kiss, 2015).

Key to establishing the focus of analysis, content-analysis studies utilize categorical examination of analytical units informed by their "membership in a class or a category" (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 106). For instance, Yuen (2011) investigates the representation of foreign cultures in two EFL textbooks in Hong Kong secondary schools, focusing on categorical references to foreign cultures, and quantifying aspects of cultural dimensions. The study reveals the prevalence of a product-oriented approach to culture, in which cultural products outweigh all other cultural dimensions. These findings also affirm the disproportionate representation of cultures with the predominance of English-speaking countries, while Asian and African countries come as the least frequently represented (Yuen, 2011).

While content analysis seeks in the categorization and quantification of cultural phenomena a systematic means to examine relevant aspects of its sample or universe, unit selection in categorization and coding procedures are not always explicit. In an attempt to identify stereotypes and cultural bias in six English as Second Language (ESL) textbooks used in K-12 in the United States, Ndura (2004) focuses on the publishers' introductions and the editors' remarks to unveil the underlying philosophies of content design and the table of contents, to note the selection and distribution of topics. The findings reveal three major forms of cultural bias: stereotyping, invisibility, and unreality. Although Ndura (2004) deploys a comprehensive list of the models of gender bias for the analysis (i.e., Banks, 2001; Sadker & Sadker, 2001), the study does not provide clear-cut, explicit criteria for data unitization and coding procedures. Rather, it suffices with shallow readings of workbook activities and illustrations from "passages of interest" (p. 146). Nonetheless, the study proposes practical, pedagogical strategies to promote culture learning, underscoring the importance of diversifying perspectives in cultural representations to help learners mitigate cultural bias.

Similar methodological ambiguities have been observed in other studies. In fact, not all content analysis studies are inductive; rather, such studies limit the analysis to categorization and unitization as the guiding principle for representational meanings. Nomnian's (2013) analysis of Thai cultural dimensions in six EFL textbooks in secondary schools in Thailand represents a pure structuralist approach limited to the distribution of closed categories (i.e., Thai cultural practices, products, places, perspectives), and discounting the interrelated global political and economic realities and local complexities potentially informing the findings. Categories can be of immense importance for the development of the taxonomy of the sample under study, as well as the identification of relationships between different elements. However, without in-depth

interpretation, they do not necessarily unpack the underlying meanings. More specifically, while the findings show Thai perspectives as the most frequent cultural category and Thai persons as the least frequent, the discussion makes no reference to the meanings or themes of those perspectives or the rationale behind their inclusion or the exclusion of other categories in the data. However, stressing the need for the learner's critical reflexivity in culture learning, the study raises important questions related to the inequities of local and global cultures in EFL textbooks, which has long been in favor of Anglo-culture and its knowledge systems.

While contents can be closed categories, themes provide rich meanings that run through the data, and thus are ideal for the supplementation of content analysis (Weninger & Kiss, 2015). These two directions combine quantitative and qualitative methods to the analysis of culture. For instance, Ping (2015) examines the linguistic resources conveying cultural meanings about diverse nationalities in twelve English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Chinese primary schools. The study adopts Krippendorff (2004) and Neuendorff (2002) content procedures which include both deductive and inductive coding. Supplementing the findings with qualitative analysis, Ping (2015) explains that the choice for content analysis offers an analytical foundation to understand the cultural content and its organization in a systematic way; "to examine what national cultures are included and what elements of culture are considered representative of those national cultures" (p. 169). While the quantitative findings reveal the disproportionate representations of national cultures, prioritizing Chinese and American national cultures in particular, qualitative analysis further explains the construction of Chinese culture as exceptional and supreme, reinforcing the local curricular ideology that EFL teaching in China strives to foster Chinese patriotism and national pride (Ping, 2015).

To analyze the degrees of racial and ethnic diversity in six EFL textbooks in Japan, Yamada (2010) employs a diachronic examination of culture between 1980's and the 2000's, focusing on the representation of countries and continents. The study adopts Kachru's model (1996) of inner circle (e.g., US, Britain, Australia), the outer circle (e.g., India, Singapore, Philippines), and the expanding circle (e.g., China, Indonesia, Thailand), as areas for frequency of representation. The focus is subsequently narrowed to Asian countries, with the focus on Japan to ascertain how frequently Japanese culture is featured in these textbooks overtime and what categories of individual representation are activated (e.g., terms of physical features: skin, eye color, hair, etc.). Besides, Yamada (2010) also uses ethnic and cultural traits for categorization (i.e., names of countries and national origins, religious affiliations, and languages). The findings suggest that despite the differential representation of countries of the English speaking communities, prioritizing national cultures from the inner and expanding circles, Japan's domestic diversity appears to be consisting predominantly of Japanese in interaction with the inner circle, which emphasizes the prevalent EFL ideologies of power and hierarchical arrangements discussed in other studies (e.g., Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Matsuda, 2002; Nault, 2006), and most notably Japan's scant responsiveness to multiculturalism (Yamada, 2010).

In the context of foreign languages and cultures other than English, Chapelle (2014) investigates the curricular progress of Québec and Canadian content in a sample of sixty-five first-year French textbooks, published between 1960-2010 in the United States. This diachronic content-oriented approach considered only the most common textbooks for its data sample. In this study, content analysis centers on contexts and cultural notes. While the former refer to segments in the text, which provide the learner context to realize some cultural knowledge about

Québec and Canada while practicing vocabulary and grammar, the latter represents the content that provides knowledge about culture as a sideline to the description and clarification of the linguistic practice (Chapelle, 2014, p. 422). The study not only reports the increased inclusion of cultural content related to Québec and Canada in the last few decades, but also includes thorough examinations of contextual factors in this curricular progress (e.g., Quiet Revolution and Canadian history, Quebec identity and culture, bilingualism). More importantly, such findings are discussed against the backdrop of Québec and Canada's language politics and international relations, addressing the interrelated systems of regional politics and social events vis-à-vis curricular contents.

Musumeci and Aski (2010) examine four Italian textbooks for beginning levels in US universities. Through the analysis of textual and visual features and activities in the textbooks, the study focuses on culture learning, mainly the implicit-explicit integration of culture, cultural competence, and assessment of the ACTFL standards. Musumeci and Aski (2010) argue that textbooks present explicit culture; however, such information is less likely to be consistently incorporated in language activities (i.e., detached view of culture). The study also indicates that culture learning is not consistently assessed in the entire textbooks, contending that such inconsistency varies by text and assessment techniques. The study underscores the need to extend culture learning beyond surface, objective culture (e.g., products), and incorporate the identification, reflection, and comparison of cultural perspectives in language activities, as informed by the ACTFL standards. Considering the introductory level of language proficiency, objective culture is vital to immerse the learner within the aspects of Big "C" culture; however, subjective culture is equally beneficial for intercultural competence, and thus students should be allowed to access these cultural meanings as they progress in their linguistic competence.

In essence, content analysis studies employ systematic categorization strategies as a means to topical or thematic analysis, adopting coding schemes and principled quantification measures that account for reliability and validity. However, content analysis requires explicit coding procedures and contextual considerations that interrogate structural analysis against the broader sociocultural and ideological patterning in hope of finding parallels and discerning the rationale that undergirds cultural representation and construction of cultural knowledge. Computing the frequency of certain terms alone is not sufficient to uncover cultural information unless such findings are explained against the backdrop of contextual phenomena. Nonetheless, content analysis has the potential to elicit specific, orderly distinctions of cultural phenomena, while addressing the *whats* and the *hows* of cultural meaning.

2.3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

As a point of departure, CDA suggests an issue-based framework, informed by the historically discursive, social, and cultural practices of dominance, inequality, and exclusion. Such an approach is interested in the complex, often covert intersections of discourse, society, and power, and the systems in which language serves to inculcate cultural, social, or political hegemonies via manufacturing consent and (de)legitimatization strategies to serve the interest of power structures (van Dijk, 2014). Fairclough (1995) offers a definition of this research direction in which he explains:

> By critical discourse analysis, I mean analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over

> power, and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p.132-33).

Language use becomes a site of struggle, through which different social or political realities are created and naturalized, and broader ideological delineations and their quest for hegemony manifest. Oriented within a poststructuralist approach, such definitions illuminate the critical processes in which language use informs and is informed by ideology and power dynamics.

In practice, CDA does not suggest a uniform set of analytical procedures or a specific direction of research. Instead, this framework relies on interdisciplinary analytical tools, inspired by a common interest in political, social, and cultural issues. It is important to note that such interdisciplinarity contributes to the supposed variability in the attention paid to linguistic details. Attending to linguistic structures and processes in talk and texts to uncover ideological investments lies at the heart of the CDA interest in culture analysis.

Interrogating the construction, representation, and voice of cultural knowledge in a widely used ESL adult textbook in Canada (i.e., Canadian Concepts 3), Ilieva (2000) adopts Fairclough's (1989, 1995) CDA approach that attends to three level of analysis: (1) textual analysis defined as the description of linguistic features in the text, (2) processing analysis or the interpretation of the processes of production and interpretation of text, and (3) social analysis, or analysis of the conditions of the production and interpretation of text. The study puts forward an educational, anthropological approach to culture; "culture as a process of making sense of the world and a site of social differences and struggle over meaning and representation of people with multiple and shifting identities" (Ilieva, 2000, p. 52). The findings reveal the pervasive capitalist discourses of urbanism and consumerism (e.g., shopping as a vital feature of Canadian culture), displaying a mainstream understanding of culture; a national attribute of fixed values

and behavioral patterns, which trigger the homogenization of Canadian society (Ilieva, 2000). Though the analysis exhibits the manifestation of such discourses through lexical choices, it does not provide an explicit discussion of the analytical procedures adopting the proposed framework. My reading of the study resonates with Weninger and Kiss's (2015) observation that inadequate textual evidence to support inferences and operationalization of critical discourses usually renders the findings overgeneralized and unsubstantiated, reiterating a common critique in terms of the attention paid to linguistic analysis in CDA studies.

Examining the discourses of cultural knowledge and ideology in Chinese language textbooks, Liu (2005) adopts a CDA approach that incorporates elements of critical curriculum theory (Apple, 1992). Using a sample of 308 texts in twelve volumes of the People's Education Press (PEP) used in primary schools in China, the study draws upon a CDA framework with three analytical dimensions. The first dimension focuses on intertextual analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Lemke, 1992), which probes the intertextual relations between texts at three levels: thematic, orientational, and organizational. The second dimension attends to the perspectival and sub-semantic areas that constitute major discourses in the texts, using frequency statistics and highlighting strategies of emphasis and omission of discourses. And the third dimension concerns the analysis of forms and linguistic choices, namely lexical units, syntactical means, and generic structures, through which major discourses are realized. The study reports the prevalence of three main discourses: patriotism (32.14%), cultural values and beliefs (29.22%), and pro-science and technology (23.37%) (Liu, 2005). These dominant discourses are discussed in the way cultural knowledge is designed to serve the interest of the nation-state and maintain social order. More specifically, such discursive prevalence entails a closed discourse system guided by power relations, in which the reader's identity, interest, behavior, and intersubjectivity

are defined and constrained. Liu (2005) takes issue with such system orientation and calls for an open discourse system of cultural knowledge grounded in critical thinking and cultural reflexivity.

Gulliver (2010) examines the narratives of immigrant success in twenty-four ESL textbooks in a government funded language program in Canada. Employing a CDA framework that examines the (de)legitimization strategies (i.e., the ideological square: us vs. them; emphasizing-deemphasizing strategies) (see van Dijk, 2000) and the maintenance of a low orientation to difference (Fairclough, 2003), the study takes interest in the discursive strategies in the forms of the positive-self and the negative-other, as well as the extent of dialogicality. Through the identification of generic structures in these texts, CDA helps to discern the strategic objectives and ideological relations. The analysis captures several recurrent narrative patterns through the texts (e.g., redemptive narratives), which infuse different immigrant experiences ritualized into a shared national story that represents Canada as a place of greatness and success, and oftentimes countries of immigrants as places of struggle and poverty (Gulliver, 2010). These findings suggest that these redemptive stories become a practice of legitimation in the language material through which the national imagining of immigration is naturalized (Gulliver, 2010).

Xiong and Qian's (2012) study addresses the hegemonic practices in EFL materials in Chinese high schools, exploring the way such ideologies are entrenched in cultural knowledge and commonsensical meanings. Drawing on a relatively smaller data size, the study examines texts from a unit entitled "Language" in a popular textbook, Advance with English (Student's Book 3), focusing on three types of text: the "Reading" section, the "Welcome Note", and the "Grammar and Usage". As explained, the rationale underlying these choices is elicited by the unit's discussion of major historical, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic aspects related the English

language, as well as other aspects pertaining to the evolution of the Chinese characters, which "can be seen as a measure to neutralize the perceived linguistic and cultural imperialism caused by English teaching" (Xiong & Qian, 2012, p. 80). The findings identify three key issues in the unit: (1) the selective representation of the history of English, (2) the shallow sociolinguistic explanations, and (3) grammatical prescriptivism (Xiong & Qian, 2012). The study explains that certain linguistic processes convey ideological work, such as lexical choices to assume a textual authority or the use of passive forms to hide the colonial power of English (Xiong & Qian, 2012). Similar to other reviewed studies (i.e., Gulliver, 2010; Liu, 2005), Xiong and Qian (2012) decry the one-way logic in promoting certain ideological and sociocultural positions while restraining others, particularly when it comes to representation of local languages and cultural history.

Analyzing the representation of gender in EFL textbooks in two popular EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia, Aljuaythin (2018) adopts a three-level CDA model of analysis (Fairclough, 2015), examining the level of description (i.e., the linguistic devices employed in the text), the level of interpretation (i.e., the discursive practices such as the production, distribution and comprehension of the text), and the explanation level (i.e., the social practice involving the relationships between the social and the discursive processes, situating the text within the larger social and cultural scopes). The textbooks are UK based publications, designed by foreign authors, and adopted for the first and second semesters of sixth graders in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia. As explained in the study, such materials provide critical, rich data, for they are designed for young learners, initiating cultural understanding of basic topics and facts in foreign language learning. The study involves a preliminary quantification of a checklist that includes the frequency of male and female subject occurrences in the text, the types of activities

associated with each gender, pictorial representations, and the social and domestic roles assigned to each subject. After compiling these quantitative data, qualitative analysis follows up with three generated critical themes: gender asymmetry and stereotyping, patriarchal ideology, and local perspective (Aljuaythin, 2018). The gender asymmetries in the textbooks suggest the stereotypical and marginalized representations of women, argued to perpetuate a susceptible reality of women that hinders the processes towards an egalitarian society in Saudi Arabia (Aljuaythin, 2018).

Investigating the ideologies of monoculturalism in twelve Chinese and Korean heritage language textbooks for immigrant children in the US, Sun and Kwon (2020) employ a CDA framework to examine the ideologies underlying the cultural politics of representation. The data include two popular textbook series for heritage language programs in the U.S. This choice is justified by a number of reasons discussed in the article, mainly Korean and Chinese being the top reported ethnic groups of all Asian origins, underscoring the importance of handing over heritage while "providing language education, sustaining community forces, and building social capital" (Zhou & Kim, 2006, cited in Sun & Kwon, 2020, p. 405). The analysis starts with open coding for cultural representations in texts and pictures, followed by the identification of major codes, and subsequent clustering of thematic categories outlined in hierarchical relationships (Sun & Kwon, 2020). In terms of findings, the analysis captures a disproportionate representation of culture in both series. That is, while Chinese culture accentuates the moral and value systems of patriotism, national accomplishments, diligence, and sacrifice in the name of the nation-state, using monoethnic representations of the majority population "Han" and overlooking other Chinese minority groups (i.e., the discourse of the us-culture); the Korean textbooks tend to rely on a more straightforward, yet static product-oriented approach to culture,

which is reduced to clothes, food, music, architecture, games, and the like. More critically, models of cultural representation also reveal the overrepresentation of the West and the U.S. as monocultural, monoethnic societies (e.g., everybody is white, everybody eats hotdogs, everybody celebrates Thanksgiving), capturing the White-Anglo American hegemony and its epistemologies while dismissing other minority cultures. Such findings are closely in line with other studies in the reviewed literature (i.e., Hong & He, 2015; Liu, 2005; Song, 2019; Xiong & Qian, 2012; Yamada, 2010).

Partly pertaining to Arabic as foreign language (AFL), Uzum et al. (2021) employ a multimodal CDA approach (Machin & Mayr, 2012) to examine and contrast the representation of cultures and their communities in three introductory level FL textbooks of Arabic, French, and German used in U.S. universities. Investigating textual and visual resources, the study engages a three-phase analysis to probe the ideological patterning and power relations (e.g., Chapelle, 2016; Gray, 2013b; Risager, 2018). The first phase focuses on data coding of texts and images, assigning categories to units of text and images; the second phase involves thematic derivation to characterize cultural representation and analyze the legitimization and maintenance of power relations (i.e., identity representation and subject position vis-à-vis the imagined world); and the final phase helps explain the salience of major categories, such as the representation of language learner (i.e., critical or uncritical), representation of society (i.e., monolithic or multicultural), and representation of language communities and cultural subjects (i.e., complex identities, diversity, stereotypes). Consonant with other studies (i.e., Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Ilieva, 2000), Uzum et al. (2021) argue that the three language textbooks display a monolithic conceptualization of society, constructing a tourism discourse and a political ideology that omits the complexities of culture and identity. More critically, the textbooks deliver essentialized and

homogenous representations of language communities, erasing minority cultures and communities, and treating language learners as uncritical and apolitical (Uzum et al., 2021).

Given its interest in sociopolitical issues, power, and ideology, CDA has been instrumental in the analysis of culture in FL textbooks, most notably those assigned by centralized powers (i.e., national education systems). In part, the focus on government-supported material can be explained in the ubiquitous effects of the political rationalities underlying educational directives and language policies, which are designed to prioritize a certain type of cultural knowledge and organize social order for the interest of power. CDA helps to unveil the nature of the value systems and sociocultural meanings maintained via the representational practices that reflect the local and/or global ideological commitment of different stakeholders, either through the reciprocation of similar cultural meanings or the production of counter-narratives.

2.3.3 Semiotic (Multimodal) Analysis

More recently, a myriad FL textbooks series have been using multimodality to convey cultural meaning. In essence, multimodality recognizes the richness in modes to communicate prerequisite meanings about language and culture. As such, the concept of modal affordances is dependent on the organizing principles and the cultural readings of the mode; that is, the meaning potential and expressiveness that the semiotic resources can offer. To this end, multimodal analysis views that the construction of meaning depends on the combination of various modes (e.g., texts, pictures, signs, colors, movement, gestures, gaze, sounds, music) working in tandem (Weninger & Kiss, 2015). Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) contend that these meaning-making processes also posit an editing process that offers the "integration code" as "the means for synchronizing the elements through a common rhythm" (p. 2). Multimodality covers

the broad extent of the semiotic repertoires, organizing principles, and cultural references that make the construction and communication of meaning, possible in a particular time and space (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). Multimodal semiotic analysis rests on three theoretical assumptions: (1) that cultural representation is the expression of the multiplicity of modes jointly contributing to meaning-making; (2) that these resources become socially conventionalized in order to serve as meaning-making resources contributing to social, individual, and affective meanings, as necessitated by their communities; and (3) meaning stems from the choice and configuration of modes, suggesting the interaction between modes and the motivation/interest of people in a specific social context (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010).

Drawing upon Peirce's semiotics (1974), Weninger and Kiss (2013) suggest an approach of indexicality to examine the way texts, images, and tasks, in conjunction, shape the guided semiosis for language and culture learning in language textbooks. Their units of analysis involve images, texts, and their accompanying pedagogical tasks in two Bulgarian EFL textbooks (Bloggers & Steps). In part, Weninger and Kiss (2013) critique the content analysis approach and its theoretical assumptions, noting such study of culture limits itself to static terms, focusing on the frequency of categories and treating meaning as confined to linguistic and/or visual resources. They view that explicit, factual culture resides in denotational meanings, leaving implicit, connotative culture unexplored. Further, they contend that the quantitative direction alone remains "highly inferential" and unable to probe the cultural politics of language textbooks, particularly that language textbooks are "laden with ideology" (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 699). Thus, the study posits that factual segments of culture should be paired with tasks that prompt student's reflexivity and treat culture as active habits of interpretation, rather than explicit knowledge of facts (Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Guided by appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), visual semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and systemic functional-multimodal discourse analysis (O'Halloran, 2008), Chen (2010a) examines the processes semiotic resources produce dialogic engagement and control engagement values in EFL textbook discourses. The data consist of seventeen English textbooks assigned for primary and secondary education in China. The analysis centers on the processes in which the editors, characters, and readers' voices intersect in multimodal activities, such as labeling, illustrations, highlighting, dialogue balloons, and jointly constructed texts. These five types of multimodal resources are viewed as engagement devices that manage the scalability of engagement values (Chen, 2010a). Chen (2010a) argues that the co-deployment of heteroglossic discourses in language textbooks allows for dialogic affordances between different actors in the context of pedagogy.

Informed by the same theoretical underpinnings in Chen (2010a), Chen (2010b) analyzes the processes multimodality contributes to the construal of the attitudinal curriculum goals in primary and secondary EFL textbooks in China. The study notes that images play a crucial role in bringing about certain emotions and attitudes, such as the way cartoons are contested to be suggestive of positive attitude, instilling happiness through the learning process. More precisely, the text-image relation is found to be complementary that while the attitudinal under-committed texts describe the cultural content to the reader, the corresponding cartoons construe an intended positive evaluative stance (i.e., students' positive emotion) (Chen, 2010b, p. 72). Gradually, these attitudinal undertakings are developed with the learner's progress to become institutionalized stances of evaluation, suggesting an ontogenetic view of attitudinal curriculum goals (Chen, 2010b). In line with Chen (2010a), Chen (2010b) argues that the diversity of

semiotic resources guide readers in their negotiations and extractions of cultural meaning in curricular materials.

Moss et al. (2015) study adopts aspects of visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1994), and pedagogy (Littlejohn, 2011) to examine the implications of citizenship education in a commonly used Colombian EFL textbook. The study centers on the prospects of providing meaningful contexts and purposes for language and culture learning, the types of interactions assigned in the material, and the worldview constructed in texts and images. The findings show several inefficiencies in terms of how activities are decontextualized from meaningful social context, engaging passive participation patterns, culturally neutral depictions, representation of static worldviews, and fairytale images or comic-book register, which altogether misrepresent the target community. In effect, these findings illuminate the utility of social context and interaction with culture in the transactional processes that capture the efforts to preserve a sense of identity and meaningful citizenship.

In a contrastive approach, Or and Shohamy (2015) examine the power asymmetries of Arabic and Hebrew as two politically contested languages in Israel. The study argues that the cultural politics of these two languages are informed by geopolitical issues (i.e., the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) and the conflict discourses that exert cultural tensions, stereotypes, and objectification of Arab culture in Hebrew-medium schools. Practically, the study adopts a social semiotic approach (Kress, 2010; Peled-Elhanan, 2013; Rose, 2001) that attends to the textual and pictorial representations conveyed in two major textbook series, including four Arabic textbooks for Hebrew-medium schools and four Hebrew textbooks for Arabic medium schools. Examining the representation of culture in both schools, the analysis centers on the status of the target culture, the learners' culture, reference to Palestine or Palestinians, reference to the conflict, and

the hidden agenda or motivations (Or & Shohamy, 2015). The findings suggest that the Arabic textbooks in the Hebrew-medium schools rely on a stereotypical, orientalist gaze of Arab culture, which objectifies Arabs and erases the existence of Palestinians. On the other hand, the learners' culture is present with the representation of the Jewish culture and the Israeli viewpoint of the Middle East. The Hebrew textbooks for Arabic medium schools on the other hand are argued to underscore the Israeli Jewish culture as the majority culture, which as discussed in the study, might conflict with the Arab learners' interest, values, and political views in Israel (Or & Shohamy, 2015). The study is critical of the universalistic views of culture, suggesting the annulment of the imposed models of the majority-culture value system. According to Or and Shohamy (2015), language textbooks should strive to foster critical reflexivity of citizenship and intercultural awareness, particularly in the context of political and cultural tensions.

Based on the reviewed studies, the semiotic approach strives to explain the simultaneous co-construction of meaning via different modalities in language textbooks and the way multimodality delivers cultural meaning to the language learner. This approach not only attempts to problematize the meaning potential at the theoretical level, using qualitative analyses to highlight the meaning-making processes in and throughout the material, but it also takes interest in the critical dimensions of cultural representation and culture learning.

To conclude, the literature identifies three major approaches to the analysis of culture in language textbooks: (1) content analysis, (2) critical discourse analysis, and (3) semiotic multimodal analysis. Taking different points of departure, each framework adopts a defined set of analytical tools and procedures, aimed to investigate the construction of cultural meaning in language materials. For instance, as the predominant and sole approach that applies validity and reproducibility measures, content analysis employs systematic categorization strategies and

coding schemes, which examine the quantification and distribution of cultural references and their meanings. On the other hand, with no uniform sets of analytical tools or procedures, CDA takes interest in issues of ideology and power relations, accounting for language use as a site of struggle, in which the investigation of opaque relationships between discursive practices, events, and texts, and their wider sociocultural processes permits to unpack the ideological commitment underlying the construction of cultural meaning. Finally, semiotic analysis attends to the meaning affordances of multimodality working in conjunction, which posits that semiotic resources, their organizing principles, along with their references produce meaning in a particular time and space. Altogether, these analytical applications suggest an open synergy that would update content analysis as a traditional framework, by (1) adopting the post-structuralist approach commonly applied in CDA, which interrogates structural findings against the backdrop of ideological affiliations, power relations, and interest, and (2) recognizing that cultural meaning in language materials is manifold, which extends to the combination of dissimilar semiotic repertoires (e.g., text, image, music) and their organization principle, offering a robust understanding of the production and maintenance of cultural meaning beyond the direct applications of isolated representations; that is, instead of looking at each representation individually, it would be more productive to consider cultural meaning across different modes and the type of relationship that links them.

Most notably, the aforementioned approaches demonstrate the predominance of EFL/ESL in the area of culture analysis in language textbooks over other languages, and particularly the little attention paid to AFL textbooks. In terms of English teaching materials, these approaches have identified a number of issues, such as the ideological and political tensions in curriculum design, cultural imperialism, nationality and citizenship, and aspects of monoculturalism-

multiculturalism, to name a few. On the other hand, cultural analysis in AFL materials raises the issue of the monolithic conceptualization that secularizes the target culture to serve cultural relatability (Uzum et al., 2021), as well as the orientalist gaze that not only engages stereotypical objectification of Arab cultures, but also engenders the politicization of Arabic as a language of conflict and crosscultural dissonance (Or & Shohamy, 2015). Considering such curricular issues, analysis of culture in AFL materials remains relatively scant, especially that only a single study (i.e., Uzum et al., 2021) in the reviewed literature that critically examines a small part of the data (i.e., *Al Kitaab 1*). As such, the current study introduces a revised content analysis approach that draws upon poststructuralist analysis, including a large dataset and adapted, explicit measures to examine cultural representations in ALF materials.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

This study examines cultural representations in two widely used Arabic language textbook series for Arabic as a foreign language (AFL), namely the *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series. Numerous studies of AFL in the U.S. context have affirmed the extensive use of these pedagogical resources (i.e., Abdella & Al-Batal, 2011; Badr, 2019; Elkhafaifi, 2001; Hammoud, 1996; Wahba, 2017). As established in the introduction of this dissertation, three key issues motivate the interest in these materials: (1) the critical status of Arabic in U.S. education context as a politically laden language of national security interest, (2) the prevailing standard language ideology and its maintenance of multiculturalism, and (3) the cultural politics of language textbooks in the construction of cultural knowledge.

As argued earlier, the teaching and learning of AFL in the U.S. educational context has long been associated with issues related to national security, war on terror, democratization of the political other, and global economy (see Abu-Melhim, 2014b; Al-Batal, 2007; Allen, 2007; Bale, 2010, 2014; Brosh, 2013; Diao & Trentman, 2016; Howe, 2002; Husseinali, 2006; Kramsch, 2005; Scollon, 2004). Such rationalities have certainly boosted the interest in AFL, yet they have not rectified the exacerbated orientalist gaze, exoticization of Arab cultures, or the imperialist mappings of the Arab world, which remain prevalent in the AFL post 9/11 context (see Diao & Trentman, 2016; Said, 1978; Trentman & Diao, 2017). The politicization of AFL is no more urgent than the ideological practices of standardization, which expose multiculturalism

to linguistic uniformity (Geeraerts, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Scollon, 2004). Further, the selective processes of knowledge construction, reflective of the dominant sociocultural, political, and pedagogical paradigms, strive to re/produce economic and sociopolitical accessibilities that often serves the interest of those in position of power (Apple, 2004; Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). As such, the prioritization and naturalization of certain world views, value systems, and attitudes become the point of interest for critical inquiry. Inspired by such issues, the current study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What cultural dimensions are represented and/or *not* represented in the Arabic language textbook series *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*?
2. How are these dimensions distributed in the data?
3. What cultural meanings do such representations convey about the Arabic language and its associated cultures?

The study aims to fill the gap in the empirical research of culture analysis in AFL curricular materials. As argued in the introduction and literature review, the paucity in studies of culture analysis in AFL materials for post-secondary education has been limited to survey techniques and pedagogical evaluations, addressing issues of factual knowledge, content authenticity, and instructional practices (e.g., Abuhakema, 2004; Badr, 2019; Darwish, 2019; Moser, 2019; Tamimi, 2014; Wahba & Chaker, 2013). To my knowledge, only three studies have taken a critical stance in the analysis of culture in AFL textbooks, in which only one study examines materials used in Western universities (i.e., *Al Kitaab 1*) (see Brosh, 1997; Or & Shohamy, 2015; Uzum et al., 2021).

3.2 Data

The present study examines data in five textbooks in entirety of the two aforementioned series. The first series includes three textbooks: (ألف باء) - *Alif Baa*: *Introduction to Arabic Sounds and Letters* (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2010), (الكتاب في تعلم اللغة العربية - الجزء الأول) *Al-Kitaab fii Ta 'allum al-'Arabiyya - Part One* (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2013), and (الكتاب في تعلم اللغة العربية - الجزء الثاني) *Al-Kitaab fii Ta 'allum al-'Arabiyya - Part Two* (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2013). The second series includes two textbooks: (عربية الناس - الجزء الأول) *Arabiyyat al-Naas - Part One* (Younes, Weatherspoon, & Foster, 2014) and (عربية الناس - الجزء الثاني) *Arabiyyat al-Naas - Part Two* (Younes & Al-Masri, 2014). Below, Table 2 provides more details about the selected textbooks in the study.

Table 2: The proposed textbooks for the study.

Books	Level	Number of units	Language	Number of pages	Publisher
Alif Baa	Beginner	10	SA, Egyptian, & Levantine Arabic.	227	Georgetown University Press.
Al-Kitaab 1	High beginner – Early intermediate.	13	SA, Egyptian, & Levantine Arabic.	303	Georgetown University Press.
Al-Kitaab 2	Mid intermediate-High intermediate.	10	SA, Egyptian, & Levantine Arabic.	441	Georgetown University Press.
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1	Beginner	21	SA & Levantine Arabic.	411	Routledge.
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2	Intermediate	21	SA & Levantine Arabic.	384	Routledge.

3.2.1 Data Collection

Textbook 1: *Alif Baa: Introduction to Arabic letters and sounds*, 3rd edition (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2010).

As the title suggests, this textbook is designed for Arabic beginner level with an emphasis on literacy and vocabulary acquisition. With ten units in total, the textbook includes access to a companion website and a DVD, together designed to provide activities, feedback, and supplemental video-audio materials. At the end of each unit, the textbook recaps its focus on literacy with representative vocabulary, focusing on cultural situations such as shaking hands, forms of address, at the coffee house, or guests and hosts' roles. Consistent with the explicit approach to culture learning in volume, the data in *Alif Baa* draw from the explicit designation of culture in the material; that is, the textbook's culture segments, focusing on vocabulary, dialogues/monologues, and visual illustrations, as outlined in the table of contents. Examining the textbook's own designations of culture, in fact, aligns closely with the aim of the study, which is identifying what is considered to be *general* knowledge about Arabic and its cultures.

Textbook 2: *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-Arabiyya* – Part One – 3rd edition (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2013).

Intended for high beginner – early intermediate levels, this volume provides thirteen units in total. Each unit starts with notes on vocabulary, a story in Standard Arabic (SA) and colloquial Arabic (QA), grammar notes, reading, listening, and culture. Like its previous volume, *Al-Kitaab 1* also engages an explicit view of culture, which segments culture in each unit (i.e., one or two lessons per unit), covering a variety of topics (e.g., Arabic names, establishing a household, gastronomy, religion, interpersonal relations). Considering this explicit approach, the data in this volume similarly draw from the culture segments of each unit, focusing on vocabulary, dialogues/monologues, songs, and visual illustrations throughout the material.

Textbook 3: *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-Arabiyya - Part Two - 3rd edition* (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 2013).

Building on its previous volumes, this part continues its expansion on similar foci, enhancing in the meantime vocabulary acquisition, grammar, stories in SA and QA, listening, writing, and culture learning. With ten units in total, the textbook also adopts an explicit approach to culture (usually one or two culture lessons per unit), which covers topics pertaining to housing, Arabs in America, holidays, education and so forth. Similar to *Alif baa* and *Al-Kitaab 1*, considering both parts adopt the same explicit approach to culture, which seems to be a shared feature in this series in terms of culture learning, the data in this volume draw from the culture segments in each unit, focusing on vocabulary, dialogues/monologues, and visual illustrations throughout the textbook.

Textbook 4: *Arabiyyat al-Naas* – Part One (Youness, Weatherspoon, & Foster, 2014).

Designed for beginner learners, this introductory volume treats culture as an integrated component of the language material. With twenty-one units in total, each unit consists of five lessons, which include text-videos and/or text-reading in lesson one and two interchangeably, reading passages from "Emily's" diaries (Emily, a recurring character in the text, is an American college student visiting the Middle East) in lesson three, grammar focus in lesson four, and reviews with wrap up activities in lesson five. Unlike the first series, there are no culture lessons outlined in *Arabiyyat al-Naas*. Instead, the textbook incorporates the thread of Emily's cultural experience throughout its units, focusing on her immersive activities as a study abroad student in Jordan, which engage topics related to housing, dining, meeting new friends, and the like. Emily's sociocultural encounters conveyed in her video dialogues and recounted in her diaries assist in the negotiation and mediation of cultural meaning in the material. Therefore, the data in this textbook draw mainly from Emily's immersive activities, focusing on her dialogues, diaries, songs, and accompanying visual illustrations for data analysis.

Textbook 5: *Arabiyyat al-Naas* - Part Two (Youness & Al-Masri, 2014).

Arabiyyat al-Naas 2 focuses on developing cultural awareness through the introduction of more complex topics and themes. Consisting of twenty-one units, with four lessons per unit, this volume includes short surveys of Arab history, geography, Arab cities, food, health, love and marriage, religion, economy and finance, among others. Each unit offers notes on vocabulary for warm-up activities, reading and listening materials successively in the first three lessons, before additional activities, songs/poems, and drills for review in the fourth lesson. Like its previous volume, the textbook adopts an implicit approach to Arab culture, which does not segment any material as cultural. As noted in the textbook's introduction, culture lies the type of information that embodies the interactions and lived experience of members of the speech community in the Arab world. Guided by such an understanding, the data in this volume draw from different language foci where important cultural meanings are constructed, drawing from reading passages, dialogues/monologues, as well as visual illustrations. In the following, Table 3 outlines the textbooks' approaches to culture and the data collected for analysis from each series.

Table 3: Curricular approaches to culture in the textbooks and selected data.

Textbook	Approach to culture	Data
Alif Baa	Explicit	Culture segments and visual illustrations.
Al-Kitaab 1	Explicit	Culture segments and visual illustrations.
Al-Kitaab 2	Explicit	Culture segments and visual illustrations.
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1	Implicit	Reading passages, Emily's dialogues, songs, and visual illustrations.
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2	Implicit	Reading passages, dialogues, poems, songs, and visual illustrations.

3.2.2 Rationale

Different criteria informed the data collection, mainly the textbooks' approach to culture, the pivotal role of beginner and intermediate proficiency levels for foundational linguistic and cultural awareness, and, as discussed in the introduction, the popularity of these materials in U.S. higher education. Given the different designs of the textbooks, the data draw from the explicit and implicit approaches to culture. That is, while the explicit approach renders the identification of cultural meaning straightforward, which aligns with the objectives of the study at hand (i.e., to discern the type of cultural knowledge intended for AFL learners), the implicit approach embeds cultural meaning in different activities (e.g., reading, dialogues), which hence necessitates delving further into more contents, resulting in a larger dataset for *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series. In relation to the proficiency level, the interest in introductory and intermediate levels is partly elicited by the higher enrollments in these two levels in U.S. postsecondary institutions. Also, early proficiency levels are crucial for transmitting critical knowledge, before pursuing the critical socio-political and historical dimensions of language at advanced levels (Chapelle, 2016; Keles & Yazan, 2020; Uzum et al., 2021). Finally, as argued earlier, numerous studies confirm the popularity of the selected textbooks in U.S. colleges and universities (i.e., Abdella & Al-Batal, 2011; Badr, 2019; Elkhafaifi, 2001; Hammoud, 1996; Wahba, 2017), which substantiates the MLA report and namely the prevalence of introductory levels of proficiency presented in the literature review (see Table 1).

3.3 Data Analysis and Procedure

The aim of the research questions is to provide a systematic exploration of cultural representations, by examining the quantification and distribution cultural contents and unpacking their meanings about Arab societies and cultures. To do so, the study adopts Moran's theoretical

framework (2001), which illuminates cultural meaning focusing on five key dimensions. These dimensions distill culture into codable units of surface, objective culture, namely cultural products (e.g., tools, clothing, complex institutions of family or education), cultural places/communities (e.g., the socio-spatial contexts such as nations, ethnicities, generations, or more narrowly discerned categories such as political affiliations, social clubs, and organizations), and cultural persons (e.g., individual members who embody the culture), as well as deep, subjective culture, including cultural practices (e.g., verbal and nonverbal ways of interaction and communication, and processes of preserving and maintaining cultural production), and cultural perspectives (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and value systems guiding cultural production and practices) (Moran, 2001, p. 25). Below, Table 4 outlines the cultural dimensions and their descriptors with examples.

Table 4: Cultural dimensions and their defining components (adapted from Moran, 2001).

Cultural dimensions	Descriptors
Products	Tangible objects (e.g., clothing and uniforms, food and drinks, musical instruments, architecture, tools, and the like); a certain system or institution that a certain culture produces in a certain place including but not limited to arts, language, calendar, religion, politics, economics, education, etc. (e.g., songs, films, poems, proverbs, holidays, national flags, national anthems, currencies, curricula, and the like).
Practices	Customs, traditions, and folkways – aspects of little "c" culture or subjective culture. Practices include aspects of operations (maintenance and reproduction of cultural artifact), acts (communicative functions with both linguistic and extralinguistic features), scenarios (communicative practices performed in certain social contexts for interaction), and lives (stories of members of the culture through biography and drama).
Perspectives	Explicit and implicit worldviews – ideas underlying operations, acts, scenarios, and lives; perspectives conveyed in religious beliefs, political affiliation, proverbs, myths, folktales, and the like; and those taken-for-granted, outside the collective awareness (i.e., tacit perspectives). Like cultural practices, perspectives represents aspects of subjective or deep culture.

Table 4: (Continued)

Places & Communities	Specific groups of the culture – geographical categories such as regions, countries, cities, neighborhoods, and the like; amorphous categories including but not limited to dynasties, governments, special interest groups, political parties, corporations, service providers, NGOs; and more narrowly discerned categories such as sport teams, school alumni associations, honor societies, reading clubs, and the like.
Persons	Individual members of the culture – forms of self-identification and group membership (the way members of the culture see their identity on grounds of ethnicity, religion, sect, profession, marital status, and the like).

As shown in Table 4, Moran's (2001) framework allowed me to develop a coding scheme for content analysis, and further quantify and tabulate the findings to gauge the distribution of cultural contents using descriptive statistics. This coding process focused on four recursive stages (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorff, 2002), including itemization, operationalization, data analysis, and reporting. In the following, I provide a brief summary of those coding stages of content analysis applied in the study.

During the initial itemization stage, I utilized an adapted codebook from Moran's cultural paradigm (2001), which lists relevant, definitive features for each cultural dimension to identify and derive cultural references in the data. That is, I relied on the descriptors provided in Table 4 as a tool to code for cultural references and define their orientation in the data (e.g., products, perspectives, or others). After extracting those references, I grouped them into their corresponding dimensions in an Excel spreadsheet, using numerical tags to refer to their modality (e.g., cultural note or image), the units in which they occur, and the order of their modality in the data. For instance, for occurrences of gastronomical items such as *kebaab* that emerged twice in the fourth unit via a cultural note and a picture, I tagged them as CN4-1 and PIC4-12, under cultural products. Similarly, textual references to fasting Ramadan in unit four

and eight, for instance, were assigned to cultural practices and tagged as CN4-1 and CN8-2. This process enabled me to create a complete set of identified items corresponding to the five cultural dimensions in the codebook.

Operationalization in content analysis helps to revise the coded items to facilitate the development of the coding scheme for topical or semantic categorization (Ping, 2015). During this stage, I reviewed the added items and derived their semantic categories to manage the data more economically and extrapolate representational meanings. Once I finished all the itemization of cultural references in the data using Moran (2001) five dimensions, I annotated their semantic categories within each dimension. For example, *hijab* as an item under cultural products was annotated under the category of "clothing". Similarly, references to fasting Ramadan or attending congregational prayers, which were initially grouped under cultural practices during the itemization stage, were now annotated under the category "religious tradition". In contrast to the itemization stage, which was carried out deductively, here, I adopted an inductive approach, which enabled me to add to the examples of each dimension provided by Moran (2001). (See Appendix D for more details on the derived categories and their descriptors).

Once I completed the itemization and operationalization stages, I proceeded with data analysis using raw frequency and percentage computation. During this stage, I focused on the proportion of items within each category and the overall distributions in the data. As such, I calculated the number of occurrences of items and their categories using their numerical tags to discern the distributions of cultural dimensions. As shown in the examples of the numerical tags assigned to each item, references that emerged more than once were counted as they recurrently surface (e.g., *kebaab* in CN4-1 and PIC4-12 under cultural products). This process helped me

discern the way the textbooks prioritize certain references in effort to underscore certain cultural meanings aimed toward the construction of a certain cultural knowledge.

Reporting presented the final stage of the content analysis procedure adopted in the study. After the identification, semantic annotation, and calculation of items and their categories, I generated graphs for each textbook individually to observe the distribution of cultural contents. This stage allowed me to revisit the findings and compare the distribution of cultural dimensions and their categories within and across the textbooks series, noting the prevalence, shortage, or lack of certain categories or dimensions.

To account for cultural meaning underlying these presentations, I relied on Moran's descriptors for cultural phenomena (deductive coding) and semantic annotation (inductive coding) to characterize what they reveal about Arab cultures and societies. As explained in the literature review, cultural representations offer an organized model of perception, via which cultural meaning is formed in curricular material (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983). Both cultural dimensions and their categories provided meaningful units that I interpreted based on context and distribution. For instance, depending the context underlying the categorization of cultural references as defined by Moran (2001); that is, whether such information is considered a cultural person, a cultural place/community, or the like, and its resulting frequency in the data, such recurrences undergird the representational acts that construct cultural meanings about the Arab world. Representations hence offer the conceptual structures of internalizing world realities, offering the reader the tools to derive meaning (Weninger & Kiss, 2015).

Interrater reliability

Key to content analysis is establishing reliability for empirical reproducibility (Krippendorff, 2004). In this respect, I recruited two native-speaking Arabic coders (a senior

lecturer of Arabic and a Ph.D. candidate in a Linguistics program) to independently code 25% of the data. I provided the coders with the codebook developed for the study, and guided them with examples of analysis and explicit instruction to ensure replicability. I used kappa coefficient for the interrater reliability tests, assessing each dimension in the data individually and globally (i.e., combined score), by calculating the number of agreements divided by the total number of possible agreements within each dimension, as well as the total number of agreements and possible agreement across all dimensions combined. In the following, Table 5 shows the scores for the identification of cultural dimensions in the data.

Table 5: Reliability scores for each cultural dimension and the global score.

Cultural Dimensions	**Scores**
Products	κ= .78
Practices	κ= .95
Perspectives	κ= .89
Persons	κ= .92
Communities & places	κ= .87
Global score	κ= .87

As illustrated Table 5, the coding process resulted in reliable agreement between the coders across all the datasets. Despite the slightly lower score for products, compared to the other dimensions, altogether they demonstrate reliability of substantial to almost perfect agreement (McHugh, 2012). In fact, discussing the coded items and their dimensions with the coders helped substantiate the extent of reliable agreement on the findings in the data.

As argued throughout the text, language textbooks are more than just pedagogical artifacts, for they engage ideologies that maintain a system of power relations between different stakeholders (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). Enjoying institutional

authority, language textbooks aim to grant the legitimate knowledge of world realities, which is often issued and fostered by institutional structures that equally lack ideological or political neutrality. Naturalize certain ways of becoming through learning facilitation (Wang, 2016), language textbooks serve to entrench certain values and designate certain meanings in society that primarily benefit those in positions of power (Apple, 1992). By taking such a critical stance, the present study attempts to uncover cultural meanings underlying cultural contents to delineate the type of cultural knowledge and its legitimization via textual and pictorial analysis.

3.4 Methodological Adaptations and Limitations

Although Moran's framework of cultural dimension (2001) offers a systematic approach to discern cultural phenomena in L2 education, its application for textbook analysis required further adaptation. As this framework provides a robust definition of culture, the underscored dynamicity and interrelatedness of cultural dimensions suggests paying close attention to the context in which these dimensions occur. In essence, Moran (2001, p. 24) characterizes culture as "the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts." This definition not only suggests the changing nature of culture, which is fundamentally directed by the processes of maintenance and performance of cultural informants at the local and global scales, but also highlights the intricate links of the cultural dimensions. For instance, cultural products extend far beyond the fixed, tangible artifacts to include the systems and institutions, which are often directed by the cultural operations that serve the reproduction of these artifacts. The intricateness of cultural dimensions illustrates an overlap which should be offset by context. For example, cultural expressions emerged as both cultural practices that serve communicative functions (e.g., speech acts), and as cultural products

that convey unique connotative meanings reflective of religious legacy (e.g., *Allah* lexicon). Other examples emerged in the coding of cultural places/communities and cultural products, in which spatial information merely represents a locale that serves religious congregation (i.e., mosque), or more significantly a distinctive aesthetic design of Islamic civilization, characteristic of the architectural arrangements of Arab societies. Such examples substantiate the interrelatedness of cultural dimensions presented in Moran's definitions (2001), which required careful consideration of the context in which cultural references occur to effectively capture the cultural meaning at play.

In addition to these methodological applications, it should be noted that the textbooks also suggested different approaches to culture, which resulted in different sized datasets. For instance, the curricular approach to culture learning in *Al-Kitaab* series adopts an explicit approach, which segments cultural contents as a fifth skill, whereas in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series culture enjoys an integrative approach, embedded within different language foci (e.g., reading passages, interviews, monologues) (see Table 3). These approaches and their affordances of cultural meaning informed my decisions for the data collection and analysis, that in the explicit approach I focused mainly on the textbooks' pedagogical designation of the cultural (i.e., cultural segments along with supporting visuals), while in the implicit approach my analysis entailed more data since the textbooks do not segment any material as cultural, and hence required me to look at all aspects presented therein, barring grammatical instruction. As argued earlier, aligning with the materials' approaches to culture in my data collection and analysis serves to explore the difference in the personalized directions of these resources to culture learning and more subtly the way cultural meaning underlies linguistic performance.

Equally important, the present study examines cultural representations at the beginning and intermediate levels in two major AFL textbook series. As contended previously, the choice for these two levels of proficiency was informed by their importance for establishing the foundation of cultural awareness as well as their high enrollment data in U.S. universities and colleges, as opposed to advanced levels (Looney & Lusin, 2019). Therefore, future studies might consider higher levels of proficiency and possibly employ more fixed measures to explore the way these materials maintain their design and development of cultural contents within a preconditioned curricular continuity or lack thereof.

Finally, intercoder reliability measures were implemented to ensure the study's replicability. Assessing the coded items and their categorization with the coders allowed me to assess the extent of agreement on coded items and their distribution in the data. However, while grouping the extracted items into semantic categories, I did not involve the coders. Different from the deductive itemization process, inductive semantic annotation was a part of the operationalization process, which helped to sort out the items with similar cultural information within each dimension into manageable and meaningful categories (Ping, 2015). The extensive datasets limited further testing for the operationalization process and intra-coder reliability. Therefore, smaller scale studies in the future might as well focus on both intercoder reliability testing for inductive coding along with intra-coder reliability. Future research might also consider recruiting coders from a diverse pool of academic disciplines (e.g., cultural studies, anthropology) to account for the subtleties of cultural meaning and their interpretive variation.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the major analytical tools and procedures that guided the study. The latter investigates cultural representations in two widely used AFL textbooks in U.S.

institutions, *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series, adopting a revised content analysis approach, which draws upon Moran's (2001) proposal of cultural dimensions or the "Five Ps" (i.e., cultural products, practices, perspectives, persons, and places/communities). Comprising five textbooks in total, these two series represent two major publishers: a national publisher (Georgetown University Press) designed primarily for U.S. universities and colleges, and an international publisher (Routledge), targeting a much broader audience. Considering the different approaches to culture learning in these materials, the data collection and analysis yielded different applications. For the explicit approach in *Al-Kitaab*, the data attended solely to the culture segments in this series, whereas in the implicit approach of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*, the data stemmed from different contents (e.g., reading, listening, visual illustration), and hence required applying a more comprehensive selection and analysis. The study adopts a revised content analysis framework, which engaged four recursive stages of deductive and inductive coding. Finally, to guarantee reproducibility of findings, the analysis involved two coders who participated in the study, which later resulted in substantial to almost perfect agreement in inter-coder reliability testing. In the next chapter, I present the findings attending to the aforementioned datasets and employed framework.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Background

As discussed in the methodology section, the first and second research questions (i.e., What cultural dimensions are represented and/or *not* represented in the Arabic language textbook series *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat al-Naas*? How are these dimensions distributed in the data?) concerns the analysis of cultural dimensions (Moran, 2001) and their distribution. By means of frequency computation, these research questions attempt to explore cultural coverage in the textbook series of *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*, examining each cultural dimension and its categories within each series individually, and subsequently comparing the analysis across the two series. Attending to the distribution of cultural dimensions and their categories offers insights into cultural meaning, bringing to light a comprehensive landscape of cultural phenomena, which helps unpack the type of cultural knowledge envisioned behind such representations. In the following, I present the findings exploring cultural coverage in the textbook series of *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*, examining each cultural dimension and its categories within each series individually, and subsequently comparing the analysis across the two series.

4.2 Findings

The analysis of cultural dimensions in the two textbook series revealed the predominance of surface, objective culture (i.e., Big C Culture – used interchangeably), which consists mainly of cultural places-communities (N=724), persons (N=531), and products (N=521), as opposed to

the disproportionately low representations of deep, subjective culture (i.e., small c culture – used interchangeably), such as practices (N=216) and perspectives (N=165). In the following, Table 6 summarizes the global distribution of cultural dimensions within (horizontal) and across (vertical) the textbooks.

Table 6: Global distribution of cultural references in the textbooks.

	Products	Persons	Place & communities	Practices	Perspectives	**Total frequency per textbook**
Alif Baa	n=61 (30%)	n=39 (19%)	n=67 (33%)	n=22 (11%)	n=14 (7%)	N=203 (100%)
Al-Kitaab 1	n=63 (32%)	n=66 (34%)	n=45 (23%)	n=11 (6%)	n=9 (5%)	N=194 (100%)
Al-Kitaab 2	n=91 (31%)	n=82 (28%)	n=68 (23%)	n=34 (11%)	n=20 (7%)	N=295 (100%)
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1	n=191 (27%)	n=189 (27%)	n=225 (32%)	n=54 (8%)	n=44 (6%)	N=703 (100%)
Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2	n=115 (15%)	n=155 (20%)	n=319 (42%)	n=95 (13%)	n=78 (10%)	N=762 (100%)
Total frequency per dimension	N=521	N=531	N=724	N=216	N=165	

Three main trends can be observed from the overall findings. First, the predominance of surface, objective culture with references to cultural places, followed by cultural persons, products, as opposed to deep, subjective culture, with references to cultural practices or perspectives. Second, there is a discernible difference between the two textbook series in terms of cultural places versus cultural products and persons. As noted earlier, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* contributed more instances of cultural representations than *Al-Kitaab* series. Third, despite these

nuances, there is a consistent trend of dominance of surface, objective culture over deep, subjective culture across all textbook series, individually as well as globally.

The two series presented a wide array of surface cultural phenomena that materialize Arab cultures and societies in the textbooks. This representation lies in the recurrences of large, structured, and amorphous categories of geographies and institutions (e.g., nations, countries, cities, mosques, universities, corporations), accommodation and entertainment (e.g., hotels, theaters, malls, and restaurants), culturally unique items of clothing, food, drinks, and religious articles (e.g., documents and artifacts). On the other hand, deep culture focuses mostly on patterns of cultural behavior and value systems, such as social, religious, political, and economic practices, and their underlying cultural reasoning. Such subjective patterns form the processes of cultural operation (i.e., maintenance and reproduction of culture), which entail communicative acts with extra/linguistic features in sociocultural contexts and their cultural significance.

As noted in Table 6, the total frequency per textbook shows that cultural representations increase with the progress of proficiency, entailing significantly different proportions between the two series. The analysis of the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series yields more contents and cultural meanings than *Al-Kitaab* series. As explained earlier, this can be attributed to the textbooks' structure and approach to culture, for *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* utilizes an implicit approach that assigns cultural learning to different language skills, integrating an outsider's perspective in its first volume (i.e., Emily's immersion and language socialization in the Middle East), as well as heritage learner's perspectives and reading passages in the second volume, which altogether help mediate cultural meaning using different resources (e.g., dialogues, diaries). Conversely, *Al-Kitaab* adopts an explicit approach that segments cultural contents in each chapter via the presentation of certain cultural themes or topics, using texts and/or visual illustrations. However,

it should be noted that regardless of the slight congruence of content proportion and proficiency, each textbook reported exclusive features that characterize the predominance of surface, objective culture and the scarcity of deep, subjective culture.

In the following sections, I present the findings for each textbook individually, delineating the formulation of each cultural dimension with supporting examples. The distribution of cultural dimensions and their components are discussed in more detail from the most frequent to the least frequent in the following.

4.2.1 Alif Baa

The predominance of tangible, objective Culture is prominent in the first textbook, *Alif Baa*. Analysis of this textbook reveals great distributions of places-communities (33%), products (30%), and persons (19%). References to intangible, subjective culture are relatively infrequent on the other hand, attested in the distributions of practices (11%) and perspectives (7%). In the following, Figure 2 exhibits the overall distribution of cultural dimensions, along with their constituting categories presented subsequently in Figure 3.

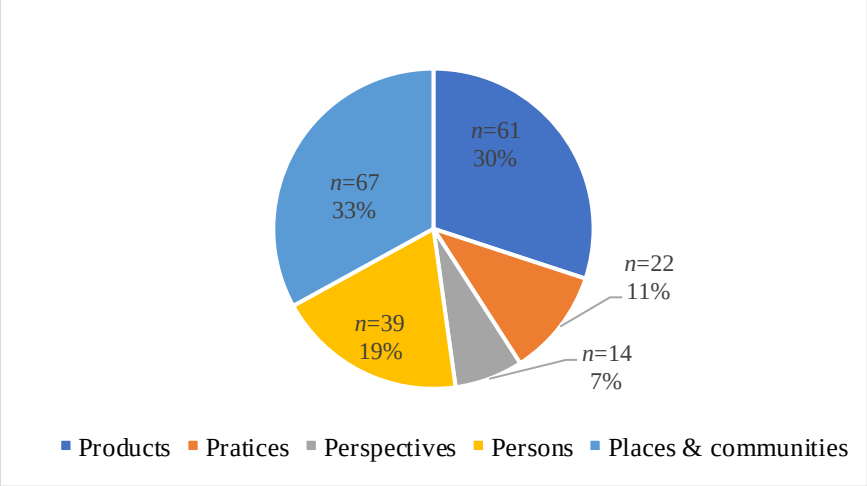

Figure 2: Distribution of cultural dimensions in *Alif Baa*.

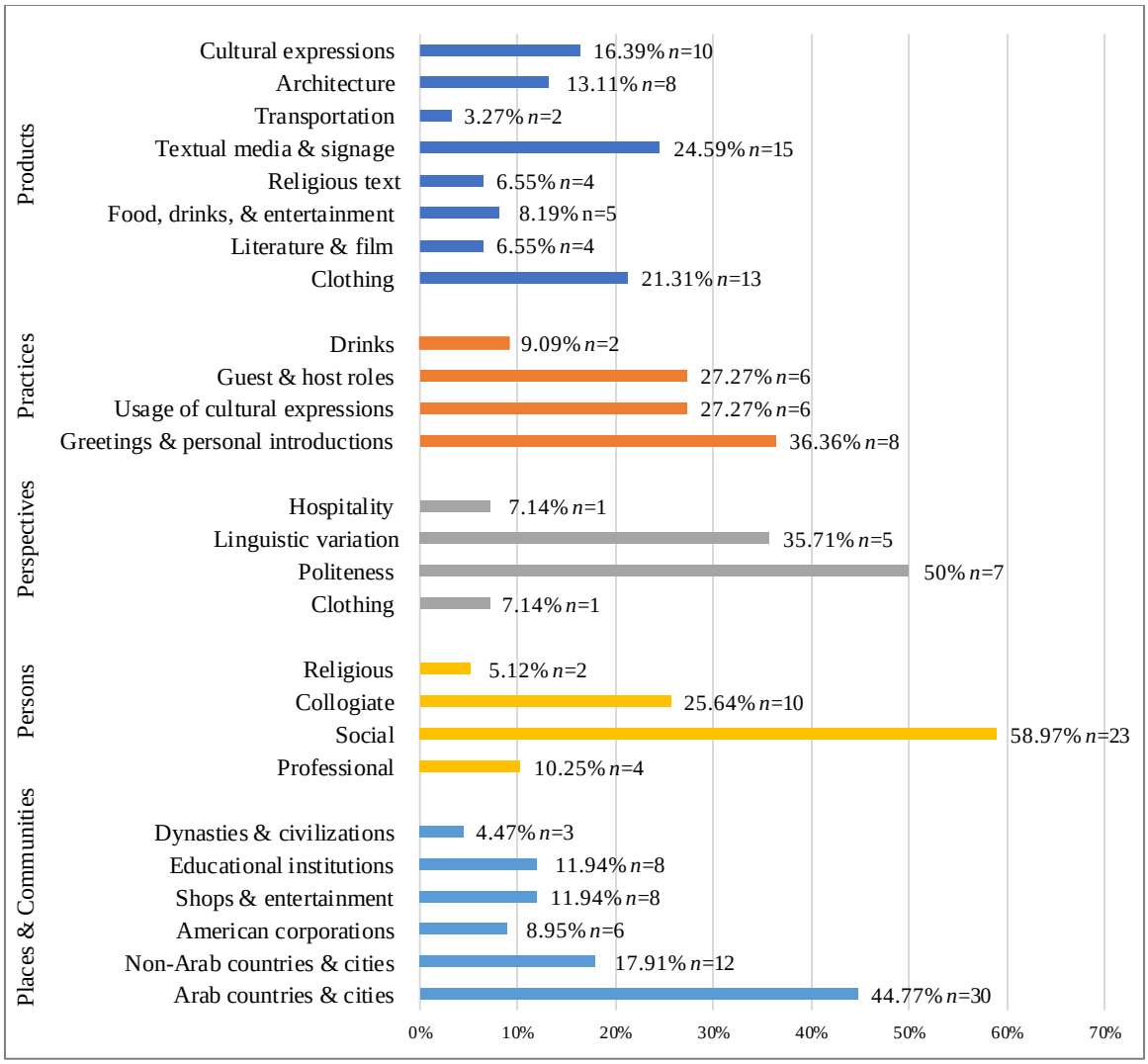

Figure 3: Distribution of categories within cultural dimensions in *Alif Baa*.

As noted above in Figure 3, the predominance of places-communities (n=67) includes mainly categories of "Arab countries and cities" (n=30), "non-Arab countries and cities" (n=12), "shops and entertainment" (n=8), "educational institutions" (n=8), and "American corporations" (n= 6). More precisely, recurring names of Arab countries are part of a map of Arabic speaking countries and capitals, as well as other major cities in Egypt and Syria, being two representatives of the Arabic varieties used in the textbook. Recurrences of non-Arab countries includes items such as America, New York, France, and other parts of Asia and Europe to instantiate transliteration practices (i.e., crosslinguistic transcriptions of sounds and letters). The equal

representation of shops and entertainment and educational institutions centers on depictions of local attractions, such as markets, restaurants, and coffee shops for the former, and references to regional universities and cultural centers (e.g., American University of Cairo, Center for American Studies and Research) for the latter. Also, representations of American corporations display mostly transliterated names of international restaurant chains (e.g., Applebee's, Arby's, KFC, TGI Fridays), which are also designed to serve the literacy interest in the textbook.

As the second predominant cultural dimension in the textbook, cultural products show 30% distribution (n=61), engaging prevalent categories such as "textual media and signage" (n=15), "clothing" (n=13), "cultural expressions" [1] (n=10), "architecture" (n=8), "food, drinks and entertainment" (n=5), "literature and film" (n=4), and "religious text" (n=4). The first category attends to visual illustrations of local newspapers, street signs, business signs, and institutions (e.g., universities, hospitals, cultural religious centers). The second category "clothing" includes depictions of culturally unique clothing styles such as *thobe* (a loose, long-sleeved robe for men), *hijab* (head covering for Muslim women), and *ghutra* (headscarf with headbands for men), representative of traditional Arab dress. The category "cultural expressions" includes expressions with the word *Allah* (e.g., insha'Allah - ان شاء الله ; al-hamduli'Allah – الحمد لله), presented for pragmatic instruction as culture-specific terms.

Cultural persons exhibits 19% distribution (n=39), including representational categories such as "social" (n=23), "collegiate" (n=10), "professional" (n=4), and "religious" (n=2) to complement textual meanings conveyed in activities for reading and listening. Most frequently,

[1] Depending on the context in which they occur, cultural expressions in essence reflect a culturally unique ideational production representative of Arab cultures and Islamic tradition in particular (e.g., *Allah* lexicon), which is maintained by the communicative processes of cultural operation and maintenance (e.g., using language as a cultural practice based on a shared set of perspectives). The semantic meaning of these expressions stems from situated understanding of a communicative function (e.g., envisioning the future) and its social context, which is guided by a religious perspective (e.g., *insha'Allah* - ان شاء الله – *if God wills* – a Qur'anic derivation).

social representations comprise depictions of friends, neighbors, guests and hosts, family members, and group outings in public places. Collegiate representations include depictions of college-aged students in various educational settings (e.g., classrooms, homework), which, due to similar age and social position to members of the target audience, tend to foster a connection between the learner and the material in effort to enhance motivation and interest. Although minimal, professional and religious figures capture recurrent examples of professions (e.g., teachers, doctors, chefs), as well as textual references to Muslim Caliphs (e.g., Uthman Ibn Affan – عثمان ابن عفان; Ali Ibn Abi Talib – علي ابن أبي طالب).

As illustrated earlier, cultural practices showed a minimal distribution of 11% (n=22). Categories in this dimension mostly include "greetings and personal introductions" (n=8), which convey cultural information related to appropriateness in forms of address and honorifics, as well as para/linguistic features of greetings. Dissimilar to the examples in cultural products, the introduction of the category "cultural expressions" (n=6) as cultural practices capture the conventional use among Arabic speakers in communicative social contexts, underscoring pragmatic appropriateness and cultural meanings that are uniquely reflective of Arab tradition. In the same vein, the category "guest and host roles" (n=6) provides behavioral examples of hospitality, such as welcoming guests, serving food and drinks, and responding to hosts' invites.

Lastly, cultural perspectives make the least attested dimension in the data, with only a 7% distribution (n=14). This dimension encompasses the category "politeness" (n=7), which offers explanations on polite behavior in Arab culture, such as expressing proper concerns to soothe someone who might appear in distress, despite social distance. Other categories with cultural perspectives include "linguistic variation" (n=5), which introduces the readers to the diglossic practices of Arabic in the Arab world and stances on interdialectal mutual intelligibility. This

aligns closely with the bidialectal approach of this series, which integrates the use of Egyptian and Levantine (Syrian) Arabic within the material to ensure sociolinguistic competence and access sociocultural capital. As such, the textbooks assigns colloquial conversational segments to reinforce mutual intelligibility (i.e., standard and colloquial), allowing for hybrid linguistic performances, which are characteristic of the educated native Arabic speaker. However, as justified in the textbook, the choice of these two varieties is explained in terms of the predominance of these two dialects in Arab pop culture (e.g., music, film), contending for the intelligibility of these two varieties in particular among other dialects[2]. Less frequently within cultural perspective are categories such as "clothing" (n=1) and "hospitality" (n=1), which discuss cultural beliefs on the symbolic and aesthetic value of clothing, as well as cultural beliefs on the dynamics of guests and hosts roles, respectively. Overall, the functional distribution of cultural perspectives aims to complement meanings conveyed in cultural practices and products (e.g., politeness in personal introductions and leave-taking, politeness in cultural expressions, religious beliefs on handshaking and gender, guest and host roles, etc.), which substantiates Moran's (2001) notion of the interrelatedness of cultural phenomena; in this case, cultural perspectives inform the production and maintenance of culture (i.e., cultural artifacts and practices).

As illustrated in the analysis *Alif Baa*, cultural representations focus mostly on tangible aspects of surface culture. This is evidenced in the prevalence of cultural places-communities with recurrences of Arab countries and cities, introducing the novice learner to the Arabic

[2] The textbook seeks in the predominance of the Egyptian and Levantine dialects in Arab pop culture the justification for their selection without accounting for the degrees of contact or variation and their linguistic and extralinguistic factors (e.g., phonological, lexical, attitudes) to predict mutual intelligibility. By so doing, the textbook reproduces the *Mashreq* language ideology (see Hachimi, 2013), which assigns linguistic Arabness to certain dialects due to regional rather than linguistic proximity (i.e., the Middle East as the natal place of Arabs and Islam, and hence Arabic is 'purer' in this region than in other parts of the Arab world). I will return to the issue of the standard-colloquial dichotomy with more elaboration in the next chapter.

speaking world and its linguistic and cultural variation. However, this predominant dimension also portray aspects of capitalist enterprises, which though serve to activate literacy practice, they nonetheless construct a cultural sharedness due the inexorable reach of globalization. Such representations (e.g., American brands) are designed to produce an open, progressive Arab society that conforms to Western expectations, especially in a time of political turmoil and intercultural tensions following the events of 9/11. As another major cultural dimension, cultural products center on representations of textual media and signage and culturally unique clothing, which similarly aligns with the literacy focus in the material, but also reflects local tradition. Further, cultural persons cover mainly social representations of friends, neighbors, guests-hosts, and the like, which emerge in literacy practice and conversational accounts via supporting visuals. However, with less frequent representations, aspects of deep culture such as cultural practices are limited to instances of greetings and personal introductions, illuminating appropriateness in pragmatic instruction, given the intended proficiency level in the textbook, and the relevant perspectives underlying such practices.

4.2.2 Al-Kitaab 1

In keeping up with its explicit approach to culture, *Al-Kitaab 1* prioritizes the representations of cultural persons (34%), followed by products (32%), and places-communities (23%). In terms of deep, subjective culture, the analysis shows minimal distributions of cultural practices (11%) and perspectives (9%). Below, Figure 4 outlines the distribution of these dimensions, along with their constituting categories outlined subsequently in Figure 5.

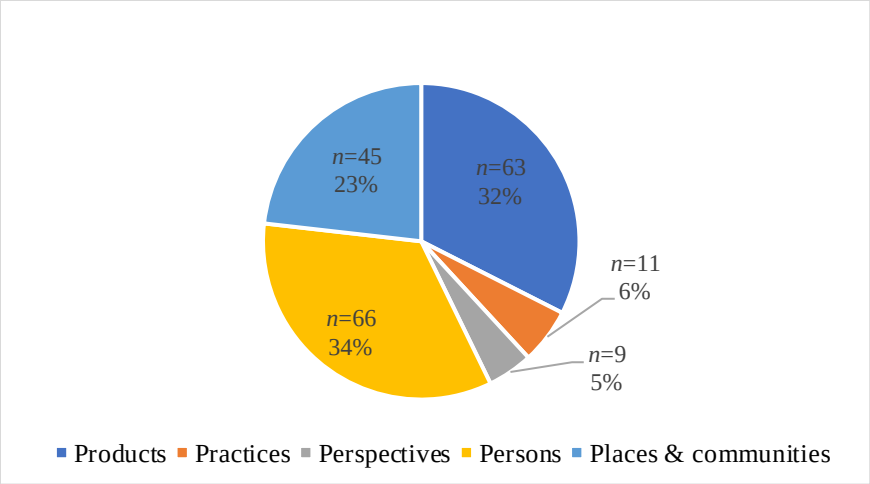

Figure 4: Distribution of cultural dimensions in *Al-Kitaab 1*.

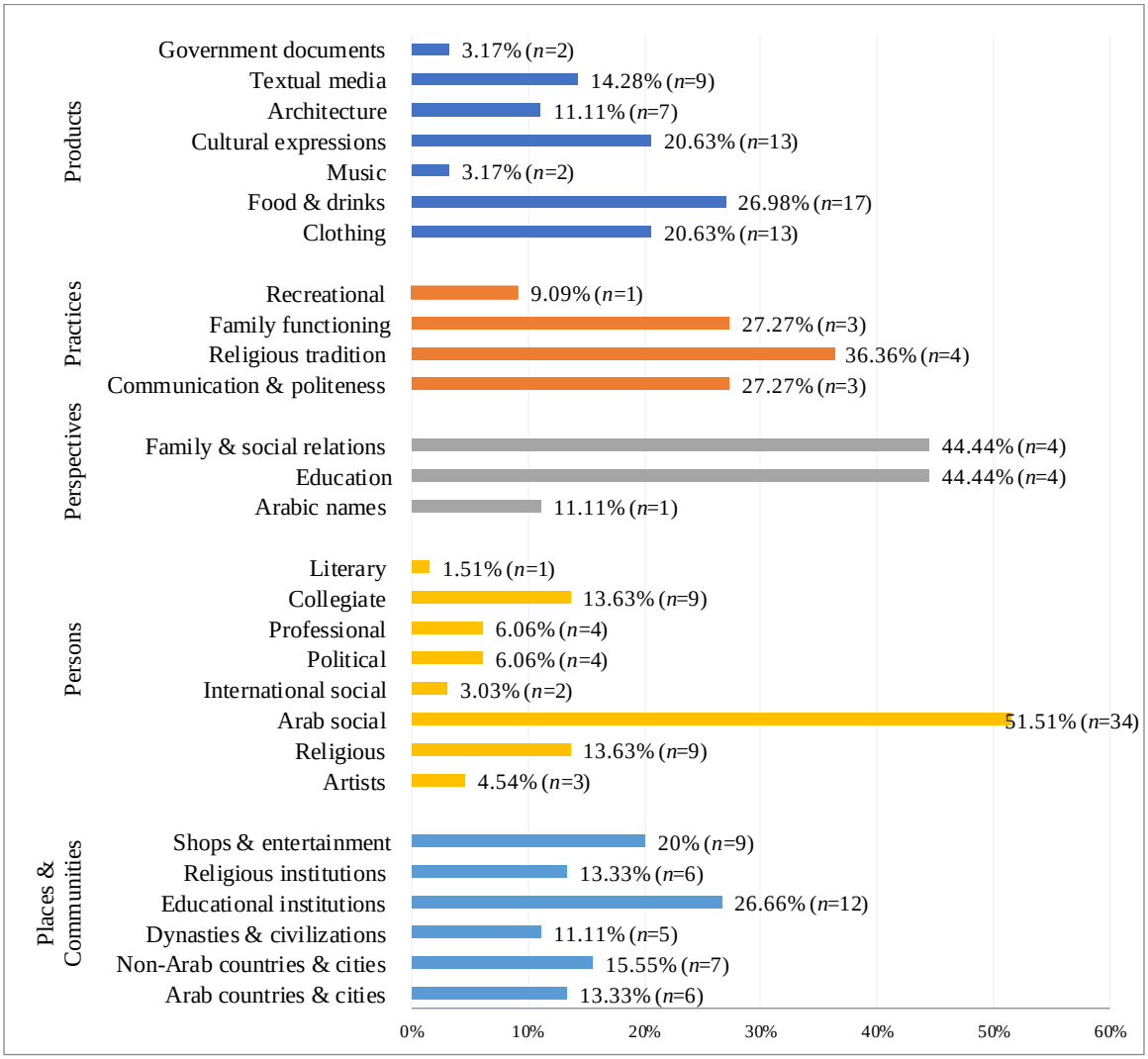

Figure 5: Distribution of categories within cultural dimensions in *Al-Kitaab 1*.

As shown in Figure 5, the predominance of cultural persons includes categories such as "Arab social" (n=34), "collegiate" (n=9), "religious" (n=9), and "political" (n=4). The most frequent representations capture instances of family members, friends, couples, and neighbors in social interaction, designed to add meaning to reading or listening material (e.g., texts and dialogues) and enhance comprehensibility. The category "collegiate" engages representations of students in academic settings (e.g., studying, graduating) and the introduction of the term *al-Mu'iid* (المعيد – lit. teaching assistant) to familiarize the learner with the educational system in Arab societies (e.g., Egypt). Equally represented, religious figures include references to major Muslim personalities (e.g., Prophet Muhammad, Muslim Caliphs, Imam Hussein), addressing critical chapters of Islamic history and sectarianism (e.g., Sunni - Shi'ite). Representations of political figures on the other hand center on former Arab and Muslim leaders (e.g., Jordanian Prime Minister Samir Rifai, Iranian supreme leader Khomeini), presented in biographical text to reinforce learning about political history in the region. In essence, the prevalence of cultural persons in this volume comes as a part of the communicative approach of the textbook, which prioritizes social interaction and personal conversation, assigning recurring individuals in dialogues and graphic illustration as cultural informants reflective of and embodying their societies.

Cultural Products also represent another predominant cultural dimension of surface culture with 32% distribution (n=63). Major categories within this dimension include "food and drinks" (n=17), "cultural expressions" (n=13), and "clothing" (n=13). More emphasized in this volume than in *Alif Baa*, representations of food and drinks (e.g., hummus, couscous, kebab, baklava) are introduced to familiarize the learner with Arab cuisine, conveying the long history of the Arab world and the inter-civilizational encounters that contributed to its gastronomical

variance. The coverage of cultural expressions attends to the recurrences of proverbial and idiomatic structures and culture-specific terms such as *Allah* lexicon (e.g., الحمد لله al-ħamdu lil'laah, ماشاءالله - maa šaaʔalaah), introduced in social contexts to support semantic instruction. For instance, discussing the topic of marriage, the textbook deploys the terms بنت حلال (bint ħalaal — lit. daughter of the permissible) and ابن حلال (ibn ħalaal — lit. son of the permissible), which denote righteous upbringing and devout descent of the referent, perceived as a tenet of piety that informs cultural suitability for marriage. Beside these linguistic structures, and similar to the previous volume, representations of culturally unique clothing also emerge via depictions of traditional garments such as *thobe*, *hijab*, and *abaya* (a black long-sleeved dress for Muslim women), which serve to mark the distinction between secular and traditional clothing styles and its variation in different parts of the Arab world (e.g., *thobe* and *abaya* as primarily representative of the Gulf region).

As another major dimension of surface culture, places-communities display 23% distribution (n=45) of cultural representation in *Al-Kitaab 1*. This dimension mainly comprises categories such as "educational institutions" (n=12) and "shops and entertainment" (n=9). The most recurring items include representations of local universities (e.g., Aleppo University, Beirut University) and educational/cultural centers (e.g., Center for Middle Eastern Studies), which shed light on the education system and academic orientations. As such, such discussions posit that the education system in the Arab world resembles more the European model rather than the American liberal art college, despite the rise in private American universities in Arab countries, the textbook notes. Reinforcing commercial transaction, examples in the category "shops and entertainment" include references to malls and traditional markets (i.e., *souks*), restaurants, and movie theaters, reproducing the consumerist tendencies and recreational options within the

represented societies. Such references remain part of the dominant capitalist enterprise, which commodifies language and culture in issues of possession and service-type encounters; a global socioeconomic reality that has become inherently reflective (to varying degrees) of both the learner's and the target cultures, nonetheless.

Similar to its introductory volume, cultural practices and perspectives were the least frequent in *Al-Kitaab 1*, making 6% (n=11) for the former and 5% (n=9) for the latter. Cultural practices concern in part the recurrences of "religious tradition" (n=4) (e.g., Muslim female and male congregational prayers, Christian prayers), "family functioning" (n=3) (e.g., cultural behavior in Arab families such as avoiding smoking around parents, or the case of grandmothers as the early-birds of Arab families routinely waking up grandchildren for school), "communication and politeness" (n=3) (e.g., forms of address and honorifics, or use of family names after marriage). In terms of cultural perspectives, the representations focus on the topic of education in the Arab world (n=4), which tend to offer cultural understanding on academic specialization and evaluation, and the functions of certain roles such as المعيد (almuʕiid – lit. teaching/research assistant), as well as family and social relations (n=4) (e.g., cultural views on gender and friendship, marriage, and family households). Those perspectives are not only relevant vis-à-vis the learner's needs and interest, as in the case of pursuing higher education abroad in Arab societies, but also fundamental for cultural awareness of interpersonal relations and society as a whole.

Similar to its previous volume, *Al-Kitaab 1* displays mostly aspects of surface, objective culture. Considering the shared explicit approach to cultural knowledge in this series, the focus on surface culture shows similar interest in cultural phenomena, by not only underscoring mostly analogous representations (e.g., social, collegiate, and religious representations in cultural

persons, or food, drinks, and clothing in products), but also assigning slightly equal proportions of content (averaged n=199 per textbook).

Despite the relevance of the predominant representations of surface culture, the degrees of prominence placed on their categories are informed by the level of proficiency and pedagogical goals intended in the material. For instance, we have seen how the prevalent references to names of Arab and non-Arab countries in the dimension of cultural places/communities in the previous volume serve to familiarize the beginner learner with the Arabic speaking world and facilitate literacy practice using transliteration, which entails the learner's first language and culture (i.e., English L1 and C1). In the current volume, however, such pedagogical objectives shift. In *Al-Kitaab 1*, representations of cultural places/communities prioritize references to educational institutions, introducing complex issues (e.g., models of the education system in the Arab world), which tend to orient to the needs of early intermediate-level learners, who might be considering studying abroad. Likewise, while cultural products emerge as the second most frequent dimension in both textbooks with relatively comparable proportions, their foci in both textbooks rather entails different contents, which on the one hand serves the curricular objective of literacy in *Alif Baa* via the representations of transliterated, bilingual signs, and on the other lays out new categories such as music and governmental documents (e.g., passport & visas) in *Al-Kitaab 1*, addressing more nuanced issues (e.g., art). The proficiency factor is also at play in terms of the representation of cultural subjects, which tends to introduce new categories such as political, literary, and artistic figures in *Al-Kitaab 1*. However, as demonstrated in these two volumes, proficiency does not seem to affect the proportion of cultural contents, but still informs the introduction and distribution of certain categories constituting surface culture.

4.2.3 Al-Kitaab 2

Once again, as in the first and second volumes, content analysis of *Al-Kitaab 2* reveals the predominance of surface, objective culture, showing cultural products at 31%, persons at 28%, and places-communities at 23%. Deep, subjective culture, on the other hand, receives less prominence, showing minimal distributions of cultural practices at 11% and perspectives at 7%. Given the proficiency level intended in this volume, such dimensions tend to enjoy slightly greater proportion in *Al-Kitaab 2* than in the previous volume. In the following, Figure 6 shows the overall distribution of cultural dimensions, followed by Figure 7 with more details on the categories constituting each dimension and their distribution in the data.

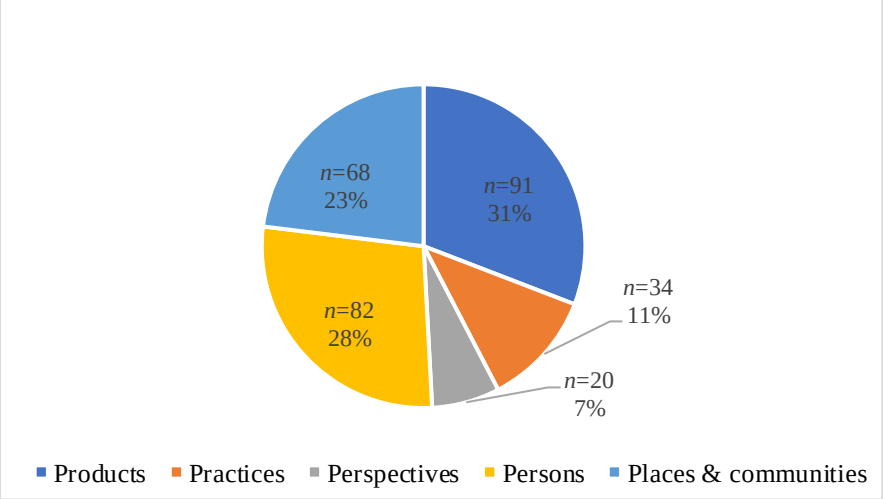

Figure 6: Distribution of cultural dimensions in *Al-Kitaab 2*.

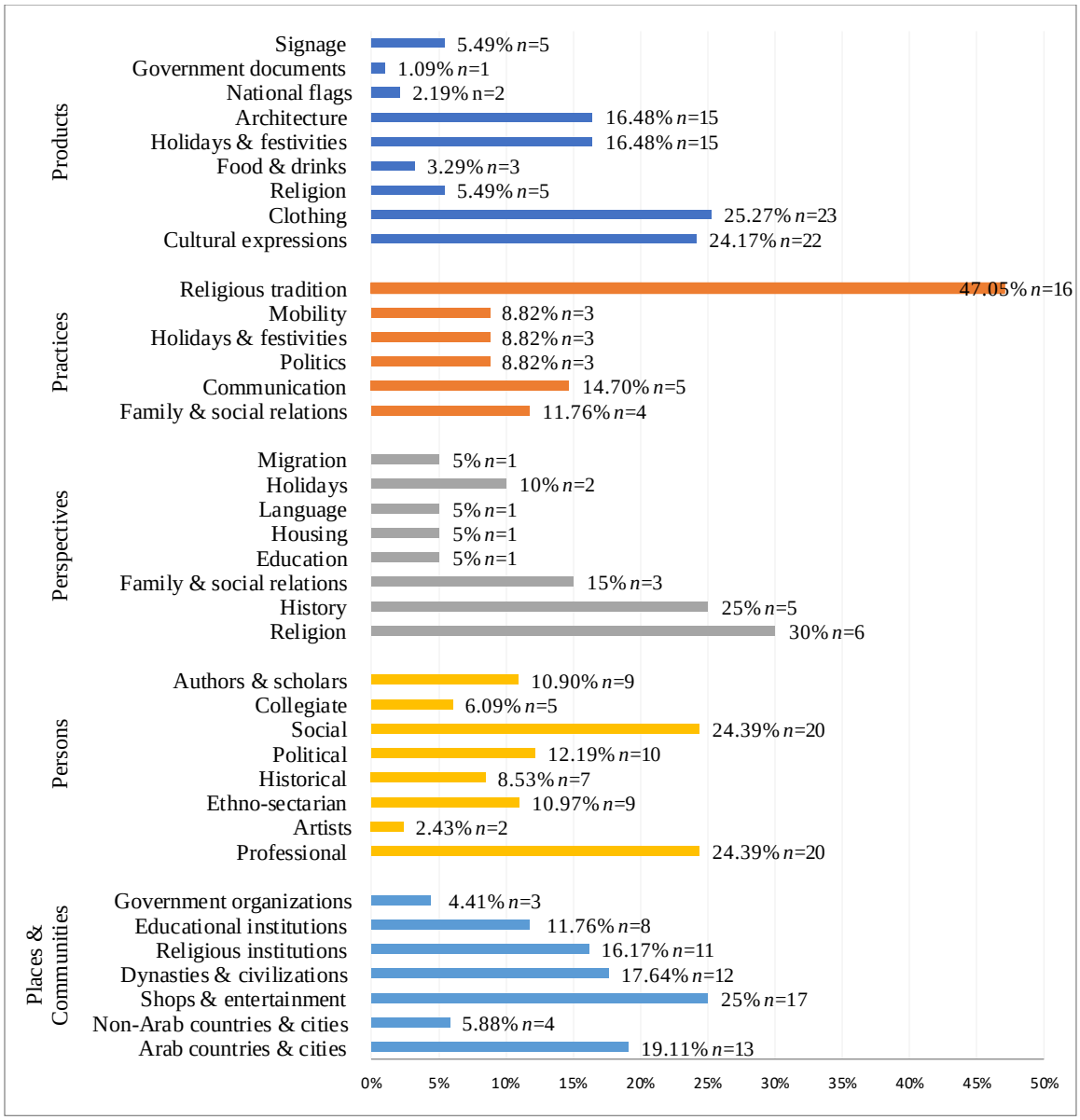

Figure 7: Distribution of categories within cultural dimensions in *Al-Kitaab 2*.

The predominance of cultural products consists primarily of representational categories of "clothing" (n=23), "cultural expressions" (n=22), and "architecture" (n=15). As in the previous volumes, representations of clothing center largely on culturally unique items such as *abaya*, *thobe*, *ghutra*, and a newly added item, *jellaba* (a unisex long sleeved, loose fitting hooded robe worn in countries of the *Maghreb* or North Africa). Here once again the textbook extends its cultural coverage to new aspects of culture in the Arab world, which corroborates the

development of cultural information in line with the development of proficiency. The category "cultural expressions" includes familiar linguistic constructions (e.g., expressions with the word *Allah*), and complex idiomatic and proverbial constructions in colloquial Arabic. For instance, the textbook introduces a list of idiomatic expressions that utilize colors and body parts to refer to personal positive and/or negative attributes in colloquial conversation (see Table 7). Such cultural meanings suggest a unique cultural production of uncommon conceptual categories to describe behavioral patterns in human interaction, notably different from those found in learner's L1. For instance, the expression كرشه واسع (kəršuh waasəʕ), whose literal meaning translates into someone with a large (واسع) belly (كرش), is introduced in the textbook to describe greedy professionals overcharging clients for service. Similar idioms are introduced to reinforce the use of figurative language. On the other hand, architectural information concerns distinctive structures such as minarets, domes, and citadels. In the following, Table 7 outlines other expressions with body parts introduced in the textbook, with literal and connotative meanings.

Table 7: Figurative expressions with colors and body parts in *Al-Kitaab 2* (with author's translation).

Expression	Literal Meaning	Figurative Meaning
"لسانه / لسانها طويل"	His/her tongue is long	Mouthy, insulting, or overcritical
"إيده / إيدها طويلة"	His/her hand is long	Apt to steal or light-fingered
"دمه / دمها خفيف"	His/her blood is light	Funny or pleasant to be around
"دمه / دمها تقيل"	His/her blood is heavy	Obnoxious or unpleasant to be around
"ماعندوش / ماعنداش دم"	Drained of blood	Inconsiderate of feelings or concerns of others
"قلبه / قلبها أبيض"	His/her heart is white	Kind or goodhearted
"بطنه / بطنها كبير"	His/her belly is big	Greedy or covetous
"عينه / عينها وحشة "	His/her eyes are monstrous	Envious or giving the evil eye

Cultural persons exhibit 28% distribution (n=82), comprising major categories such as "professional" (n=20), "social" (n=20), "political" (n=10), "ethno-sectarian" (n=9). Like *Alif Baa* and *Al-Kitaab 1*, professional and social figures attend to familiar and new representations of professions (e.g., merchants, UN agents), and members of the target culture in social interaction (e.g., family members, friends). Different from the previous volumes, political figures expand the knowledge of political history with new issues of Arab societies such as secularism and the so-called Arab Spring, referencing prominent political personalities such as the former Turkish President Mustapha Kamal Ataturk, former President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Arab political activists (e.g., Lina Ben Mahni). These representations bring attention to the 2011 political turmoil in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, discussing the enduring autocratic regimes and the call of civil societies for social justice, access to economic resources, and democracy for all. As such, the textbook ensures political knowledge of the Arab world, engaging critical information, which not only enhances cultural awareness of the target culture, but also requires enhanced proficiency to digest. Similarly important and related to the ethnocultural fabric of Arab culture and parts of the world, the textbook also demonstrates relatively extensive coverage of local and international ethnic and religious minorities (e.g., Amazigh, Tuareg, Arab Bedouins, Native Americans, Hindus, Copts), which seems relevant to certain cultural foci in the textbook (e.g., celebrating the Amazigh new year or fasting for Muslims and Coptic tradition in Egypt). Honoring the legacies of indigenous cultures, such representations address the challenges of cultural hegemony and inequity faced by many minority groups in modern day society.

Cultural places-communities constitute 23% (n=68) of cultural representations in *Al-Kitaab 2*. As shown in Figure 7, this dimension includes major categories such as "shops and

entertainment" (n=17) (e.g., clothing stores, markets, coffee shops), "Arab countries" (n=13) (e.g., Yemen, Amazigh regions across North Africa, and cities in the Levant), "dynasties and civilizations" (n=12) (e.g., Abbasid Caliphate, Byzantine Empire, Persia), and "religious institutions" (n=11) (e.g., Sufi centers, mosques, churches). While such representations are no anomaly of the prevalent consumerist commitment of language textbooks observed in the previous volume, foregrounding the economic terms of language and culture (Duchêne & Heller, 2012), they also offer critical insight into the political and religious history that underscores the ethnocultural diversity of the target culture. Minor representations, on the other hand, place prominence on categories such as "educational institutions" (n=8) (e.g., Center for Financial and Economic Studies, Institut du Monde Arab), "non-Arab countries and cities" (n=4) (e.g., USA, New York City), and "government organizations" (n=3) (e.g., the courthouse, the unemployment office). Altogether, such representations are not random, but rather work in tandem to complement cultural foci in the textbook.

In terms of cultural practices, the latter account for 11% (n=34) of cultural representations. It is worth noting that this dimension prioritizes instances of "religious tradition" (n=16), which aligns with the pedagogical interest of this volume and its focus on religious and political history, as well as ethnocultural diversity. For instance, these representations account for the differences in religious fasting among Coptic Christians and Muslims in Egypt, instantiating ceremonial Sufi rituals during the month of Ramadan (e.g., Qur'anic recitations, socio-religious gatherings such as *al-Diwaniya* in the Arabian Gulf or *Khiyaam Ramadania* in the Levant or Egypt), and the observance of the Great Fast for Coptic Easter (عيد الفصح - Eid al-Fuṣḥ). Other cultural practices in the textbook attend to pragmatic meaning in the use of forms of address (e.g., الكنية – al-kunya), bargaining, as well as linguistic and gestural features

accompanying idiomatic expressions, such as على راسي (ʕalaa-raasi – figuratively, head-carrying someone to express eagerness in service) or من عيني (min ʕiinii – lit. 'out of my eyes' - with hand gesture, pointing the index finger toward the eyes to signal personal enthusiasm when offering someone help). Such expressions are part of the Arabic speech acts (i.e., requesting and responding), which figuratively assign body parts in Egyptian and Levantine colloquial expressions, and capture a unique languaculture feature of those dialects to underscore politeness. Specifically, the use of "head" or "eyes" for positive response encapsulates the receptiveness and reciprocity of politeness between interlocutors, which marks a special way of valuing social communication.

As seen above in Figure 6 and Figure 7, cultural perspectives have also limited distribution at 7% (n=20). This dimension introduces views mainly on "religion" (n=6) and "history (n=5). As argued earlier, given the focus on historical information, *Al-Kitaab 2* conveys underlying beliefs in Islamic tradition pertaining to the sacred value of the Qur'an and الحديث النبوي (al-ħadiiθ al-nabawii – lit. Prophetic sayings), as well as the religious meanings of التاريخ الهجري (al-taariix al-hijrii – lit. Islamic calendar), which helps to determine proper times of Islamic observance. In line with the ethnocultural diversity of the Arab world presented earlier, religious perspectives are not exclusively related to Islamic tradition, they also account for fundamental meanings in Coptic Christianity, distinguishing between Islamic and Coptic forms of religious abstinence (e.g., Ramadan, Coptic Easter) as a fundamental virtue of two different religious readings that both seek to attain spiritual connection with God. Further, historical perspectives present views on traditional Arab markets (suggesting that the names of these markets often stem from the type of merchandise for which they are best known), the extensive travels of the 12th century eminent explorer and scholar Ibn Battuta as one of the most celebrated

figures of Islamic civilization (being the longest in history who laid the groundwork for orientalist studies), and views on critical aspects of Egyptian modern history (e.g., 1952 Egyptian revolution, 2011 Arab Spring, and the influential role of intellectual figures of the Arab Enlightenment proposed as influential eras of political and intellectual transformation). Such representations of complex perspectives as definitive of the target culture require higher proficiency to digest, which unsurprisingly explains its concentration in the present volume compared to the previous ones, suggesting that proficiency and learner's readiness guide the distribution and complexity of cultural contents in this series.

To conclude, cultural knowledge, as demonstrated in the analysis of *Al-Kitaab 2*, relies on the concentration of surface, objective culture, featured in the representations of cultural products, cultural persons, and cultural places-communities. Specifically, the predominant references to cultural products generated recurrent and new categories (e.g., clothing, idioms/proverbs, architectural/festive structures), suggesting relatively more complex meanings from the previous series. Such recurrences emerge in social and cultural contexts, which situate language as a medium to negotiate the communicative demands of Arab societies (i.e., Egypt and Syria), and delve into the cultural meanings of their cultures. Correspondingly, cultural persons appear in the representations of social interaction and personal illustrations, reinforcing the embodiment of the culture as the most frequent category in this series. More notably, different from the portrayals of student demographics seen in the previous volumes, which serve to prompt a sense of relatability (i.e. studious culture) and elicit interest among the target audience, the representations of cultural persons in *Al-Kitaab 2* do not consider coverage of student demographics. Rather, given its higher proficiency, this volume engages new professional and political representations (e.g., UN agents, former presidents, political activists), which aim to

inform knowledge about critical issues of Arab societies as a part of cultural awareness. Addressing the complexity of cultural meaning, the textbook also extends the scope of subject representations to indigenous cultures in the Arab world and beyond, which attest to the curricular interest in this volume in historical and sociopolitical issues. Such representations recognize the legacies of minority groups and their pivotal role in cultural maintenance and promotion at the local and global scales. Especially considering the ongoing, hidden cultural imperialism, which exposes minority cultures to the reductionistic practices of globalization and the hegemony of power structures, the coverage of these identities becomes a critical tool to decolonize language curricula and disrupt the existing power dynamics. The attention to historical information is also evident in the representations of cultural places/communities, which, in addition to the prevalent references to commercial venues that continue to mark the banal economic terms of language and culture in this series, covers complex issues pertaining to former dynasties and civilizations, speaking to the extensive and multifaceted historical accounts of the Arab world. In fact, the focus on historical information receives a significant increase in *Al-Kitaab 2*, compared with *Alif-Baa* or *Al-Kitaab 1* (58.77% increase from the second volume *Al-Kitaab 1* and 294.6% increase from the first volume *Ali-Baa*), which equally substantiates the proficiency factor for content distribution and complexity.

The representations of cultural dimensions and their constitutive elements in the first series remains primarily a matter of proficiency and curricular objectives. As shown in Table 6, the first series displays similar proportions of cultural contents, with the exception of *Al-Kitaab 2*, which tends to deliver slightly more contents (n=295 for the five cultural dimensions combined). These proportions and their prevalent representations of objective culture are

informed by learner's proficiency, which also guides the degrees of complexity for such contents. Knowledge of intricate religious, political, and intellectual history requires advanced language skills to unpack. Therefore, the cultural focus in this volume comes as no surprise, especially given the learner's readiness and the underlying curricular expectations. However, some major representations such as the prevalent consumerist transactions and emphasis on political designations should be further discerned within the restrictive demands of globalization and its ideological amalgamation of knowledge and economic and political accessibilities, which render language a formidable capital that grants FL learners participation in a global economy (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015). I will return to the discussion of such implications in detail in the next chapter.

In the following, I shall present the findings for the second series, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*, presenting each textbook individually. I shall then compare the textbooks within the same series, similar to the presentation of the findings from the first series, before comparing the textbooks across the two series in the end of this chapter.

4.2.4 Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1

As explained in the methodology section, the *Arabiyyat Al-Nass* series uses a different approach to culture from that of *Al-Kitaab*. This series adopts an implicit approach, which integrates cultural meaning into different language skills and materials. The first volume in this series utilizes an outsider's perspective; an American study abroad student (i.e., Emily), who reports on her immersive activities and language socialization during her sojourn in various Arab societies (e.g., Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine). Structurally, each unit consists of five lessons, beginning with vocabulary and expressions, followed by video segments of Emily and interactants (e.g., her roommate, Fadwa), excerpts from her diaries for reading, explicit grammar

focus, and finally glossaries with wrap-up activities. Different from the *Al-Kitaab* series, which detaches cultural knowledge as a fifth skill, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* assigns Emily as a cultural mediator to facilitate cultural information via learner's schemas of interpretation and production, supported with reflective activity and crosscultural discussion. In effect, her social interaction and cultural exploration in the host societies render such communicative processes for cultural mediation attainable.

The analysis of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* shows the predominance of visible, objective culture, including cultural places-communities at 32%, products at 27%, and persons at 27%, as opposed to subjective culture, which only shows practices at 8% and perspectives at 6%. Below, Figure 8 illustrates the distribution of cultural dimensions, along with the distribution of their categories and their distribution presented afterward in Figure 9.

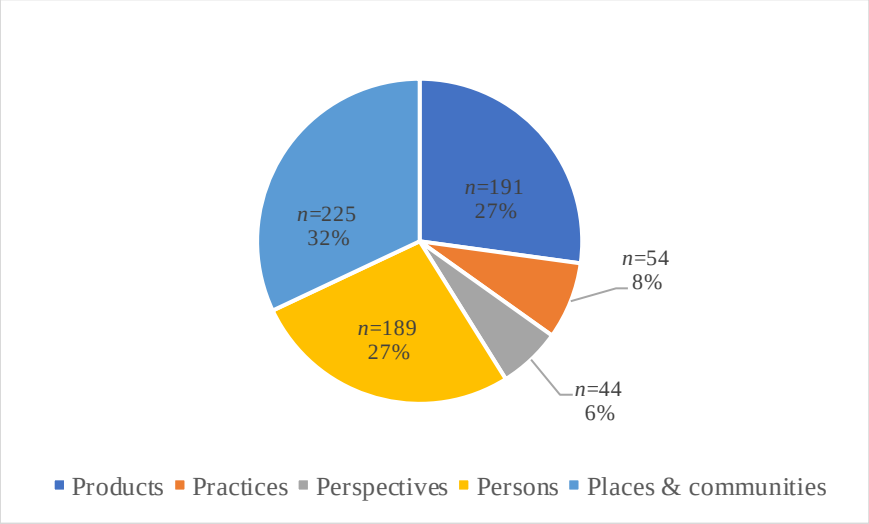

Figure 8: Distribution of cultural dimensions in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*.

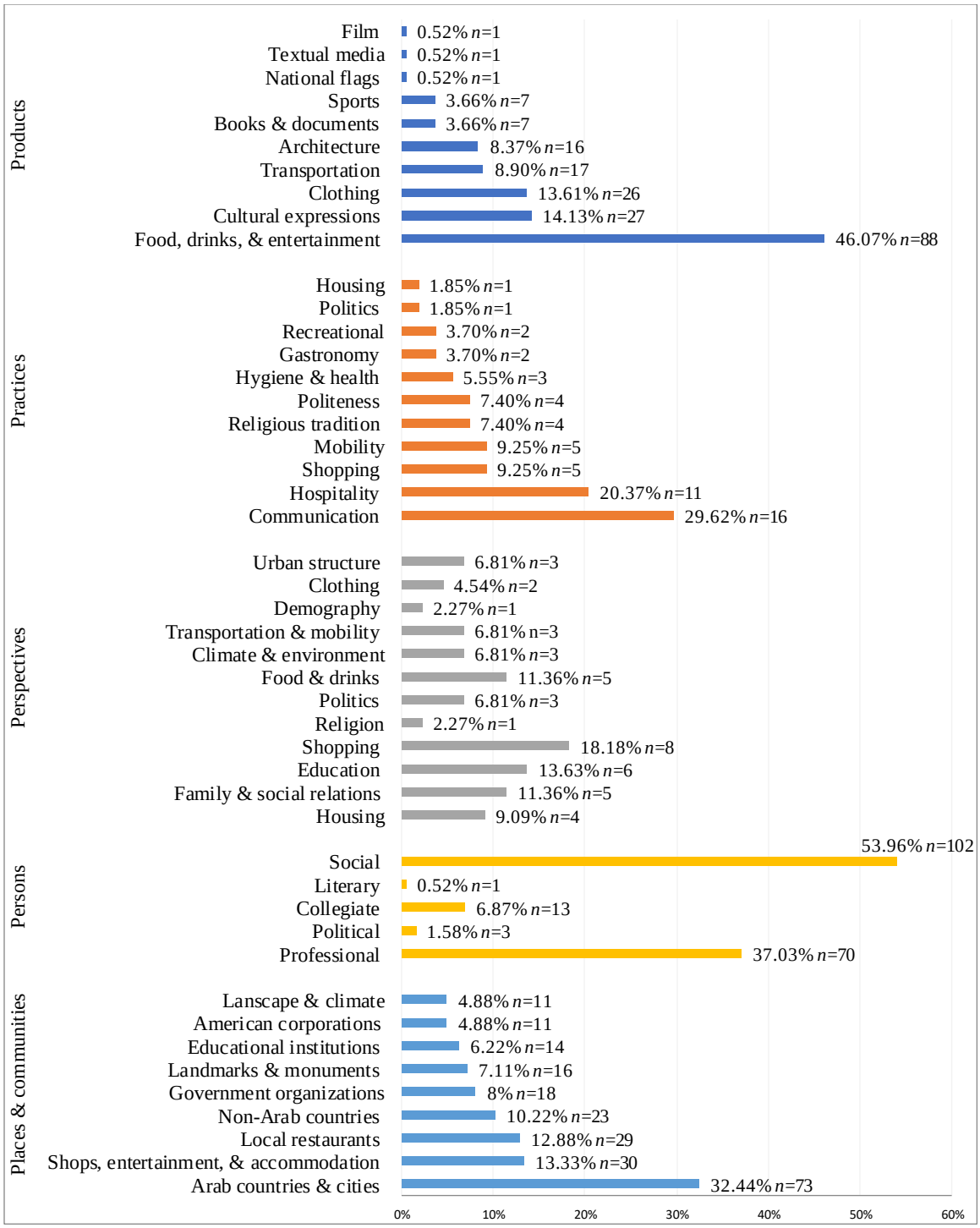

Figure 9: Distribution of categories within cultural dimensions in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*.

Given the recurring thread of Emily's immersive activities during her sojourn in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*, cultural representations hence place prominence on cultural places and

communities with 32% distribution (n=225). This latter instantiates eight semantic categories in total, in which "Arab countries and cities" (n=73) form most recurrences. Unsurprisingly, such representational concentrations of surface culture work closely in line with the curricular design of the material, which relies on the mobile, sociocultural discovery the L2 learner abroad, addressed mostly within a learner-explorer itinerary. As a study abroad student, Emily's interaction lies primarily in solving logistic issues in service-type encounters (e.g., arriving at the airport, requesting a taxi, finding housing, dining out, shopping, etc.), which also explains the prevalence of other categories, such as "shops, accommodation, and entertainment" (n=30), "local restaurants" (n=29), "government organizations" (n=18) (e.g., State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, American Embassy), and "landmarks and monuments" (n=16). Importantly, while the references to governmental organizations partly align with Emily's sojourn abroad (e.g., embassy, airport, immigration office), other references within this category stem from Emily's interactions in her host society, questioning if her interest in the Arabic language holds any political motivations to serve the national interest, such as working for intelligence agencies, which in effect reproduces the politicization of Arabic as a language of national interest (Bale, 2010; Trentman & Diao, 2017). Less frequent categories within this dimension include "educational institutions" (n=14) (e.g., University of Colorado, University of Texas, Jordanian University), "American corporations" (n=11) (e.g., KFC, McDonalds, Starbucks), which are not only consonant with the personal and social expectations of Emily as a U.S. college student abroad, but also mark the homogenizing applications of globalization and its cultural politics of sameness. Arguably, the inclusion of iconic American references (e.g., restaurant giants) presents the host culture as socioculturally and economically convenient for

study abroad students, who might cling to the familiar in the face of cultural difference encountered in their destinations.

As another important dimension of surface culture, products enjoy 27% of the overall distribution (n=191), which contains mostly categories of "food, drinks, and entertainment" (n=88), "cultural expressions" (n=27), "clothing" (n=26), "transportation" (n=17). Also congruent with Emily's quest as a learner-explorer and her immersive ventures abroad, major categories include representations of local food (e.g., *falafel, hummus, mansaf*), idioms and proverbial expressions (e.g., *Allah* lexicon), and clothing (e.g., *hijab, abaya, thobe,* or *shmaagh* - a traditional head-dress popular in the Levant, also known as *kufiya*). Such recurrences suggest the traces of the tourism discourse in the study abroad endeavor (Michelson & Alvarez-Garcia, 2015), which limits cultural meaning and individualized language learning to commercial transaction and consumption of goods and service. In this sense, Emily's interest in the target culture risks the deployment of an orientalist gaze (Said, 1978), which, under the guise of a promising global citizenship of study abroad, situates the East as the accessible reservoir of an antiquated, exoticized beauty that, on the one hand, invites possession, and on the other denies the destination and its cultures coevalness, enabling the politics of contemporaneity (Fahmi & Liska, 2024).

Further, cultural persons exhibit 27% distribution (n=189), entailing major categories, such as "social" (n=102), "professional" (n=70), and "collegiate" (n=13). Similar to the previous series, social figures center largely on cultural information related to social roles (e.g., Emily—the protagonist, Fadwa— her roommate, family members, and friends) in different social settings (e.g., shopping, family visits, dining out). Such representations appear in accordance with the socialization processes of Emily with members of her host societies, whose interactions serve to

accommodate her sociocultural and linguistic inquiries or merely facilitate her service requests (e.g., taxi driver, waiter, receptionist). Minor categories within this dimension concern the sporadic recurrences of collegiate (n=13) (e.g., students), political (n=3) (e.g., Stalin), and literary figures (n=1) (e.g., Jabran Khalil Jabran).

In terms of deep culture, cultural practices form 8% (n=54) of cultural representations in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*. This dimension focuses mainly on appropriate sociocultural behavior in categories of "communication" (n=16) and "hospitality" (n=11). The main category comprises communicational practices such as handshakes, small talk, storytelling and tea/coffee time, humor and sarcasm, the use of English with internationals as a marker of openness in Arab societies, which the textbook deems disruptive to the immersive efforts of study abroad students such as Emily, and the allegedly intrusive conversational behavior of certain native interactants, who tend to show interest in Emily's personal business, such as her marital status or religious beliefs. Hospitality practices, on the other hand, present acts of inviting and hosting Emily by numerous interactants, including Fadwa's mother during a family visit, the immigration officer at the airport upon Emily's arrival to Amman, and a Palestinian refugee during her visit of the refugee camp, which altogether encapsulate the generosity of host culture despite reported circumstantial hardship.

Finally, cultural perspectives display 6% distribution in the data (n=44). This dimension accounts for the cultural perception and attitudes towards cultural phenomena (mainly products and practices), sorted out in major categories such as "shopping" (n=8), "education" (n=6), "family and social relations" (n=5), and "food and drinks" (n=5). The most frequent perspectives emerge in the crosscultural discussions of Emily and her roommate Fadwa about issues pertaining to traditional and modern markets or malls (i.e., Emily favoring old markets while

Fadwa preferring modern malls), the seemingly surprising prevalence of traditional garments (e.g., كوفية – *Kufiya*, a traditional headdress) made in China, perceived as a threat to authenticity, food pricing in Amman versus the US (i.e., food in Amman considered cheaper than the U.S.), and the celebrated social value of local produces. Also frequent in this dimension, perspectives on education account for the crosscultural value of public versus private education in Jordan and the U.S. (insinuating public education in Jordan being more promising than private education, as opposed to the U.S.), the social pressure exercised on high performing students in Arab societies to become either doctors or engineers despite personal interest, as well as the expressed curiosity of locals inquiring if Emily's interest in Arabic language and culture is motivated by issues of politics and interest to serve the U.S. government, which reflects an inquiry triggered by the American hegemony and its regional intervention in geopolitical conflicts. Cultural perspectives on family and social relations attend to the intercultural differences in terms of size between Jordanian and American families (i.e., the former being larger than the latter), and premarital relationships such as having a boyfriend or girlfriend, which are culturally rejected, notably among older generations (e.g., Fadwa's mother). Finally, perspectives on food and drinks discuss gastronomical issues (i.e., مسخن - *Musakhan* considered authentic solely if home cooked), the prohibition of pork in Jordanian diet as informed by religious beliefs, and issues of food intolerance amongst study abroad students due to presumably overeating practices or exposure to new nutritional ingredients. As shown with these examples and argued with the distribution of other cultural dimensions in the textbook, the specification of cultural contents are in tandem with the pedagogical interest assigned to Emily as an American study aboard student, pursuing her studies in Jordan and visiting neighboring countries (e.g., Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine) in effort to enhance her linguistic and cultural awareness.

In summary, content analysis of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* demonstrates the predominance of surface, objective culture. This prevalence is evidenced in the recurrences of places-communities, and the slightly equal distributions of cultural products and persons. In terms of places-communities, representations of shops and entertainment sites constitute the largest category, which tend to trace the social ventures of Emily as the mobile learner-explorer. In this sense, Emily's cultural journey entails aspects of educational tourism and commercial activity, such as visiting local markets, restaurants, clothing stores, and historic sites in Jordan and other surrounding countries. The representations of cultural products capture the prevalence of clothing as the most recurrent category, followed by cultural expressions and architectural/aesthetic information, which suggests contextually analogous applications informed by the commercial transactions of Emily as a study abroad student, instantiating the commodification of language and culture. Also as a part of Emily's social interaction, cultural persons include mainly social, professional, and collegiate representations.

On the other hand, deep culture does not receive much coverage in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*. These representations mainly prioritize polite behavior (i.e., hospitality), as well as cultural views on shopping, education, and gastronomy. Again, the predominance of such categories is not random, but rather closely aligned with the underscored surface culture explained in the previous sections earlier. As such, deep culture, though seems more comprehensive in the present series than the *Al-Kitaab* series, offers underlying cultural meanings that guide the maintenance and reproduction of surface culture, for the former remains nonsensical without the foundation of the latter (Moran, 2001).

Noteworthy in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* is the proportion and specificity of cultural contents. Evidently, this series displays significantly greater proportions of cultural phenomena (N=703),

compared to *Alif Baa* (N=203), *Al-Kitab 1* (N=194), or *Al-Kitaab 2* (N=295) (see Table 6). Such an increase does not seem to be solely a matter of proficiency as observed in the first series, but can be similarly attributed to the implicit approach to culture. As such, Emily's assignment as a cultural mediator via her video segments and diaries offers wide-ranging and profound insights into Arab cultures through crosscultural discussion and reflective activity. Her mediation serves to facilitate cultural knowledge for the AFL learner, in which Fadwa (Emily's roommate) represents an equal contributor to such goals. In fact, Fadwa's input provides a local intermediary that serves to authenticate and supplement cultural meaning. While their interaction as two roommates sharing reciprocal interest in language and culture (L1 and L2) aims to ensure positive learning outcome for both, Emily and Fadwa's pair-work also allows for cultural negotiation, which contributes to the expansion of cultural meaning through conversationally integrated tools of elaboration and (dis)association.

4.2.5 Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2

Although there are congruent features in terms of design between *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*, such as the number of units (twenty-one theme based units) and the integral approach to culture, the current volume introduces more advanced issues and new cultural mediators. Whereas topics in the first volume center primarily on issues pertaining to Emily's sojourn abroad (e.g., housing, food, transportation, shopping, etc.), *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* sheds light on complex issues of linguistic, sociohistorical, religious, political, economic, and environmental characterization, covered in reading and listening materials. With four lessons per unit, all units follow the same structure. Each unit starts with reading and listening activities in the first three lessons, followed by recap activities in the fourth lesson. Unlike the previous volume which essentially relies on Emily's videos and diaries as the main pedagogical resources

to deliver cultural information, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* does not incorporate video material, yet still deploys familiar (i.e., Emily) and new recurring characters (e.g., Sara and Ali) in conversational segments. As noted in the material, the participation of these characters aims to reflect the different types of learning motivation and pedagogical needs, including Emily as a returning AFL learner motivated by sociopolitical issues, Sara as a heritage language learner learning Arabic to connect with her Syrian roots and family overseas, and Ali, a non-Arab heritage learner of Pakistani descent, interested in Arabic to cultivate his Islamic faith. Through interview segments, together they share their learning trajectories and cultural experiences in the textbook.

The analysis of culture in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* reveals the prevalence of surface culture with places-communities at 42%, persons at 20%, and products at 15%. Deep culture shows minimal occurrences with cultural practices at 13% and perspectives at 10%. In what follows, Figure 10 illustrates the distribution of cultural dimensions, along with their constituting categories presented in Figure 11.

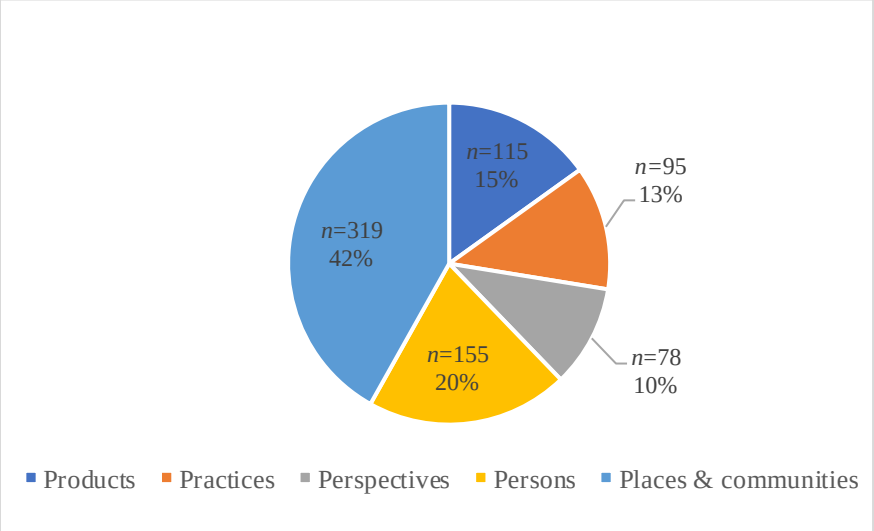

Figure 10: Distribution of cultural dimensions in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*.

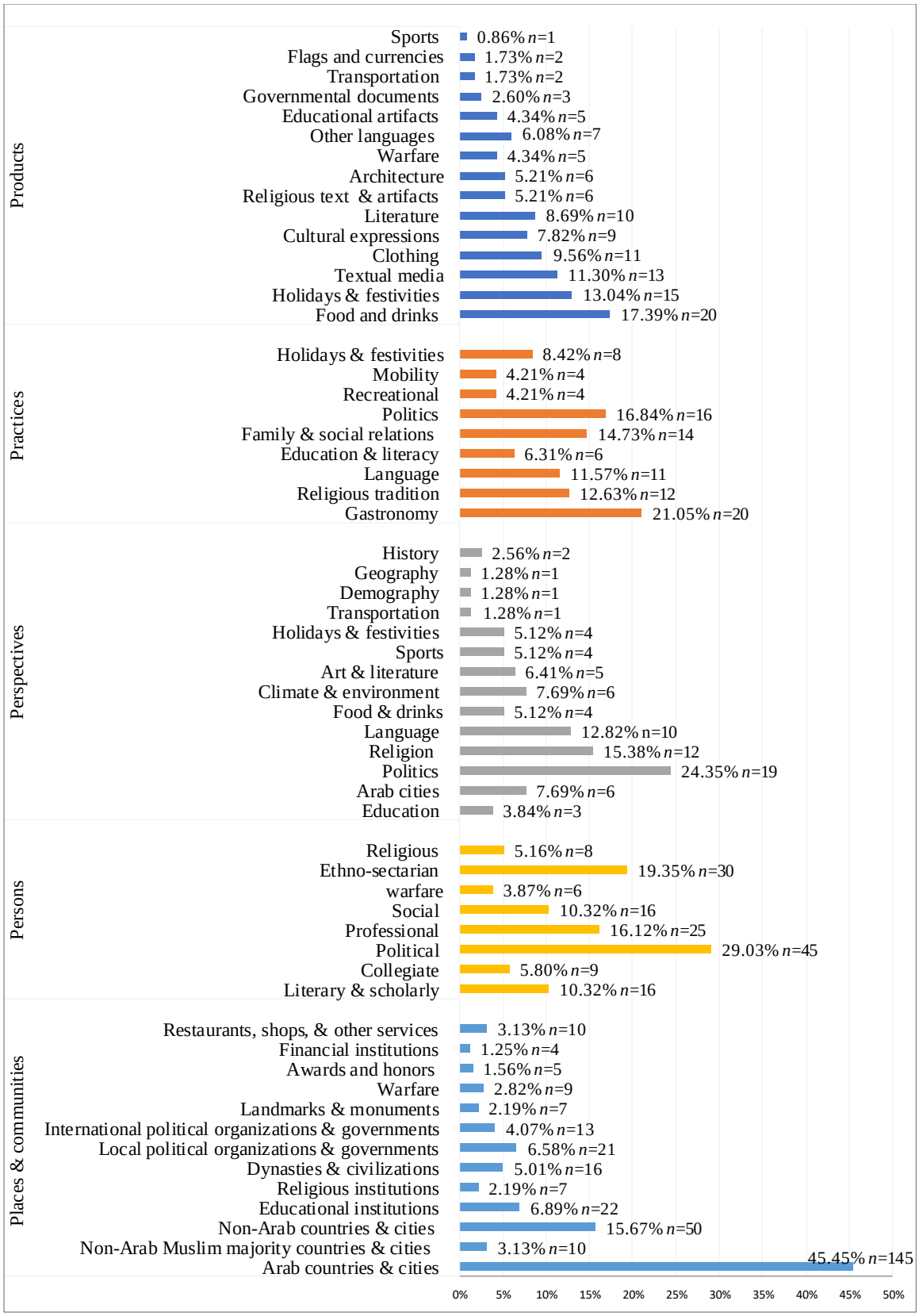

Figure 11: Distribution of categories within cultural dimensions in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*.

In *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*, content analysis identifies the prevalence of cultural places-communities with 42% distribution (n=319). Grouping the items in this dimension resulted in thirteen categories in total, including "Arab countries and cities" (n=145), "non-Arab countries and cities" (n=50), "educational institutions" (n=22), "local political organizations and governments" (n=21), "dynasties and civilizations" (n=16), "international political organizations and governments" (n=13), "non-Arab Muslim countries and cities" (n=10), "restaurants, shops, and other services" (n=10), "warfare" (n=9), "religious institutions" (n=7), "landmarks and monuments" (n=7), "awards and honors" (n=5), and lastly "financial institutions" (n=4). Different from the previous volume, in which the prevalence of cultural places/communities lies in the expansive territorial information covered by the mobile learner-explorer, in the current volume such prevalence include significant recurrences of amorphous, non-geographical categories. For instances, representations of local political organizations and governments demonstrate references to Arab political parties, political councils, foreign services, and intergovernmental organizations, such as *Hizb Al-Tahrir* (حزب التحرير), the Arab League (الجامعة العربية), the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), and the Constitutional Union Party (UC). In fact, while the attention to issues of education and history is still maintained in comparison with the previous volume (e.g., Baghdad University, London School of Economics, Umayyad Caliphate), *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* tends to show a heightened interest in political issues evidenced for instance in the discussions of international and regional conflicts (e.g., the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, WWII), Arab women in politics, and democracy. More exclusively, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* exhibits references to military alliances, arm manufacturers, and international defense forces (e.g., the Sand War, General Dynamics, Lockhead Martin, Israeli Defense Forces, US Air

Force); an interest also expressed in learner's motivation. That is, dissimilar to her learning motivations in the previous volume, which takes interest in Arab culture and tradition, envisioning a career as a university professor, Emily's interest in Arabic in the current volume appears to seek a political prospect. Her conversation with her professor unveils her interest to join governmental agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State or the Department of Defense, reinforcing a political rationality that instrumentalizes Arabic for the interest of national security (Bale, 2010). Her advanced proficiency level, which has previously benefited from a number of learning opportunities such as immersion travels in the previous volume, tends to expand her choices exploring new professional options in the current volume. Nonetheless, while the textbook suggests such interests to promote a promising market value of the language, such curricular representations continue to inculcate the ideological underpinnings that militarize Arabic as a language of geopolitical hegemony.

As another major cultural dimension, cultural persons show 20% (n=155) distribution in the data. This dimension includes major categories such as "political" (n=45), "ethno-sectarian" (n=30), "professional" (n=25); as well as minor categories such as "social" (n=16), "literary and scholarly" (n=16), "collegiate" (n=9), "religious" (n=8), and "warfare" (n=6). Given the political emphasis in this series, representations of political figures concern the recurrences of kings, queens, head of states, diplomats, mayors, and political party leaders (e.g., King Abdel Aziz Al-Saud, Elizabeth II, Mahmoud Abbas, Hamid Karzai, Fatima Ezzahra Mansouri), contextualized within different topics on local and international politics. Also, the representation of ethno-sectarian figures, which include references to minority groups and sects in the Arab world and beyond (e.g., Amazigh, Kurds, Druze, Ishmaelite, Shiite, Copts, Chechen), tends to surface in intermediate levels, similar to *Al-Kitaab 2*. The proficiency level assumed by these volumes

allows for the discussions of more complex issues accounting for the nuanced cultural meanings of the Arab world, though the level of cultural detail appears to be more extensive in the current series than the previous. In fact, drawing attention to cultural complexity is imperative for critical awareness of the target culture at this level of proficiency. In line with the exclusive representations of defense contractors in cultural places/communities, cultural persons also mark the emergence of British and German military figures (e.g., Erwin Rommel, Bernard Montgomery), addressing histo-political and military issues related to the Second World War II.

The predominance of surface, objective culture is also evidenced in the representations of cultural products, which show 15% distribution (n=115). This dimension provides fifteen categories in total, in which "food and drinks" (n=20) and "holidays and festivities" (n=15) enjoy much prominence. Most frequently, gastronomical representations cover popular Arabic dishes and drinks such as *Maqlouba* (مقلوبة), *shaay* (tea), and Arabic coffee. Coverage of holidays displays special days of local calendars, including national and religious holidays in Egypt, such as the Sinai Liberation Day (عيد تحرير سيناء - Eid Tahrir Sinai), Military Forces Day (عيد القوات المسلحة - Eid of the Military Forces), or Sham Al-Nassim (شم النسيم). In contrast with the previous volume, and similar to *Al-Kitaab 2*, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* assigns culture-specific terms for semantic instruction, which entail idiomatic and proverbial structures, such as تعددت الاسباب والموت واحد (taʕaddadat al-asbaabu wa al-mawtu waaḥid – lit. the causes varied but death is one), اعطي الخبز للخباز ولو ياكله كله (iʕṭi al-xubz li al-xabaaz walaw yaakluh kuluh – lit. give the bread to the baker even if he eats it all), and بمشيئة الله (bimashii'ati Allah – lit. with God's willing), activated in reading and conversational segments, which capture a unique way of interpreting social reality, different from the expressions found in learner's L1.

More specifically, introducing the theme of wildlife, the textbook introduces a list of colloquial Arabic proverbs with names of animals reflecting their symbolic values in Arab societies. The list includes seven examples in which names such as 'falcon', 'camel', 'cat', or 'monkey' are assigned metaphorical constructions to convey meanings in situated language use. In essence, these proverbs illustrate the entrenched cultural bonds that link Arab societies with these creatures, engaging unique connotative meanings representative of the target culture's schemas. For instance, the use of the word 'falcon' in the proverb "اللي ما بيعرف الصقر بيشويه" (lit. those who do not know the falcon, will grill it) encapsulates Arabs' cultural recognition of falconry as a cherished cultural legacy, which has long served the survival endeavors of Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula. Historically, these birds have commonly assisted Bedouins as hunting scouts to track preys and sustain their livelihood in the hostile climate of the Arabian desert. In many Arab Gulf countries, the falcon represents a national symbol of valor and prestige, underscoring a cultural significance that is appreciated in many cultural festivals across the region (e.g., King Abdul-Aziz Falconry Festival). Thus, as the proverb suggests, despite hardship, one should abstain from consuming the bird for sustenance, for its long-term utility far outweighs its immediate gratification. The use of the falcon or other animals in these proverbs instantiates the symbolic value these creatures hold for Arab societies and cultures, proposing a figurative language model of internalizing reality through meaning-making by association. In the following, Table 8 lists proverbs with other animal names presented in the material.

Table 8: Proverbs with animal names in *Arabiyyat al-Naas 2* (with author's translation).

Proverbs	Literal meaning	Connotative meaning
لسانك حصانك، ان صنته صانك	Your horse is like your tongue, if you protect it, it will protect you.	Use caution in the way you use your words, or otherwise you may suffer the consequences.
اللي ما بيعرف الصقر بيشويه	Those who do not know the falcon will grill it.	Those who do not value certain things in life will end up losing them quickly.
الجمل ما بيشوف عوجة رقبته	The camel does not see the crookedness of its neck.	A situation where a person condemns others for faults he or she also commits (i.e., the pot calling the kettle black).
البقرة لما تقع بتكثر سكاكينها	When the cow falls, the knives multiply.	A situation where the fall of those who were once in a position of power attracts others who were in wait to inflict harm on them.
راح القط، إلعب يافار	The cat left, come out and play, mouse!	The tendency to misbehave or act without restraint in the absence of an authority figure.
فقدنا القط، أجانا ينطّ	We missed the cat, it came jumping.	A situation where a subject of the conversation appears unexpectedly (i.e., speak/talk of the devil).
القرد بعين أمه غزال	The monkey is a gazelle in its mother's eyes.	Not all people share the same views about what is attractive (i.e., beauty is in the eye of the beholder).

Cultural practices in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* emerge with 13% distribution (n=95). Within this dimension, nine categories were derived in total, in which representations of "gastronomy" (n=20), "politics" (n=16), and "family and social relations" (n=14) enjoy much prominence. Most frequently, gastronomical practices deliver instances of eating customs and dietary tradition (e.g., sharing a meal on the floor with a group of family members or friends, regional differences in making coffee or tea, and the consumption of camel meat and dairy as representative of the Arabian Gulf), which are uniquely reflective of Arab tradition. Also in line with the critical attention to politics in the textbook, political practices concern examples such as the long-awaited determination to stand against oppressive regimes in Arab societies (e.g., Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt), and modern examples of electing female politicians at the head of

governmental agencies (e.g., Mayor of Marrakech in Morocco). In essence, such discussions instantiate the major transformative politics that have shaped modern-day Arab societies in the recent years, designed to reflect a new political landscape that praises justice and democratic reforms. On the other hand, practices pertaining to family and social relations encompass examples of arranged marriage, levirate marriage, and the ongoing generational shift abandoning such traditions, which similarly suggests an ongoing societal changes in the Arab world.

Cultural perspectives represent the least frequent dimension in the textbook, with solely 10% distribution (n=78). The semantic categorization of perspectives resulted in fourteen categories in entirety, which includes views "politics" (n=19), "religion" (n=12), and "language" (n=10) as the most recurring categories. As illustrated with the other dimensions, the prevalence of political perspectives is no anomaly of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*. This category consists of recurrences pertaining to exemplary views on sectarianism in Lebanon, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Qaddafi's politics in Africa, defense budget, and the US geopolitics in the Middle East. Additionally, religious perspectives underline the valorization of knowledge in Islam, the spiritual significance of Mecca as the religious capital for Muslims, and Qur'anic evaluations of Abrahamic religions; a distribution that constitutes critical awareness of Arab tradition. In terms of perspectives on language, the latter focus on issues of language authority, such as social attitudes toward the divine authority of fuṣḥaa due to its association with the Qur'an, interdialectal intelligibility and the alleged threat of variation, as well as AFL learning motivation. Such perspectives are part of the bidialectal approach of the textbook series, which aims to develop communicative skills and enable access to sociocultural capital through dialectal instruction.

Specifically, reflecting the sociolinguistic situation of the Arab world, *Arabiyyat al-Naas 2* integrates the use of fuṣḥaa and Levantine Arabic, but with an increased focus on the former to index educatedness in line with the proficiency level intended in the textbook. The integration of these two forms is due to the diglossic nature of Arabic, which assigns the colloquial variety to everyday communication and the standard variety fuṣḥaa to formal domains (e.g., literacy, religious sermons, news media, or political speeches). Just like the presentation of culture, the use of fuṣḥaa and the Levantine dialect in the textbook is integral, designed to reflect the unmarked, hybrid linguistic performances of educated native Arabic speakers. This integration relies on shared forms of the two varieties, deploying the root pattern system to develop syntactic and lexical awareness. To do so, *Arabiyyat al-Naas* series presents a *sociolinguistic corner* segment to note aspects of variation and provide alternative meanings in case of observed crossdialectal variation. In keeping up with its integrative approach, *Arabiyyat al-Naas 2* posits that advancing fuṣḥaa in accordance with Levantine Arabic allows for optimal reinforcement of crosslinguistic and sociocultural information, which enriches the sociolinguistic repertoire and activates multidialectal performances in the long term. However, to consider such pedagogical practices in these series against the issue of representation, such linguistic performances remain reflective of the societies of the activated colloquial varieties, which in both series are limited to Egyptian and Levantine dialects and cultures.

In conclusion, content analysis of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* demonstrates the predominance of objective culture, exhibiting a stark political interest in this volume, as opposed to the first volume. As reported in the findings, attention to surface, objective culture delivers prevalent recurrences of cultural places/communities (i.e., countries and institutions), cultural persons (i.e., political and ethno-sectarian figures), and cultural products (i.e., gastronomy and calendar),

subsequently. Both volumes in the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series tend to prioritize territorial information via references to Arab and non-Arab countries for instance. However, given the proficiency level in the second volume and its expansive coverage of political and military information, which entails international political actors (e.g., as in WWII), references to non-Arab countries appear are more recurrent in the second volume, compared to the first volume, in which territorial information is mainly driven by Emily's sojourn abroad and her learner-consumer experience (e.g., recurrences of names of restaurants, hotels, landmarks). The attention to politics is also evidenced in the emergence of political and ethno-sectarian figures as the most recurring categories within the cultural person dimension. In terms of cultural products, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* shows predominant manifestations of food items, which is not only consonant with the first volume due to Emily's educational tourism, but also suggests the commodification of Arabic language and culture, marking the inevitable consumerist tendencies that limit language use to economic transaction rather than social rapport.

Concerning deep, subjective culture, the representations of cultural practices and perspectives in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* does not receive much attention. Though such representations seem to be more exhaustive in this series than the first, they are consistently sporadic as opposed to surface, objective culture. Compared to the first volume, which embeds deep culture in polite behavior in communication underlying service-type encounter, *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* assigns deep culture mainly to political and gastronomical practices, as well as political and religious perspectives, which capture the subtleties of Arabic as a politically and religiously laden language, reflective of political conflict and religious orthodoxy (Bale, 2010; Diao & Trentman, 2016; Morrow, 2006).

4.3 Summary and Significance of Findings

The analysis has clearly evidenced the prevalence of surface culture across all five volumes of the two series. The distribution of contents displays a curricular preference for cultural places/communities (N=724), cultural persons (N=531), and cultural products (N=521), as opposed to cultural practices (N=216) or cultural perspectives (N=165) both overall and within each textbook. Generally, this prevalence cannot be entirely a matter of the judicious, selective curricular processes of cultural contents. By nature, objective culture holds more influence on human perception than subjective culture, especially that the former encompasses observable phenomena (surface) as opposed the latter (i.e., unseen, deep culture). These features bring to mind Hall's (1976) metaphorical model of the cultural iceberg, which distinguishes between the surface (above the water surface) and the deep (below the water surface) phenomena. As such, Hall (1976) contends that despite the greater amount of hidden culture lying below the water as society, the external, conscious part of culture attracts more attention than the internal, subconscious part of culture.

Despite the different curricular designs in the material, both the explicit (the *Al-Kitaab* series) and the implicit approach (the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series) place prominence on surface culture. Specifically, while the analysis of the explicit approach shows the prevalence of cultural places-communities in *Alif Baa*, cultural persons in *Al-Kitaab 1*, and cultural products in *Al-kitaab 2*, the implicit approach displays cultural places-communities in both *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2* as the most predominant dimensions. Within both approaches, language proficiency tends to guide the distribution and complexity of cultural contents. The proficiency-informed development of content bears different implications on cultural orientation. For instance, while cultural contents at the intermediate level tend to prioritize historical, literary, and

religious information in the explicit approach, content development in the implicit approach seems to pay critical attention to political and exclusive military and environmental issues. The conspicuous interest in political issues in the second series is not only instantiated in contents or thematic foci, but more saliently via a promoted language marketability expressed in learner's motivation, delivered in conversational segments (i.e., Emily shifted interest from academia in the first volume to political careers in the second volume). By directing individual interest toward political issues in higher proficiency levels, the textbook promotes a global utility of Arabic that reproduces the ideological discourses of the language as a tool for geopolitical hegemony.

However, learner motivation is solely limited to political interest. In fact, both series address heritage speaker/learner experience. For instance, while the *Al-Kitaab* series presents the cases of Maha and Nesreen as two heritage language speakers in the diaspora, recounting their personal and social experiences, the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series, more elaborately, addresses the learning challenges and personal motivation of Sara and Ali as two heritage learners with dissimilar interests in the language. Sara's interest in Arabic is to cultivate her linguistic and cultural heritage, while Ali, as a non-Arab of Pakistani descent, is learning Arabic to explore the meanings of the Qur'an. Such motivations suggest the interrelated ideological discourses underlying Arabic as a language of cultural and religious heritage. While such individual needs offer a source of expansive crosscultural discussions in the material, Arabic as a heritage language prompts the imperative for material designers and practitioners to diversify curricular and instructional approaches in line with the sociocultural nuances of the language and the demands of its users.

In contrast, the representation of subjective culture accounting for cultural practices and perspectives remains infrequent in both series. Such representations center primarily on shared references to communicative, religious, and political practices, and underlying beliefs, which mostly underscore polite behavior and social values. In this light, practices and perspectives that attend to social communication tend to emerge more frequently during early stages of proficiency (i.e., first volume), particularly in the *Al-Kitaab* series. In the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series, however, the emphasis is rather placed on aspects of consumerist behavior in the first volume, and political culture in the second volume, which, as argued throughout this chapter, aligns with the textbooks' design and objectives; that is, Emily's educational tourism as a study abroad student in the first volume, and the curricular emphasis on political meaning in the second volume. Communicative practices are present in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*, but such occurrences do not account for pragmatic appropriacy as much as in the first series, but rather focus on solving logistic issues via commercial transaction in service-type encounters.

As discussed earlier with the cultural iceberg metaphor (Hall, 1976), these findings reflect the numerous challenges posed on language textbook designers. First, cultural information in language textbooks does not happen in a vacuum. For instance, the educational tourism discourse in the second series with Emily as an AFL learner abroad with a special interest in the Arabic language and culture is not random. As a celebrated educational enterprise to ensure intercultural awareness, the study abroad model risks the representation of language learners as mobile adventurers, inspired by a border-crossing quest for knowledge through consumption (Michelson & Valencia, 2016). Such ideological practices expose language and culture to the consumerist ambitions of the capitalist enterprise, which engages the tourist gaze (Caton & Santos, 2009; Doerr, 2012) that embeds cultural authenticity in consumer and

possession activity, leading ultimately to the materialization and exoticization of the target culture. Also, the commodification of linguistic and cultural knowledge relies on a marketed value that is informed by historical and sociopolitical events, which in this case promotes Arabic as a language that promises careers in national security and foreign policy. Reducing the language to solve political conflicts or rather to maintain the geopolitical hegemony of the U.S. in areas deemed critical for world peace reduces the target culture to the expectations and objectives of political directives. Such objectives often place serious restrictions on curricula and study abroad programs, especially when receiving grants under certain policies such as Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which remains a major source for the promotion and development of foreign language education, including AFL (Bale, 2010).

CHAPTER 5: DICUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 AFL Textbooks as a Window to the Arab World?

Language textbooks represent a unique genre that constitutes the groundwork for teaching and learning in language classrooms (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). These pedagogical artifacts stem from the judicious choices of institutional policy and political ideology. Their curricular contents and designs account for the ideological priorities that approach language learning and attend to its culture(s) to meet the demands of a global economy (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015). Importantly, such materials impart critical information on society and the world, engaging sociohistorically situated ideologies that manipulate form and meaning. These curricular practices deploy cultural representations as an ideological engagement that undergirds linguistic and cultural information (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015). "Laden with ideology" (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 699), language textbooks offer the vehicle that seeks a way of internalizing sociocultural experience and embracing novel meaning-making systems in language learning, envisaged for a sociocognitive order that naturalizes certain ways of becoming (Wang, 2015).

Bearing ideological groundwork, cultural representations in language textbooks transmit the sociopolitical worldviews that align with the economic and political interdependencies, subject position, and power relations of globalization. Specifically, the textbook series examined in this dissertation instantiate the dominant neoliberal ideologies that grants participation in a global political economy, allowing for ideological engagement with the target language and

culture on the basis of a given market value. As such, cultural representations in the *Al-Kitaab* series, for instance, underscore the globalist, capitalist attributes of Arab societies, which are designed to evoke cultural sameness at the expense of foreignness. These representational practices engage shared inclinations that juxtapose similar modes of living, professional and academic interests, and globalized commercial labels related to corporate America that celebrate openness and contribution to global society. Given the surrounding political discourses of Arabic as a critical language following the events of 9/11, this series appears to seek crosscultural similarities as an antithesis to neutralize the Islamophobic discourses and compensate for the intercultural deficiencies to serve the U.S. national security interest. That is, these textbooks are not merely pedagogical artifacts with isolated cultural meanings, but rather entail the links with major historical, social, economic, and political events that in turn direct knowledge construction in curricular contents (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015).

The engendered intercultural sameness or relatability hints toward the identity politics of a global citizenship, which mobilizes subject positioning to cater to the demands and interest of globalization. As a product of the neoliberal ideology, global citizenship suggests that language learners are marketable agents of a deterritorialized global village (Shohat & Stam, 1996), in which unity is prioritized over difference (Anderson, 2016). Such discursive traits situate language learning within globalized transactions, which though seem counteractive to the once dominant national paradigm (see Risager, 2007), still gravely risk the homogenization of world societies and cultures. In other words, the previous concern to do away with the nationalist designations that lie in the implicit conceptualization of the national as the natural frame of reference (e.g., equating a target language to a 'target country'), and account for the global flows of linguistic and cultural knowledge within the transnational paradigm, does not seem to fully

deliver the emancipatory promise of FL education. In fact, akin to nations or national citizenship, the construction of the so-called global citizenship is not a preexisting state of affairs, but rather underlies the collective and strategic efforts of power structures to maintain interest (Zemach-Bersin, 2007).

The urge to connect globally and internationalize cultural meaning in light of globalization has long been dominated by Western power, which continues to uphold forms of cultural imperialism (Pennycook, 1994). Advancing globalist enterprises via textual or pictorial references to giant fast food chains (e.g., Arby's, Applebee's, KFC), franchised American institutions in the Arab world (e.g., American University in Cairo), or more peculiarly arm manufacturers (e.g., General Dynamics, Lockhead Martin), for instance, insinuates the capitalist tendencies that exert the hegemonic practices of power and its knowledge system in critical areas of sociopolitical organization. While such ideological practices might hold legitimate motivations for literacy instruction, as we have seen in the first volume (i.e., using American fast-food chains to facilitate transliteration), or merely portraying the inevitable reality of globalism in the Arab world, it is also important to acknowledge the situatedness of U.S. students of Arabic under these globalized dynamics and the exerted hegemony of geopolitical agenda, in which they find themselves thrust into the role of cultural ambassadors to justify the American political entanglement in foreign affairs (Diao & Trentman, 2016; Kinginger, 2008; Trentman & Diao, 2017). Nonetheless, such references capture the new approaches to framing language and culture, which closely aligns with the rise of hyper-competitive economies and the global spread of the new work order (Block, 2008; Blommaert, 2010). Arabic language learners are thus expected to embrace such embedded sociopolitical realities, which nonetheless attest to the

covert encounters that are carefully crafted to guide learner's ideological engagement with a global, political economy (Liu, 2005).

Besides such ideological commitments, also concomitant with the neoliberal ideology are the touristic transactions and service-type encounters. While the nationalist paradigm has once been decried for its commitment to the interest of the nation-state, posited as banal nationalism, researchers have worked in line with such ideological investments to explain the dynamic forces of globalization that employ the tourist gaze in communicative transaction, framed as banal globalization (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010, 2011) or banal globalism (see Szerszynski & Urry, 2002, 2006). Similar to the once prevailing banal nationalism in language textbooks, which rests on the implicit iconization of nationhood, banal globalization inculcates the touristic, consumerist obligations, which seek a tool of ideological legitimation and authentication in language and culture commodification (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2011). As shown in the analysis of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1*, cultural immersion and language socialization fall within the accessibilities of educational tourism, in which Emily's language socialization and cultural exploration, for instance, revolve mainly around commercial transactions to solve the logistic issues pertaining to the learner-explorer's itinerary, hence prioritizing the economic terms of language and culture (Duchêne & Heller, 2012). In this respect, AFL learning represents the unchallenged capital to attain knowledge of the cultural other; a type of knowledge that is often attainable through mobility and consumption of goods and service, rather than rapport and commitment. As such, social interaction appears to be guided by what and how to consume (i.e. the learner-consumer) (see Block, 2010), assigning vocabularies that are oftentimes restricted to functional requirements for service-type encounters, and rarely goes beyond shallow curiosity and surface pleasantries in examples of greeting rituals, inquiry about Emily's geographical and familial

background, or complementing her L2 performance. Addressing "global consumer citizenship" (Block, 2010, p. 297) becomes evident in the context of AFL, which in effect restricts substantial and prolonged discussion of deep culture. The designed L2 learner's study-abroad experience to facilitate cultural exploration sustains the educational tourism discourse in the material, which primarily confines cultural authenticity to consumerist behavior.

The links between the tourism discourse engendered by the valorization of study-abroad in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* pose serious ramifications on the representation of cultural authenticity. Cultural authenticity seldom lies the socially co-constructed meaning that emerge from the committed communicative negotiations of social agents (Kramsch, 1993), yet in the examined examples most often lies in the appeal of possession of artifacts deemed of symbolic historical and aesthetic value. This mobile learner-consumer experience commodifies Arab culture (e.g., clothing, food, monuments) as a part of global economy, which in part treats host societies and their cultures as accessible reservoirs of an antiqued beauty subject to possession. The attention to historical esthetics situates cultural authenticity in a packaged exoticization of the cultural other, which exacerbates the politics of time and namely the lack of coevalness or non-contemporaneity (Fabian,1983; Fahmi & Liska, 2024). In fact, the partition of the 'exotic' cultural-other and the 'global' learner-consumer has always been an ideological resource of orientalism (Said, 1978), which not only perpetuates the colonial asymmetries of the East and the West, but also unveils the paradox in the globalist rhetoric. That is, such asymmetries enable the mobility of the L2 learners on their quest for crossborder exploration and consumption, while confining the cultural other to their stagnant past grandeurs (Doerr, 2012; Kubota, 2016). At its core, this globalist exoticization has its foundation in the hegemonic capitalistic commodification

of language and culture, which crafts a global consumer citizenship to conform to a global political economy and serve its power structures.

In line with the aforementioned neoliberal practices, the educational tourism discourse instills a deliberate elision of critical historical inquiry. The focus on the hyper-consumer activity in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 1* for instance engages linguistic and cultural information that deems historical reasoning irrelevant. The sociopolitical events covered in the textbooks stem from factual information that rarely interrogates the driving forces behind the status quo. For instance, the representations of regional conflicts (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) appear to be focused primarily on current sociopolitical aftermaths (e.g., refugee camps), which in no way delve into the root problem of the issue. The disengagement in introspective critical learning to enrich historical meaning is in part disrupted by the embedded tourist gaze, which prioritizes commercial transaction in service encounters, rather than critically questioning historical events (Block, 2010; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010). Language learners are expected to internalize linguistic and cultural meaning that primarily serve the consumerist activity of goods and service, rather than engaging in rationalized reflections that explicate the here-and-now against the backdrop of different ideological delineations and interests. The effects of the tourism discourse on the presentation of historical and sociopolitical events conceal cultural differences, leaving the reasoning of underlying factors from different subject positionings unattended. Therefore, the capability for AFL leaners to engage in critical crosscultural discussions with native speakers who might hold different worldviews and value systems remains questionable. This is a concern due to "the shallow treatment of cultural diversity as multiplicity, not difference" (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015, p. 25).

Also, the inherent association of the Arabic language and Islam is not necessarily consonant with the dominant neoliberal ideologies in the textbooks. Since its early efforts in the late 1970's, neoliberalism has naturalized a value system that praises individualism over collective identity inscriptions such as nationalism or religion (Gray & Block, 2017). The construction of neoliberalism in language textbooks prioritizes the self-actualization of cosmopolitan elites, who tend to enjoy the luxuries of social life such as traveling, utilizing new technologies, and most appealingly consuming (Block & Gray, 2017). Particularly in the context of secular societies where the examined textbooks are produced and assigned, the neoliberal traits in these materials construct sensitive views of empowered citizens as risk-taking agents, whose moral autonomy is free from religious dogma, yet determined by the capacity to cultivate market ambitions (Brown, 2005).

The neoliberal ideology assigns authority to individual agency, stressing the normative subjectivities of a self-made and self-branded cosmopolitanism committed to a hyper competitive economy (Block, 2010). Such characterizations correspond with the discursive instantiations in the *Al-Kitaab* series, which tend to homogenize Arab capitals such as Cairo or Damascus as primarily progressive secular societies for the sake of the globalist cultural sameness and sharedness. The portrayals of Arabic speakers as educated, affluent cosmopolitans (e.g., holding white collar jobs such as diplomats, UN officials, University professors) serves the ideological engagement of the textbooks, which in this case adopts secularization as an antithesis to the stereotypes of intolerance and prejudice surrounding Arabs and Muslims in the wake of the 9/11 global politics. These representational practices also extend to the linguistic production of these cultural subjects, which equally risks the activation of an exclusive language system of

Arabic that discounts the traditional bearings of its vocabulary (i.e., religious invocations) and reduces the symbolic value of Islam in everyday social communication.

Language textbooks are more than curricular artifacts; they are laden with ideology (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). These learning resources serve the legitimization and conventionalization of linguistic and cultural knowledge, designed by the accessibilities and constraints of the dominant neoliberal paradigm that draws from the globalist objectives of political and ideological rationalities. Not only do such artifacts emerge from the local, institutional selective processes of language policy, but they also reflect the global systems of power relations with overt and covert preferences for certain attitudes, belief systems, and values. Such reproductive processes suggest the discourse trends that link the subtleties of social, political, and cultural phenomena, lending themselves a reliance on historical events as an available resource to pursue their ideological enterprises.

5.2 The Degrees of Criticality of AFL in the Textbook Series

Beside the target culture (C2) and the learner's culture (C1), language textbooks sustain the broader educational culture in which the textbook is published or assigned (Kramsch, 1988). Such representational processes entail the interrelated negotiations of different stakeholders, who are motivated by individualized priorities to bring forward a certain type of knowledge. The contested interest of different cultures in language material also resonates with Risager (2018), who posits that the construction of cultural knowledge is informed by the perspectives of the publishing institution, in combination with a particular education system and a particular curriculum. Cultural knowledge thus becomes perspectival, reflecting extrinsic and intrinsic ideologies that contend for its naturalization and legitimization.

The educational context in which the two textbook series in this study are produced and assigned reflects major world events that informed language advocacy and its policy in U.S. institutions. Both the *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series appeared following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, a time of anti-Americanism abroad and American skepticism at home (Stam & Shohat, 2007). Triggering a traumatic aftermath, such events exposed a dire deficiency in Arabic linguistic and intercultural competencies, which were critical to address the urgency of national security (Bale, 2010). As discussed earlier, these major events renewed the interest in Arabic, generating unprecedented federal support to meet the dearth of linguistic and intercultural resources (Al-Batal, 2007), and inculcating a political rationality that situates language advocacy within the service of the state (Scollon, 2004).

The links between the threat of national security and AFL in the U.S. educational context have long reframed language advocacy. The post 9/11 political urgencies sought in the Arabic language a critical apparatus to compensate for the failure of foreign policy and ensure national security (Bale, 2010). This language advocacy rests on a hegemonic rationale that reduces Arabic and its cultures to the orientalized delineations, which posit that knowledge of Arabic is critical to policing and regulating the East (Said, 1978). Therefore, the criticality of the language stems essentially from a national mandate that limits Arabic linguistic and cultural knowledge to the expectations and objectives that preserve U.S. geopolitical and economic hegemony over regions deemed critical for national security and economic transaction. As a critical language, Arabic learning becomes an indispensable tool to cultivate U.S. imperial ambitions, reflecting a language advocacy that cultivates power and authority under the veneer of global cooperation and intercultural dialogue (Diao & Trentman, 2016; Trentman & Diao, 2017).

The criticality of Arabic as a politically loaded language is unambiguously reproduced in the examined materials. As established earlier, the example of Emily as an AFL learner in critical, non-traditional destinations (e.g., Jordan, Palestine, Egypt) engages a study-abroad context that in part equates AFL learning to geopolitics. Her conversations feature learner's individual motivation by political issues to join governmental agencies (e.g., U.S. department of State, the Central Intelligent Agency) and serve the interest of the state. The *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series raises the awareness of the discourse of criticality by implicitly assigning this political ideology to local interactants in the first volume (e.g., taxi driver), who question if Emily's interest in the language is driven by political interest, to which Emily responds that she is interested in pursuing a career in academia. However, in the second volume, the textbook renders the political interest more conspicuous, by displaying Emily's keen inclination toward pursuing a career with the government (i.e., Dept of State). By so doing, the first volume sheds light on the public discourses of the national security in host societies, which do not seem to be just a local presupposition but a global one, whereas the second volume substantiates that positive learning outcome in AFL promises patriotic accomplishment and hence financial stability. In either case, the learner's imagined professional prospect, as that of Emily, corresponds to what the national ideology promotes; that is, the demand for a political East and its threat for national security. As illustrated earlier, the politicization of Arabic is also shared in the reading materials, which outline critical issues pertaining to regional military history, defense budget of Arab countries, and military contractors, catering to the needs of AFL learners with interest in Arabic as a language of geopolitical instability. Similarly, such discursive instantiations capture a language ideology that continues to maintain the politicization of the language as a tool of American hegemony.

The politicization of Arabic reflects a problematic quest for imperialism in American language policy, which prioritizes knowledge of 'critical' languages and cultures for political gain. The discourse of national security surrounding the promotion of Arabic dates back to the Cold War era. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and its Title VI emerged as a reaction to the Soviet sputniks, which necessitated the development of foreign language education to address the threat of national security (Bale, 2010). This national imperative set the basis for the implementation of Title VI, which remains an important factor for the politicization of Arabic, just like it did once with the politicization of Russian as a critical language during the Cold War. As the cornerstone of foreign language policy, Title VI represents one of the most comprehensive and longstanding federal interventions in U.S. higher education, designed mainly to maintain American power (Spring, 2006). Reflecting an interest that interposes the exotic allure of the Arab world and its fundamentalist religious challenges, Arabic language enjoys the resource orientation in U.S. language planning (Ruiz, 1984). Particularly in a time of political turmoil, such an orientation offered substantial support for the expansion and development of numerous programs, to the point that without Title VI, the cadre of Arabists and many Arabic teaching materials designed and used in the U.S. today would not have been available (Bale, 2011). As once 'the language of the enemy' (Pavlenko, 2003), a sentiment triggered by the events of 9/11, Arabic, like other critical languages that are prioritized for the national interest, is capable of promising foreign policy, military preparedness, and national security. Therefore, it becomes hardly surprising to come across textual references in Arabic curricula related to Lockheed Martin or General Dynamics for instance (e.g., see analysis of *Arabiyyat Al-Naas 2*).

The national security discourse has long shaped the knowledge about Arabic and the American multilingual subject (Kramsch, 2006). In 2006, President George W. Bush launched

the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), which offered further development of critical language education, deemed essential for national security and economic competition. Consonant with Title VI, this initiative also promoted foreign language education of Arabic as a critical language to pursue the U.S. national interest in light of the post 9/11 political climate. This interest focused on recurrences such as Al-Qaida, the de-Baathification of Iraq, and regional conflicts (e.g., the Palestinian-Israeli conflict), recycled in a political rhetoric to justify the U.S. imperialist interventions in the East. As a result, framing the learning of Arabic in line with such challenges served to create a reductive understanding of Arabic as a static object of study, which constructs a homogenous East whose difference is suspicious and thus requires regulation and conformity to Western standards (Said, 1978). Such discursive practices have serious ramifications on language learners, who although are cognizant of issues of hegemony, they often fail to see the orientalist imagining in the national discourse they take upon to create their identities as multilingual subjects (Diao & Trentman, 2016). The politicization of Arabic leads to the positioning of AFL learners as servants of U.S. hegemony, making them subject to criticism when they travel abroad to Arab societies, as illustrated with Emily's conversation with the taxi driver. As a means to cultivate national identity (Pavlenko, 2003), studying Arabic as a critical language has long served America's interest abroad, despite the learner's non-orientalist efforts to offset the politicization efforts (e.g., Emily's learning objective in the first volume). This national ideology that links critical language education with political urgencies restricts access to the authentic cultural nuances of the Arab world, not only due to the orientalist homogenization prompted by the politicization of the language, but also due to the native speaker's resentment toward American exploitation and hegemony (Diao & Trentman, 2016).

To offset the effects of politicization, language advocacy in the case of Arabic and other 'critical' languages should undo its circumstantial reliance on political crisis as a determinant of language valorization. In fact, this issue lies at the level of language planning, which fails to note that language extends far beyond its functions to solve global shared risks. In essence, knowledge of language and its cultures includes the access to the world views and value systems of the cultural other, allowing the language learner to discern and tolerate cultural difference in constructive dialogue. Language allows us to make-sense of our world realities, rendering attainable the intricacies of our ingenuity and imperfection, which prioritizes language learning as a form of genuine understanding rather than mere problem solving; for the latter often occurs due to lack of the former. In fact, the occurrence of cultural or political dissonance is an evidence that our approach to foreign language education has failed us. Arabic language advocacy need to do away with its crisis-based advocacy and focus more on the subjective, human-centered traits that allow language learner to appreciate difference in order to promise a harmonious coexistence that thrives on crosscultural understanding and mutual respect. Such objectives can only be attainable if we account for cultural difference as an integral part of foreign language education, in lieu of projecting multiplicity or sameness for the sake of globalization. Relying on crises to sell our interest in foreign languages not only perpetuates the ideological hierarchies that confine 'critical' languages to political issues while romanticizing others for Western alliance, but also risks the obstruction of the genuine conversation and exploration of cultural meaning in foreign languages in general. Put simply, if foreign language education is truly envisioned to understand the cultural other in the first place, then the chances of crisis should be slim. Until the ideological enterprise that reduces Arabic and its cultures to a static object of study is completely dissolved, part of cultural knowledge will remain restricted to the historically

embedded politicization of critical languages, whose parallel to national crises (e.g., cold war, 9/11), as Bale (2010) suggests, no longer serve the pragmatic expediency that seizes the opportunity of political events for program infrastructure or development, but alarmingly coalesced into a common sense for the marketability of language as a tool of hegemony.

5.3 Rethinking the Standard-Colloquial Dichotomy

The linguistic situation of Arabic in the Arab world is diglossic. By definition, diglossia refers to the alterable use of language varieties within their speech communities based on situational factors. As illustrated in the textbooks for instance, while the standard variety is utilized for literacy practices (e.g., Emily's use of fuṣḥaa in her diaries), colloquial Arabic is adopted for social communication (e.g., Levantine Arabic for personal conversation). More specifically, the standard form or fuṣḥaa is reserved for formal, high domains (H), such as education, media, political speech, or religious sermons, enjoying the attributes of prestige and power, whereas colloquial varieties (e.g., Egyptian, Moroccan, Saudi, Syrian, among others) are assigned to low domains (L), maintaining the everyday social communication. This diglossic situation assumes a stable linguistic situation in which the communicative functions of the standard and colloquial varieties are firmly assigned across different domains (Fergusson, 1959). While such an early view of diglossia provided foundational insights into Arabic variation, it has, however, generated vigorous criticism among sociolinguists, who argue that these linguistic practices are also governed by social variables (e.g., Abu-Melhim, 1991; Albirini, 2011; Bassiouney, 2020; Blanc, 1960; Holes, 1983; Schmidt, 1974).

Indeed, Arabic language variation also accounts for issues of speaker's agency, communicative goals, and social distance. For instance, Fergusson (1959) problematic assumption of the standard-colloquial dichotomy isolates the two varieties as independent ends

of a fixed binary. Such a view overlooks the applications of the Arabic continuum, which features the language user's (deliberate) choice of stylizing hybrid linguistic performances that simultaneously draw from both the standard and colloquial repertoires, resulting in further interdialectal variation (Al Masaeed, 2022a; Blanc, 1960; Holes, 2004). The language domains assigned to the standard and colloquial varieties in Fergusson's proposal (1959) discounts the speaker's navigation of the Arabic continuum, which not only entails the contextual determinants that prompt the code switch and accommodation acts (Abu-Melhim, 2014a; Chakrani, 2015; Soulaimani & Chakrani, 2023), but also indexes the educated Arabic native speaker's identity that typically emerges in multidialectal production (Al Masaeed, 2022a). Aside from the debate surrounding Fergusson's diglossic stability (1959), the dichotomous delineations of the standard and colloquial varieties also insinuate the ideological hierarchies that activate linguistic de/authentication and de/legitimization.

The standard-colloquial dichotomy interpellates social beliefs and attitudes towards language varieties, which in the case of Arabic grants exclusive authority and prestige to fuṣḥaa. With its root *f-ṣ-ḥ* encapsulating clarity, chastity, and freedom from speech impediments (Suleiman, 2004), fuṣḥaa enjoys an idealized correctness, which rests on fixed structural features (e.g., grammar, lexicon, phonology) that authenticate eloquence. These features generate a language ideology that exerts power asymmetries between the standard form fuṣḥaa and its colloquial varieties. This ideology submits to a top-down view of the standard form as the legitimate, and thus the one that should be promoted and acquired (Al Masaeed, 2022b). Presenting system of sociopolitical interest (Blommaert, 1996; Kroskrity, 2004), the standard language ideology deploys the institutional discourses that promote conformity to uniformity to ensure immunity from linguistic desecration. Generating conflicting views of the standard as the

pure and the colloquial as the debased, the standard language ideology jeopardizes the sociocultural nuances of the vast and diverse speech communities, shrinking the rich linguistic and cultural realities into a single pattern of abstract terms that de/authenticate usage and status.

The teaching and learning of Arabic has long privileged the standard variety or fuṣḥaa in the teaching of Arabic. The deep-seated associations of this Arabic variety with religious tradition and the sociopolitical significance it holds for pan-Arabism as the common denominator for all Arabs have bolstered its prevailing status as the language of interest. Fuṣḥaa, or the variety of eloquence as its roots suggest, has always sustained the strong bonds with Islam, representing the God-given language of transcending beauty (Chejne, 1968). Such beliefs render this variety the desired medium and subject of education, despite the sociolinguistic potential of the Arab world. This idealization reflects the native speaker pedagogy of the Arab world (Al-Batal, 2017; Versteegh, 2004), which is undoubtedly beneficial for literacy practice. However, given the diglossic situation of Arabic (i.e., the role of colloquial varieties for social communication), the ongoing global changes, and L2 learner individual motivation, incorporating colloquial varieties becomes indispensable in Arabic curricular material and instruction (Al-Batal, 2017; Ryding, 1995; Younes, 2014).

As illustrated in the data, all the textbooks incorporate colloquial varieties to enhance the communicative competence of the AFL learner. Fundamentally, communicative competence extends far beyond the knowledge of literacy or grammatical rule, as it also encompasses the awareness of the discourse principles and social context to fulfil communicative needs (Hymes, 1971). As proposed under Canale and Swain's framework (1980), the ability to communicate requires (1) grammatical competence (i.e., producing grammatical accuracy), (2) discourse competence (the ability to connect linguistic structures in cohesive and coherent manners), (3)

sociolinguistic competence (i.e., the ability to interpret and produce appropriate utterances cognizant of the social context, the topic in question, the interlocutors, and the sociocultural dynamics of the conversation), and (4) strategic competence (the ability to strategically address communication issues as they may arise from mishaps or lack of grammatical or sociolinguistic competence). Teaching only the standard variety risks the deployment of an unauthentic model of oral proficiency that hinders the AFL learner's ability to socialize and interact in culturally appropriate ways, since no native speaker uses fuṣḥaa for personal conversation. For AFL learners interested in oral proficiency and intercultural communication, the incorporation of a colloquial variety is essential to access the native speaker repertoire and facilitate social communication. Therefore, the adoption of fuṣḥaa alone makes the teaching of AFL a disservice to the learner (Palmer, 2007).

As the question of teaching a colloquial form to ensure communicative competence is put to rest, the choice of which dialect to include becomes another contested question. Considering the vast range of the existing dialects in the Arab world (e.g., Moroccan, Libyan, Sudanese, Iraqi, Yemeni, to name a few), the option to cover all dialects beside SA presents an insurmountable undertaking. However, as shown in the two textbook series in question, Arabic programs tend to prioritize Egyptian and Levantine Arabic, contending for their wide popularity in Arab pop culture and their mutual intelligibility vis-à-vis fuṣḥaa. This preference is also evidenced in the MLA enrollment data (Looney & Lusin, 2019), which highlight the predominance of SA programs, followed by spoken Arabic programs of Levantine and Egyptian dialects in U.S. universities (see Table 1). Those dialects have elicited much academic interest over the last two decades, as opposed to other varieties, which grant them a wide recognition within SA material and instruction. Another reason for prioritizing these two colloquial varieties can be attributed to

surveyed learners' individual choice, which similarly captures the interest in Egyptian and Levantine Arabic (Al-Batal & Belnap, 2006). The prevalence of these two dialects is also related to the demographic profile of Arabic instructors in U.S. universities, which shows the predominance of Egyptian and Levantine backgrounds (Abdalla & Al-Batal, 2011). This linguistic affiliations also extend to Arabic curriculum designers and their abundant materials covering Levantine and Egyptian dialects in particular (e.g., the five textbooks under study), which not only makes the teaching of Egyptian and Levantine Arabic relatively inviting, but equally makes the task to teach other Arabic dialects increasingly implausible (Palmer, 2007), engendering the implicit de-Arabization of other dialects in the long run.

If language and culture are two sides of the same coin, then by extension, cultural representation becomes problematic in the prioritization of a certain language variety over the other. While language is inherently expressive of the speaker's identity, the group identity of its speech community, and the culture it embodies, the representation of such details in the present integrated approach remains limited to the knowledge systems and societies of the presented dialects. As the integration of Levantine and Egyptian Arabic in SA materials constitutes a pedagogical imperative to offer a tool for language socialization and exploration of sociocultural meaning, taking into account the diglossic practices of Arabic, such a sociolinguistic approach limits cultural diversity to the sociocultural repertoires of the dialects it covers.

By all means, the present discussion does not advocate for the prioritization of any dialect in particular, but rather posits that linguistic choice in AFL materials hold a significant impact on the representation of culture. As established earlier, ensuring oral proficiency in Arabic requires the development of sociolinguistic competence, which thrives in the exposure to authentic social contexts. Colloquial Arabic maintains social interaction in Arab societies, and thus AFL learners

need to be able to interpret and produce appropriate utterances that conform to the social practices of Arabic speech communities. In order to ensure socialization and immersion skills, AFL learners need to be able to speak at least one colloquial variety to engage in genuine conversation and avoid ridicule (Shiri, 2013; Trentman, 2013). However, while the language textbooks sustain language ideologies that de/legitimatize certain varieties over others (e.g., Egyptian or Levantine being the most intelligible varieties), empirical research has evidenced that all Arabic dialects, including those that display varying degrees of linguistic divergence or proximity share a high degree of mutual intelligibility (Abu Melhim, 2014; Čéplö et al. 2016; Soliman, 2014; Trentman, 2011; Trentman & Shiri, 2020); a fact that renders all dialects eligible for integration (Al Masaeed, 2022b). Therefore, the question of which dialect to include does not hold merit in this pedagogical debate, since knowledge of fuṣḥaa fundamentally informs the identification of a dialect (Trentman & Shiri, 2020). Rather, the focus should be placed on how instructional and curricular approaches should account for mutual intelligibility features to allow for the integration of multiple dialects and facilitate the learner's multidialectal practices, based on contextual factors and situational needs. To this end, such approaches might need to consider an equal distribution of regional variation (i.e., North African, Egyptian, Levantine, and Gulf) in both integrated and separate approaches (i.e., spoken Arabic programs), especially that these four varieties represent major regional categorization (Versteegh, 2001).

The integration of more dialects in AFL materials can rely on mutual intelligibility research, which still remain scarce in the field of Arabic linguistics (e.g., Abu Melhim, 2014; Čéplö et al. 2016; Soliman, 2014; Trentman, 2011; Trentman & Shiri, 2020). These studies demonstrate how comprehensibility among Arabic dialects can be determined based on structural variation (e.g., phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical), allowing the language learner and

instructor to build upon the awareness of certain features to foster translanguaging practices. For instance, the 'sociolinguistic corner' segment in the *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* series presents an insightful example that illustrates features of variation and mutual intelligibility, as opposed to isolated glossaries of interdialectal or English equivalencies. By allowing the learners to discern variation features and explore their interdialectal links, they will be able to enhance their metalinguistic awareness while attending to the social meanings of variation, especially that speakers alter their linguistic production along a continuum of fuṣḥaa and other colloquial forms, allowing for sociocultural exploration to take place (Trentman & Shiri, 2020). However, this awareness would not be possible without foundational proficiency in fuṣḥaa, since this later represents the source of all Arabic dialects (Bassiouney, 2020). Mutual intelligibility studies can also offset the disseminated language ideologies that undermine the linguistic Arabness of certain dialects and exert the linguistic hierarchies, by providing empirical evidence that variation is not inherently indicative of unintelligibility or un-Arabness. In this respect, North African dialects, which tend to be stigmatized considering the prevailing *Mashreq* ideology (see Hachimi, 2013), could benefit from such studies in order to gain equal status in AFL curricular materials, particularly that countries such as Morocco for instance continues to offer an attractive destination for numerous study abroad programs in the recent years (Fahmi & Liska, 2024).

Numerous studies have demonstrated practical approaches to dialect integration in AFL teaching (Shiri & Joukhadar, 2018; Trentman, 2017; Turner, 2017; Younes, 2014). Motivated by the same rationale that proficiency in colloquial Arabic is essential for sociolinguistic competence, these studies propose a plethora of integration models informed by the diglossic practices of the Arab world. For instance, Trentman (2017) introduces a genre-based curriculum guided by systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to integrate the teaching of fuṣḥaa and a dialect

in early stages of acquisition. This model suggests that the SFL framework offers a valuable understanding of how genre-based conventions guide the linguistic choices of the language user, allowing AFL learners to activate different dialects for different skills (Trentman, 2017). Also motivated by the need to incorporate more dialects, especially in light of the growing study abroad trends, Tuner (2017) proposed a model that integrate Moroccan Arabic by duplicating the materials provided in *Al-Kitaab* (i.e., Egyptian and Levantine), ensuring contiguity in format and presentation. Such a reproductive design can also be useful to integrate other dialects to facilitate socialization and immersion skills in different parts of the Arab world. Undoubtedly, the choice of a dialect should also take into account the learners' objectives, which in turn should equally guide instructional and curricular development in AFL (Kuntz & Belnap, 2001). Until the question of how to teach sociolinguistic variation is settled once and for all, the concern of cultural representation shall continue to pose a persistent challenge in the teaching of AFL, for language and culture are intrinsically interdependent.

5.4 Implications: Research Methods and Pedagogy

As established in the methodology section, the present study utilizes an adapted content analysis approach that draws upon Moran's cultural framework (2001). Specifically, content analysis examines cultural representations, which attend to aspects of surface (i.e., cultural product, places, persons), and deep culture (i.e., cultural perspectives, practices). Culture in this respect is interrelated, entailing the reproductive processes of operation and maintenance, in which cultural persons in certain places or communities use and produce a shared set of cultural artifacts, and engage in a shared set of meaningful practices, which are fundamentally guided by a shared value system at play, resulting ultimately in the legitimization and preservation of cultural phenomena. Within such processes, culture is a doing word (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones,

2012); a system of being and making sense of our world realities, which captures the interrelatedness and evolving nature of culture. However, while adopting such theoretical underpinnings for the analysis of culture, it is important to bear in mind the situational contexts in which such notions occur. As explained in Chapter 3, cultural products may deliver different meanings, depending on the way they are presented in the textbook. For example, material manifestation of the target culture may emerge in the form of a cultural place (e.g., historical monuments), which might as well capture a distinctive architectural or aesthetic production, uniquely representative of the target culture (e.g., minarets, domes, citadels). We have also seen how linguistic practices deployed for pragmatic instruction might also feature a unique cultural understanding of social interaction, entailing culture specific vocabulary (e.g., *Allah* lexicon). Such examples substantiates the interplay of cultural dimensions, which necessitates careful consideration of context and curricular goals to discern the type of cultural information underlying presentation.

To ensure critical awareness, conveying cultural meaning in language textbooks should prioritize reflective representation, holding a mirror up to the raw sociocultural, economic, and political discourses of the target language and its cultures (L2/C2). In essence, reflective representation focuses on the unvarnished truth that objectively transmits cultural meaning of L2, free from any hegemonic influence that adapts the focus for the interest of power structures. Specifically, reflective representation derives its authority from reality itself (Hall, 1997), allowing for the direct and transparent links that establish the replication of a raw, undistorted cultural reality (Risager, 2018). However, the analysis in this study reveals a persistent globalized, surface culture of sameness, which suggests intentional, constructionist representations (see Risager, 2018). In effect, and as argued earlier, such recurrences tend to blur

the heterogeneous cultural landscapes of C2, and risks the inculcation of Anglocentric views that restrict the Arabic language and its cultures to the hegemonic neoliberal didactics. Considering the prevailing standards of intercultural awareness, which stress mutual understanding and urge to think and act in line with L2 shared knowledge of sociocultural conventions (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993), cultural complexity fails to meet the mark due to the intentional disinterest in cultural foreignness. These representations point toward the paradox in the globalist discourse underlying language policy, which manifests in the exaggerated preoccupation with finding common grounds rather than making sense of intercultural difference. We tend to designate those languages other than ours as 'foreign' languages (i.e., L2 or FL), but when it comes to their associated cultures, we tend to center more on illuminating cultural sameness and intercultural reliability (see Uzum et al., 2021), rather than accounting for the substantial differences that elicit reciprocal understanding. Prioritizing cultural foreignness grounded in deep, subjective culture and undoing the hegemonic influences that serve power relations in curriculum policy ensure critical intercultural awareness and help establish strong bonds that thrive on reflexivity, tolerance, and mutual respect.

Furthermore, the frequency of contents examined in both series hints toward problematic pedagogical implications. Content analysis indicated the predominance of surface, objective culture (i.e., cultural products, persons, places) and the underrepresentation of deep, subjective culture (i.e., cultural perspectives and practices). Such recurrences render the facilitation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) at stake; a construct that oftentimes calls to go beyond the tangible manifestations of culture to prioritize deep culture (Bennet et al., 2003). This type of culture unveils the everyday concealed discourses, assembled in communicative practices, representative of cultural perception and behavioral appropriateness of the target

language, which often requires profound immersive and reflective activity to develop (van Houten & Shelton, 2018). Different from surface culture, the exploration of deep culture fosters the dialogic interpretive and productive skills for meaning making, facilitated by the conscious, communicative contributions of cultural informants in social interaction (Byram, 2003). Prioritizing the differences in deep, subjective culture is indispensable to enrich the inquisitive and critical skillset of foreign language learners, which cultivates the desire to delve into the rationalities underlying unfamiliar perspectives and practices, promising the willingness to socialize further, and understand cultural difference with empathy. In compliance with the ACTFL guidelines for foreign language education, illuminating crosscultural differences is key, yet discerning the differences necessitates active participation of cultural informants via genuine communicative acts to account for sociocultural variables and form new attitudes that mediate between one's own culture and that of the other (van Houten & Shelton, 2018).

Finally, the textbooks' approach to culture raises important pedagogical questions pertaining to culture learning in the AFL classroom. On the one hand, the implicit approach in *Arabiyyat Al-Naas* allows for significantly more contents than the explicit approach in *Al-Kitaab*. This is evident in the integration of cultural meaning into different language foci and via the recounted experiences of recurring characters, which serve cultural mediation in immersive material (e.g., dialogues, diaries). On the other hand, the explicit approach assigns cultural segments in each unit to address certain cultural topics, which although occasionally tends to introduce fundamental features of Arab culture, its detached applications do not account for cultural meaning residing in linguistic production (or at least it does not define cultural meaning as such). Such curricular practices might entail pedagogical challenges on the part of the language instructor, by triggering the blind spots generated by the textbook's own designations

of culture. In other words, the AFL instructors using these resources might find themselves restricted to the textbooks' own definitions of Arab cultures, which in the case of the presented data pays little attention to subjective culture and focuses more on objective culture. Equally important, the implicit approach might also create an overwhelming sense of instructional dilemma considering what might be cultural or more cultural than other. However, such implications lie within the instructors' individual differences and their own understanding of the interplay of culture and language, which requires further inquiry into the instructional approaches in AFL classrooms. As such, future research could possibly address instructors' perspectives, particularly those who are using the textbook series in question, to understand classroom negotiations of cultural meaning and explore the alternative approaches to facilitate it. Overall, the implicit approach provides a wide array of embedded cultural foci that the instructor can incorporate into different language skills, but most importantly, intercultural learning should be invested in knowledge about the invisible systems of communication, values, and traditions of the target culture (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). In either case, language textbooks are only *one* source among many others to construct cultural knowledge in AFL classrooms.

5.5 Conclusion and Future Research

The current study examined cultural representations in two widely used textbook series of Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) textbooks, namely *Al-Kitaab* and *Arabiyyat Al-Naas*. The data comprised five textbooks in entirety, including beginning and intermediate levels. As argued for the rationale that motivated the study, investigating cultural representations in AFL curricular materials becomes imperative, not only in light of the prevalent institutional ideologies underlying the promotion of the language as a politically loaded language of national security and conflict, but also given the persistent cultural politics of language textbooks, as well as the

pedagogical challenges of diglossia. With such issues in mind, the analysis adopted Moran's framework (2001) of cultural dimensions, which lays out a definitive cultural paradigm in language education that entails surface, objective culture (i.e., cultural places/communities, persons, products), and deep, subjective culture (i.e., cultural perspectives, practices). To put such theoretical underpinnings into practice, the study employed a revised content analysis approach, which engaged four recursive stages of deductive and inductive coding (i.e., itemization, operationalization, analysis, and reporting). The findings of the study reveal the prevalence of objective culture in both textbook series, as opposed to the underrepresented, subjective culture.

The approach adopted in this research is limited to content analysis, guided by a poststructuralist approach that interrogates the dynamic forces of globalization and their conflicted discursive and political space underlying language and culture knowledge (Blommaert, 2010; McNamara, 2012; Kramsch & Vinall, 2015). AFL curricula occupy such a space, being promoted based on a market value that draws from major political events. That is, learning Arabic cannot be isolated from its political rationality, which continues to conflate the language and its associated cultures with the issue of national security following the events of 9/11, risking a reductionist approach to language learning that exaggerates the utility of AFL within a global economy to maintain geopolitical hegemony. The materialization of the target culture equally suggests the conflicted discursive space of the globalist rhetoric, which commodifies language and culture knowledge, restricting them to the capitalist engagement of the transnational, learner-consumer. The present approach helped to rethink the findings against the conditions in which the textbooks emerge in a particular space and time, considering that these materials represent historical and sociopolitical practices (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015), in

order to explore the way the dominant ideologies shape curricula. Computing the frequency of certain terms alone does not help to uncover the underlying meanings unless it explains such findings against the backdrop of broader issues, which inform the construction of cultural meaning (i.e., social and political events; globalization).

The findings in this study are no anomaly of the dominant neoliberal ideology and its globalist commitment to cultural sameness. The prominence placed on objective culture serves to reinforce the capitalist commodifications of language and culture, which in part thrive in praised educational tourism and commercial transaction. Within such consumerist processes, cultural knowledge emerges as a discursive proxy to pursue the neoliberal objectives, which expose cultural meaning to the presuppositions of globalization and its power interests. Those objectives assign a market value to the language in question, which relies on major sociopolitical events, allowing the multilingual subject to operate in a preconditioned global economy that promises social mobility. Specifically, the political urgencies of the 9/11 events renewed the interest in the Arabic language due to the threat of national security, attracting learners who are inspired by a patriotic sentiment to serve the interest of the state. However, such a political mandate does not seem to disrupt the appeal of cultural materialization, which problematically equates cultural exploration to service-type encounter, particularly in a time when intercultural understanding has failed world peace. Despite the politicization of Arabic by means of learner's motivation and critical references to political and military information, cultural knowledge tends to lie in the recognition and possession of surface phenomena, accessed via a packaged global citizenship that discounts cultural difference to serve those in position of power.

As the processes of globalization are interlinked, the promotion of global citizenship relies on the cultural sharedness of transnational subjects. The shared socioeconomically

prominent modes of living, professional and academic orientations, the attention to capitalist attributes, as well as global political and military issues, are all examples that attest to the ideological workings of globalization, which risk the homogenization of world cultures. Such representations were clearly evidenced in the analysis of both textbook series, where cultural diversity is often confused for multiplicity. These ideological practices result from the monolithic conceptualization of the cultural/political other, in which difference is toned-down to guarantee intercultural relatability and shallow tolerance to mitigate stereotype and Islamophobic attitude. Given the paradox of globalization, the reproduction of the global village (Shohat & Stam, 1996) and its subject positioning continues to uphold the ideological engagement of the AFL leaner primarily with the knowledge systems of the West. As stated above, the pursuit of a supposedly uniting global citizenship becomes then a site of cultural hegemony, in which the ideological enterprises of capitalist globalization feature the linchpin of cultural homogeneity.

The analysis in the present study accounts for cultural representation in terms of Moran's (2001) descriptors of cultural dimensions. Noteworthy, this framework does not fully account for linguistically embedded domains of cultural meaning (i.e., culture *in* language), as much as it assists in the identification of the multifaceted, interweaved, mostly detached manifestations of culture (culture *and* language: e.g., cultural persons, products, places). In other words, the adopted framework does not for instance focuses on sociolinguistic meaning, accounting for relevant acts of linguistic alternation to index transactional or symbolic meanings in the textbooks. Similarly, Moran's framework does not allow to delve further into the semantic-pragmatic designations of AFL to discern the meaning-making systems underlying lexicon, such as the way denotations and connotations work for instance. Also, while Moran's framework (2001) recognizes literary representation or creative expression as cultural phenomena, AFL

poetics for instance can help explore the way the language exploits its literary devices (e.g., alliteration, verse structure, rhyme) in ways that are unique to the language and its meaning-making system. Such applications, however, are parts of the languaculture approach, which conversely takes interest in the complex interdependence of language and culture, offering a sociocognitive framework that views culture as the meaning potential of linguistic performance. Dissimilar to Moran's proposal (2001), future research may unpack the interface meanings of culture *in* language (i.e., languaculture), and the way cultural understanding guides linguistic practice. To this end, Risager's interdisciplinary framework of languaculture (2004, 2006, 2007, 2018), which defines culture as meaning, embedded in discourse, can offer a much deeper understanding of culture in language textbooks. To this end, languaculture can spark the awareness of cultural difference and its influence on language use (Risager, 2006).

In terms of language choice, the textbooks in this study prioritize Egyptian and Levantine dialects. The textbooks justify these regional selection by the need to guarantee sociolinguistic competence, given the diglossic practices in Arabic that assign different varieties for different communicative functions and domains. Therefore, to facilitate the AFL learner's socialization and cultural immersion, proficiency in a dialect beside fuṣḥaa becomes an undisputed requirement for the learner, particularly that fuṣḥaa or SA does not govern the social sphere of Arab societies. However, while the choice of an Arabic dialect should be primarily informed by the learner's needs and objectives, it should be noted that any choice of a dialect is representative of the cultural reality of its own society. That is, by including or excluding a dialect in AFL curricula without ample linguistic rationale that captures the interdialectal features that builds on fuṣḥaa, we are coactively prioritizing one culture over the other, which only continues to perpetuate the linguistic hierarchies of the Mashreq and Maghreb language ideologies (Hachimi,

2013). As argued earlier, AFL learners should have reasonable access to different Arabic varieties, which would allow them to discern the linguistic grounds that explicate aspects of mutual un/intelligibility, leading to the expansion of their linguistic repertoires of the colloquial and the standard in the long term.

This study attempts to provide a systematic exploration of cultural phenomena in curricular material, taking into consideration different criteria that guided the research design (see Chapter 3). The selected data include two AFL textbook series, whose popular utility and proficiency level have been substantiated in the literature and enrollment data (see Chapter 2). Future research might consider following up on advanced AFL levels to investigate the development and orientation of cultural information. We have seen the development in learner's motivation with Emily in the first and second volume, which for instance envisions different professional prospects (i.e., showing interest in academia in the first volume as opposed to her interest in politics in the second volume). Similar applications were also observed in terms of thematic development pertaining to critical issues, such as historical, literary, political, military, and environmental foci in the second volume of both series. As argued earlier, cultural coverage works hand-in-hand with the proficiency level intended in these materials. Therefore, it would be equally important to examine the type of cultural knowledge envisaged for higher proficiency levels, and hence cross-examine such findings with the present study to form a holistic understanding of the development of proficiency vis-à-vis culture learning.

The adopted framework aims to account for a wide-ranging manifestation of cultural phenomena in AFL textbooks. While such a framework helped characterize cultural representation in these materials, it is similarly important to research how such meanings are negotiated in classroom instruction. Language textbooks might have direct influence on

classroom instruction, but such artifacts are not the sole resources, as not all instructors espouse textbooks' directives. Attending to classroom instruction and observing how cultural meaning is navigated should enhance the researcher's understanding of the pedagogical applications of culture learning in AFL. Researching classroom instruction can reveal the way monolithic conceptualizations of Arab societies and cultures transmit into instructional activity or otherwise. Such insights might as well be complemented with teacher's perspective in semi-structured interviews to question the rationale behind certain instructional practices and the challenges to ensure intercultural awareness. Complementing curricular analysis with instructional analysis would certainly expand our knowledge about the reflective and communicative functions of the interdependence of language and culture in AFL programs.

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APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Consonants:

أ	ʔ	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ط	ṭ
ث	θ	ع	ʕ
ج	j	غ	ɣ
ح	ħ	ف	f
خ	x	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	ð	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	š	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Vowels:

ـَ	a	ـَا	aa
ـُ	u	ـُو	uu
ـِ	i	ـِي	ii
Shortened vowel	ə	ـّ	Gemination with doubled consonants

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APPENDIX C: REVIEWED STUDIES OF CULTURE ANALYSIS IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

	ABOUT THE TEXTBOOK		ABOUT CULTURE			ABOUT THE ANALYSIS		
	Language	**Level & Context**	**Number of textbooks**	**Constructs of culture**	**Selected data within the corpus**	**Tools for analysis**	**Findings**	**Keywords/Themes**
Aljuaythin (2018)	English	Elementary - Saudi Arabia	2 - Smart Class 5 & Smart Class 6	Gender representation - checklist for examining gender power in textbooks (i.e., Fairclough, 2015)	Written texts and images	CDA	- The predominant gender asymmetry and stereotyping in the textbooks, patriarchal ideology, and the reliance on local perspectives.	Gender stereotyping; gender role; patriarchy
Azimova & johnston (2012)	Russian	University levels (beginner, intermediate, & advanced) - USA	9 textbooks	The representation of language speakers and their cultures - legitimation of language ownership through the politics of representation.	Physical and digital texts, images, maps, & dialogues	CDA	- The absence/erasure of Russian speakers other than white Orthodox Christian ethnic Russians due to the potential postcolonial hegemonic relations of ethnic Russians and other peoples of the former Soviet Union.	Language ownership and ethnicization; ethnocultural representation; ethnic nationalism.
Babaii & sheikhi (2018)	English	Private English language schools - Tehran, Iran.	4 series in total (2 American series: American English File & Topnotch + 2 British series: English Result & New Headway)	Neoliberalism discourses and ideologies - textbooks are ideological instruments to construct a reality that conform to the interests, beliefs, and values of their designers.	Written texts	CDA	- Tenets of neoliberalism highlighted in the data: market, consumerism, branding, individual productivity/marketability, and non-critical multiculturalism that celebrates a Utopian image of the West (i.e., inculcation) - Classification of topics showed the predominance of travelling, finding a job, and personal anecdotes; classification of relations identified friends with the highest frequency followed by interviewer-interviewee; classification of subject positions revealed the largest proportion of the interlocutors' occupational & commercial roles in institutional settings.	Neoliberalism; market-led discourse; consumerism.

Chapelle (2014)	French	First year university - USA	65 - Those from the U.S. French pedagogy journal-French Review (1960-2010)	Canadian and Québec content - references to topics associated with the Quiet Revolution, Canadian history, Québec identity, Quebec culture, bilingualism, and Québec French.	Contexts (i.e., segments in the text that provide students with sufficient context or information about Canada/Québec while practicing grammar or vocabulary) & cultural notes (i.e., information about culture as a sideline to the explanation of language and exercises).	Content analysis - Coding & categorization.	- An all-time increase in Canadian and Québec French culture over the five decades of the study; a result of the ongoing Québec-based factors of language politics and foreign relations initiatives.	Quebec culture; language politics.
Chen (2010)	English	Primary & secondary education - China	17 EFL textbooks	Language as one of the semiosis systems constitutive of culture (i.e., Halliday, 1978): the ways multimodal features of language and culture enable dialogic engagement with readers.	Written texts and images	Multimodal/ semiotic analysis	- Five types of multimodal resources were identified as engagement devices: labeling, dialogue balloons, incomplete jointly constructed texts, illustrations, and highlighting.	Appraisal systems of engagement; heteroglossia; gradeability of engagement values.
Curdt-Christiansen (2015)	English	Primary 1 & primary 2 - Singapore	2 sets provided by STELLAR	Ideological tensions - textual choices, social relations, and politics of representation in the textbooks in contrast with the STELLAR curricular goals and guidelines.	Texts and their topics/themes; images.	Content/thematic & discourse analysis	- Disparities of cultural representation between the local and global cultures as well as the lack of learner's culture and identity..	English hegemony; cultural/linguistic imperialism; power of economic and political globalization.
Davidson & Liu (2020)	English	Elementary school - Japan	2 volumes of Hi Friends!	Cultural representation (i.e., Moran, 2001; Yuen, 2011) and global citizenship.	Physical and digital texts with references to Japanese and non-Japanese cultures.	Content analysis - Coding & thematic analysis (including teachers & students' interviews)	- Low exposure to non-Japanese culture: focus on Japanese cultural contents, mainly products and persons rather practices and perspectives. - Students and teachers lack the understanding of the notion of global competence but expressed their interest in intercultural awareness and international connections.	Simplistic cultural representation; nascent global citizenship sentiment; inter/cultural awareness; open mindedness; social responsibility.
Gray (2013a)	English	Low proficiency levels - UK produced for global market	10 contemporary textbooks	LGBT representation - invisibility and heteronormativity (i.e., Thornbury, 1999)	Texts & unit themes - reading and listening activities.	Content/discourse analysis (including teachers' interviews).	- Blanket omission of gay representation in the studied ELT material -prevalent heteronormativity practices and avoidance of LGBT.	LGBT invisibility; Heteronormativity; ELT material.

Gulliver (2010)	English	LINC program clientele - Canada	24 textbooks from the LINC program	Cultural representation of immigrant success - "descriptions of national culture offer points of inclusion and exclusion, through which one is invited to position oneself in relation to this society" (p. 728).	Written texts - stories and narratives of immigrant experience in Canada.	CDA	- Discursive patterning of the positive qualities of Canada and the negative qualities of the countries of origin of the newcomers (i.e., ideological square); Unsuccessful stories are attributed to the negative qualities about the newcomers themselves - Stories become acts for legitimation through which the country and its immigration policies are legitimatized.	National narrative of immigrant success; positive self-representation & negative other representation; maintenance of low orientation to difference.
Hong & He (2015)	Chinese	Confucius Institute Textbooks - global market	3 Mandarin Chinese textbook series: Contemporary Chinese; Experiencing Chinese; & Happy Chinese	Big "C" culture and small "c" culture (Peterson, 2004) & models of target, source and international cultures (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999).	Written texts - dialogues, reading passages, & cultural notes.	Content analysis & Corpus-assisted CDA	- Han group is dominant in ethnic and cultural representation whereas Chinese minorities are marginalized and nationalities outside China are under-represented. - "one-way logic": uncritical promotion of a one ideological position while silencing others (p.105).	Group representation; cultural bias; monoculturalism; cultural and ethnic hegemony.
Ilieva (2000)	English	CLB3 - Canada	1 - Canadian Concepts 3	"Culture as a process of making sense of the world and a site of social differences and struggles over meaning and representation of people with multiple and shifting identities" (p. 52).	Written texts	CDA	- An embedded capitalist/consumerist discourse in the data as an important aspect of Canadian culture, illustrating cultural knowledge as the knowledge of cultural 'facts' and fixed sets of values/behaviors - Acts of homogenization: a generalized notion of Canadians as a unitary group.	Cultural knowledge; culture as meaning making processes; monolithic conceptualization of culture.
Juan (2010)	English	College	4 volumes of College English	Checklist of cultural content (Byram, 1993).	Texts selected by thematic (i.e., the gist of the pre-reading, text A and text B) and cultural information details (i.e., pre-reading, text A, text B, footnotes and exercises).	Content/thematic analysis & frequency count.	- The predominance of American culture; absence of international culture; paucity of Chinese culture.	Textbook evaluation; Byram Checklist; Cultural content.

Keles & Yazan (2020)	English	Elementary - UK produced for global market	5 editions of New Headway	Culture and community representation (i.e., Kachru's model of concentric circles & Yuen's 4 Ps model - products, practices, perspectives, and persons).	Visual, textual, and audial information.	Diachronic content analysis - coding & categorization.	Inner Circle cultures appear as the most frequent followed by Expanding Circle/European cultures (90% of all cultural representation altogether across the five editions), while Expanding Circle/Non-European cultures and Outer Circle cultures come as the least frequent categories (10% altogether of the textbook cultural content).	World Englishes; concentric circles; Western European & Anglo-American cultural ELT dominance.
Kramsch & Vinall (2015)	Spanish	University level - USA	20 textbooks	Culture as meaning and language as a social practice, both informed by the tensions of global politics and economy (i.e., Blommaert, 2005; McNamara, 2012; Phips, 2012; Kramsch, 2012).	Textual structures and contents.	CDA	- Linear, structural conception of meaning that lacks variability and social/historical contingency; Learning relies on standard, stable facts of language and culture that lack rationality and choice of perspective; Motivation is extrinsic, panoptic, and 'spectacular' delivering "the disengaged attitude of tourism discourse" (p. 19).	Poststructuralism: language as added value; tourism discourse.
Liu (2005a)	Chinese	Primary schools - China	12 volumes of the People's Education Press (PEP)	Discursive construction of cultural knowledge and power relations/ideologies (i.e., Apple, 1992; Price, 1992).	Written texts	CDA	- Three main discourses identified in the study: patriotism, cultural values and beliefs, and pro-science and technology. These discourses were further categorized into sub-discourses or perspectives (i.e., the great culture and people; work or sacrifice for the country; respect for authority; rational mind and scientific thinking).	Critical curriculum theory; cultural knowledge; national ideology; elite culture.
Liu (2005b)	Chinese	Primary schools (grade 1 - 6) - China	Unspecified	The discursive construction of Chinese cultural values and beliefs and their underlying ideologies: a socially constructed system constitutive of social relations and social behaviors of a particular community legitimated and disseminated through textbooks.	Written texts - stories	CDA	- 89 out of 308 texts are identified as constructing a discourse of cultural values and beliefs via five perspectives: concentration and diligence, respect for authority (government leaders and the elderly), modesty and tolerance, collective spirit, and honesty - these represent the main components of cultural values and beliefs as selected and constructed by the government and cultural elites to preserve and maintain social order/control.	Critical curriculum; story grammar analysis; cultural hegemony.
Moss et al., (2015)	English	Grade 6-11 - Colombia	1 textbook - New Generation for Teenagers	The construction of citizenship by looking at the extent to which the textbook allows for meaningful context/purpose	Written texts and images.	Multimodal/ semiotic analysis	- "The textbook exists in a kind of asepsis" (p. 87): lack of context, lack of communication with others, lack of interaction with culture (home & target culture), lack of a	Citizenship education; decontextualization; Static worldview;

				of the TL, the interaction fostered, and the implicit worldview.			sense of identity, and therefore no meaning of citizenship education.	anthropological subjects.
Musumeci & Aski (2010)	Italian	First year beginners - USA	4 textbooks	Culture learning: explicit and implicit integration of culture, cultural competence, and assessment (ACTFL standards).	Texts, visuals, & activities	Content analysis	- Explicit presentations of culture in all the examined texts; cultural information is less likely to be consistently incorporated into vocabulary and grammar presentations and activities; & inconsistent assessment of culture across texts.	content based instruction; cultural competence; ACTFL standards
Ndura (2004)	English	Elementary, middle, and high school - USA	6 - High Point, Accelerating English Language Learning, Launch into Reading, Voices in Literature, Into English, & Tools.	Models of cultural bias (i.e., Banks, 2001; Sadker & Sadker, 2001)	Publisher's introduction and editors' remarks, table of contents and selection/distribution of themes, illustrations, story line in readings, activities and their relevance to students' diverse experience.	Content analysis	- Three major forms of cultural bias detected: stereotyping, invisibility, and unreality.	Cultural bias; ESL textbooks; USA education.
Nomnian (2013)	English	Secondary schools: beginning & intermediate - Thailand	6 - World Wonders 1 & My World Series 2-6	Cultural categories: Products, Practices, Persons, Perspectives, Places (i.e., Yuen, 2011).	Written texts	Content analysis - Coding & categorization.	- Thai cultural categories are recognized in the examined textbooks: perspectives emerge as the most frequent while persons come as the least frequent.	Local culture representation; Thai culture; Tourism culture.
Or & Shohamy (2015)	Arabic & Hebrew	Grades 2 -12 in Arabic and Hebrew schools - Israel	9 Arabic and Hebrew textbooks	Representation of the culture of the target language and culture of the home language of the students.	Written texts and visuals.	Multimodal/ semiotic analysis.	- In terms of the target culture, cultural representation in Arabic textbooks for Hebrew-medium school is orientalist, stereotypical, and objectifying, limited to depictions of conservative Arabic rural society and instantiations of backwardness/peasantry. The learner's culture in these textbooks appears via Hebrew names and references to Judaism, the Middle East and Israel in line with the Israeli Jew conceptions: Arabic for security purposes. - In terms of the target culture in Hebrew textbooks for Arabic-medium schools, there seems a systematic approach to emphasize values of the majority group. The learner's culture in these	Contrasting cultures; language politicization; orientalism; national security; citizenship.

							textbooks is reduced to surface aspects of culture/appropriated by the majority culture: Hebrew as tool for assimilation.	
Ping (2015)	English	Primary schools - China	12 books of Primary English	Cultural representation in relation to the global-local tensions of English in China and their political ideologies.	Written texts - reading passages, dialogues & information notes.	Content analysis - (5 recursive stages: unitization, data selection, operationalization, coding, data analysis, & reporting)	- Disproportionate distribution of cultural representation and nationalities; heavy emphasis on Chinese and American cultural knowledge; a limited view of world culture blurring the cultural diversity of English as an international language.	Cultural dichotomies; hegemonic representations of dominant cultures; nation-state ideologies.
Porreca (1984)	English	Unspecified	15 ESL textbooks	Manifestations of sexism - (i.e., omission, firstness, occupational roles, masculine generics, stereotyped images).	Unspecified	Content analysis – Coding.	- Sexism appear in all its different categories - Male firstness is three time as prevalent as female firstness; women are far less visible in occupational roles; high frequency of nouns designating motherhood or marital status for women; adjective categories designating emotion, physical attractiveness, marriage, and gender itself.	sexism; omission; firstness; masculine generics; gender stereotypes.
Prihatiningsih et al. (2021)	English	Seventh grade - Indonesia	2 textbooks - When English Rings a Bell-Revised Edition & English on Sky 1 for SMP/Mts VII.	Types of cultural representation (i.e., Cortazzi's model: source culture, target culture, & international culture).	Written texts and images	Multimodal/ semiotic analysis.	- Imbalance in cultural representation: predominance of source culture more than the target or international culture - prioritization of learner's cultural identity over other identities of the target or international cultures.	Multimodality: Focalization, affect, pathos, ambiance, & graduation.
Setyono & Widodo (2019)	English	Senior high school (grade XII) - Indonesia	1 textbook - Bahasa Inggris Untuk SMA Kelas XII - (English for Senior High School Grade XII)	The representation of multicultural values (i.e., opportunities in the textbook to enhance intercultural knowledge and awareness).	Written texts and images	CDA	- Four multicultural values identified in the textual and pictorial analysis: respect for cultures of different religious and ethnic groups, respect for culture of indigenous people, conflict avoidance and peace with all forms of life and nature, and appreciation of creative cultural products.	Multiculturalism; intercultural awareness; paucity of cultural representation of expanding ad outer circle countries.
Song (2019)	English	Cram schools - China	1 - New Concept English	Intercultural learning (i.e., Baker, 201; Bennet et al., 2003; Byram, 1997; Paige, 2003) & types of culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) - i.e., source, target, and international cultures.	Readings of 60 lessons summarized into themes and patterns.	Content/thematic analysis - Coding & categorization.	- Target culture (46%-23/50) with the predominance of British culture and American culture, international culture (32%-16/50) with predominant examples from Europe, and general culture (68%-34/50).	Intercultural knowledge; cram schools; Chinese ELT textbooks.

Sun & kwon (2020)	Chinese & Korean	Preschool & elementary heritage learners (grades K-5) - USA	2 series of Zhongwen & Korean School: Korean Language (12 textbooks total)	Representation of cultural diversity and monoculturalism and their underlying ideologies - "the politics of cultural representation (or lack thereof) as legitimized by the textbook issuers" (p. 406).	Written texts and images.	CDA	- Aspects of monoculturalism: a homogenous view of culture in which the West is mainly a place of white people and monolithic cultural traditions - While the Korean textbook depicts a stereotypical and traditional image of Korean culture, the Chinese textbook emphasizes the "us" with the discourse of patriotism and the legitimacy of Chinese majority moral values of Han culture as the norm, dismissing other minority groups.	Asian Americans; HLL; monoculturalism; stereotypical views of culture; cultural and ethnic invisibility.
Thompson (2013)	Swahili	University: graduate & undergraduate introductory levels - USA	5 - Kiswahili kwa kitendo; Kiswahili, msingi wa kusema kusoma na Kuandika; Tujifunze Kiswahili; Colloquial Swahili; & Tuseme Kiswahili.	Representations of Swahili language, culture, and user examined against the backdrop of critical multiculturalism and its conservative & liberal models - Interface complexities of language and culture to suggest language user's identity.	Written texts - narratives & dialogues.	Content/CDA analysis	- Whereas one textbook relies on a conservative/nationalist model of multiculturalism by universalizing Swahili users, the other four textbooks demonstrate a liberal/pluralistic model of user representation accounting for different categories of Swahili users. None of the textbooks make any connections between the available cultural facts and their communities.	Critical multiculturalism; politics of representation; standard language community.
Uzum et al. (2021)	Arabic, French, & German	University introductory levels - USA	3 textbooks – Al-Kitaab; Vis-à-vis; & Deutsch: Na Klar!	Representation of target communities and their cultures (4 Ps - perspectives, persons, practices, and products) as well as the language learners (i.e., Kanno & Norton, 2000; Risager, 2018).	Textual & visual content.	MCDA	- All textbooks showed a monolithic representation of society, most predominantly Al-kitaab. - They were also found to create a tourism discourse that employs a tokenistic diversity as a way to conceal diversity - occasions of representation when learners are imagined as critical appeared mostly in the French textbook while it remains low in the German textbook and lacking in the Arabic textbook. - The imagined language learners in Al-Kitaab is in line with the National Security Initiative following the 9/11 attacks (a discourse of diplomacy and a shared humanity through particular available characters, job positions and markets); Vis-à-vis portrays the learners identity lacking cultural diversity or hyphened identities; & the German textbook constructs uncritical, white, able-bodied and	Imagined communities and identities; tourism discourse, nation-state ideology; homogenization of language communities.

							middle-class identities of the learners by creating parallel characters and topics. - the textbooks often represent the target language communities in stereotypical examples while using tokenistic mentioning for minorities, mostly in the German and French textbooks.	
Weninger & Kiss (2013)	English	Beginner level - Hungary	2 textbooks - Bloggers & Steps	Culture as dynamic processes of meaning making and interpretation processes - (i.e., cultural practices, objects, participants, and linguistic forms can (re)produce culture with different social meanings.	Written texts, images, and tasks.	Multimodal/ sematic analysis.	- Students' learning is heavily guided by deixis with minimal potential for critical reflection/cultural awareness: overt and covert cultural content and representation are heavily focused on denotation leaving cultural connotation unattended.	Guided semiosis; meaning; culture learning; cultural connotation.
Xu (2013)	English	Secondary schools - China	5 volumes of New Senior English for China	Cultural knowledge as process oriented and dynamic (i.e., Byram, 1988; Fang, 2011) - Globalization and its models of homogenization and hybridization of world cultures (i.e., Garrett, 2010).	Written texts	Content - thematic analysis	- Cultural blending of Inner Circle cultures and non-English cultures; the prevalence of cross-cultural perspectives and multiculturalism; awareness of World Englishes and local functionalities of English; & The relevance of teachers and students' lived experiences and schemas in material compilation and design.	Globalization; multiculturalism; World Englishes.
Yamada (2010)	English	High school - Japan	6 EFL textbooks published between 1981 & 2010	Kachru's model of English and Inner/Outer/Expanding Circles - countries and individual representations.	Textual frequency of continents/countries mentions in the textbooks and words of cultural traits.	Content analysis - Categorization & frequency count.	- Predominance of countries of Inner and Expanding circles while Outer circle countries remain at a much shorter percentage.	cultural diversity; globalization; World Englishes.
Yuen (2011)	English	Secondary schools - Hong Kong	2 series of Longman Elect & Treasure Plus	Cultural representations of foreign cultures in English as an international language - products, practices, perspectives and people (i.e., Bennet, Bennett, & Allen, 2003; Moran, 2001).	Reading components (i.e., the frequency of mentions reflecting the breadth of foreign cultures).	Content analysis - Frequency count & categorization.	- Tourist perspective: Products are the most frequent culture while perspectives are the least - An imbalance in the representation of culture of different regions; cultures of English-speaking countries as the most frequent and those of Asian and African countries as the least frequent.	International cultural representation; fragmented and stereotypical culture.

APPENDIX D: DERIVED CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTORS

DIMENSIONS	CATEGORIES	DESCRIPTORS
Places & Communities	Dynasties and civilizations	Historical information in references to dynasties such as the Umayyad, the Abbasid, the Nabateans, the Hashemite, the Andalusian Islamic Empire, the Byzantine empire, the crusaders, Anatolia, ancient Armenia, and middle age India and the Silk Road.
	Educational institutions	Local and international academic institutions such as the American University of Cairo (AUC), Beirut University, Aleppo University, center for American studies and research (CASAR), Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), Damascus university, the institute of the Arab World (L'institut du Monde Arab), Center for Financial and Economic Studies (CFES), University of Yarmouk, Al-Zaytouna University, Al-Qarawiyyin University, University of Texas, and University of Colorado, Center for Palestinian Studies of Lebanon, London School of Economics, and University of Marrakech.
	Shops, entertainment, & accommodation	Local markets, shops, coffee houses, restaurants, pizzerias, bookstores, theaters, malls, and traditional markets (*Souks*) for fresh produce, Arabian *Hammams*, and hotels.
	Corporations	Enterprises such as Applebee's, Arby's, KFC, McDonalds, TCBY, TGI Fridays, Boston Fried Chicken, Blue Fig, and ToysRus.
	Non-Arab (Muslim majority) countries & cities	Territorial information in recurrences of international countries, states and major cities, such as the United States of America, France, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Russia, Nigeria, NY state, Texas, Colorado, and NY City, Ithaca, Queens.
	Arab countries & cities	Arab regions, countries, cities, districts, and neighborhoods: Arab world maps with names of countries and capitals, country names such as Syria and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jerusalem, Amman, Cairo, Beirut, Nablus, Yafaa, Al-Hijāz, Baab el-Hara.
	Religious institutions	Local mosques, churches, *Zawaya* (Sufi centers), and international Islamic centers, including El Hussein Mosque, Al Amawi Mosque, Al Aqsa Mosque, Damascus Church, Zawiya Al Jazoulia, Islamic Center of Dearborn, the Coptic Church of Egypt, the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.
	Local and international political organizations & governments	Local intergovernmental organizations such as *Hizb Al-Tahrir*, the Arab League, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Syrian Embassy; political parties including the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) in Morocco, the Constitutional Union Party (UC) party in Morocco, the Israeli Communist Party (MKI), the Taliban; government offices such as the unemployment office, the courthouse, the customs and border protection offices; and international governmental entities such as the United Nations (UN), UNESCO, NY City Transit (NYCT), the U.S. Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the like.
	Monuments & landmarks	Geohistorical information on local monuments and landmarks including the Pyramids of Giza, the old city of Petra, Jeitta Grotto, *Baalbek* Roman ruins, the ancient city of Jerash, and *Kasbahs*.
	Warfare	Military alliances, weapon manufacturers, and international defense departments such as the Axis Powers, the Sand War, WWII Allies, General Dynamics, Lockhead Martin, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Department of Defense.
	Awards & honors	International and local awards such as the Nobel Prize, Lenin Peace Prize, Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, and the Foundation of Abdul-Aziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity.
	Financial institutions	Examples of the stock market, Swiss banks, London banks, and New York banks.

Persons	Collegiate	Students in classroom and private settings, such as students reading, doing homework, lab work, commencement, *Mu'iid* (student teaching assistants), high school students (e.g., Fadwa's sister and Emily's brother), local university students (e.g., Fadwa), and L2 and heritage Arabic learners (e.g., Emily, Ali, & Sara).
	Social	Social interactants including family members, friends, neighbors, and couples (e.g., Suzan, Abdellah, Alia, Abdel-Fattah); personal portraits; major protagonists (e.g., Maha & Nissrine), international families (e.g., South Asian and East Asian families in traditional clothing); immigrants, and cultural information in social roles (e.g., Emily and her room-mate), hosts (e.g., Fadwa's mother and sister), and interviewees.
	Professional	Professions such as teachers, doctors, journalists, chefs, merchants, housing agents (i.e., *samsaar*), businesspersons, office workers, chefs, merchants, engineers, taxi drivers, hotel receptionists, waiters, nurses, bankers, policemen, immigration officers, and professional athletes (e.g., Andy Roddick, John McEnroe, Youness El-Inaoui). Hicham El-Guerrouj, & Said Aouita).
	Historical	References to European and Arab explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Ibn Battuta, and sultans such as Saladin.
	Religious	References to the Prophet Muhammad and members of the Holy House (*Ahl Al-Bayt*) including the four Muslim Caliphs (i.e., *Abu Bakr Sidiiq*, *Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab*, *Uthmaan Ibn Affaan*, and *Ali Ibn Abi Taalib*), and Imam Hussein.
	Political	References to kings, queens, head of states, diplomats, mayors, and political party leaders, including King Abdel Aziz Al-Saud, Khalifa Bin Zayed, Elizabeth II, Mohamed VI, Albert II, Beatrix, King Fouad, Mswati III, Bin Rachid Al-Maktoum, Samir Rifai, Khomeini, Mustapha Kamal Ataturk, Hosni Mubarak, Qaddafi, Mahmoud Abbas, Hamid Karzai, Saddam Hussein, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Kim II Sung, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barak Obama, Fatima-Zahra Mansouri, Omar El-Jazouli, Asma Chaabi, and Lina Ben Mahni.
	Artists, authors, & Scholars	References to singers and composers such as Fairuz and the brothers Rahbani, Sufi dancers, Darbouka players (or goblet drummer), and film directors (e.g., James Cameron); Arab and international authors in literature and poetry such as Rumi, Jabran Khalil Jabran, Nizar Qabbani, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qassem, Naguib Mahfouz, Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, Tawfiq Al-Hakim, Colette Khoury, Mark Twain, Leo Tolstoy, and John Steinbeck; and scholars including Ibn Khaldoun, Al-Khwarizmi, Muhammad Abduh, and Qasim Amine.
	Ethno-sectarian	Ethnic and religious groups in the Arab world such as Amazigh, Bedouins, Tuareg, Copts, Hindus, Kurds, Chechen, Druze, Ishmaelite, Ibadi, Shite, Sunni, Christian Maronite, Persians, and Roman Christians.
	Warfare	References to crusades, German and British soldiers and field marshals such as Erwin Rommel, Bernard Montgomery during WWII.
Perspectives	Language	Views on the Arabic writing system, Arabic language variation, the use of the word Allah and its expressions and translation, evaluative stances on Quranic Arabic and Arabic fuṣhaa and linguistic associations with Islamic tradition, peculiarities of the Arabic language system (e.g., the noun "nurse" in Arabic), issues of interdialectal intelligibility and the expressed concern that variation threatens unity, expressed motivation amongst Arabic L2 learners (e.g., working for government agencies, exploring family roots for heritage learners, or understanding religion for non-Arab Muslim learners).
	Clothing	Differences and similarities in clothing in (sub)cultures, as well as the symbolic and aesthetic functions the latter serves in society; perspectives on dress code, as in Fadwa's explanations to Emily that women do not wear shorts, except in certain areas in west Amman, and *Kufiya* or *Hatta* is worn most by men in Jordanian society.
	Hospitality & polite behavior	Information on guests and hosts roles in Arab cultures such as serving food and drinks, politeness in greetings, taking leaves, and other non-linguistic means of communication such as handshakes and cheek-kissing and appropriateness, and expressing proper concerns towards others who might appear in distress, regardless of social distance.
	Religion	Religious views on emergence and perceived role of Islam in Arab societies and connections with knowledge; religious information about Quranic revelations in Mecca and Medina, *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, and Sufism, Mecca as a religious capital for Muslims, Quranic perspectives on other Abrahamic religions, and fasting in the Coptic tradition.
	Education	Perspectives on the educational system in the Arab world, including degrees and specializations, teaching assistantships, academic evaluation, modern universities and Arab culture, the perceived value of private and public universities in Jordan and the US, historical connections of education and Islam (e.g., *Al-Madrassa* or *Al-Kuttab*), issues of primary education and illiteracy, beliefs amongst Jordanians that U.S. students of Arabic are motivated by issues of politics (e.g., the motivation to work for the CIA, the Dept. of State, National Security Administration, or other government agencies).
	Family and social relations	Cultural views on personal freedom, cross-sex friendship, marriage, establishing a household, and sharing responsibilities; contrasted differences between Jordanian families (e.g., Fadwa's) and American families (e.g., Emily's) as in premarital

		relationships, stereotypes (e.g., Arab parents want all their children to become doctors and engineers), and views on honorifics and family names (or *Kunia*).
	Holidays and festivities	Beliefs regarding holiday celebrations (e.g., solar versus lunar calendar), the Amazigh new year, ideas underlying Ramadan, Eid Al-Fitre, Eid Al-Adha, and Achoura as fundamental religious holidays for Muslims (e.g., Ramadan as the month of Quranic revelation), views amongst Muslims that such occasions are signs of blessing (e.g., Mahmoud Abbas' optimism with the Eid to solve issues of politics).
	Housing	Views on housing in the Arab world such as the differences between living with a student versus living with a host family for international students abroad (e.g., the case of Emily), affordability for hotels and other accommodation options, and the social and educational benefits for having a student roommate.
	History	Views on old Arab markets and their name derivations, accounts from the travels of Ibn Battuta, history of modern Egypt, the expansion of Islam and Arabic in its four main regions (i.e., *Al-Maghreb Al-Arabi*, the Nile, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian Peninsula), the Ottoman conquest, and the post WWI British and French colonialism in Arab regions.
	Migration	Views on the push factors of immigration and their effects on Arab societies.
	Shopping	Cultural information about pricing in old and modern markets, availability of merchandise, local produce versus imported produce, as well as the shared view on upselling and overpricing in transactions with outsiders (e.g., Emily shopping with Fadwa).
	Politics	Views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the U.S. geopolitics in the Middle East, including Palestinian refugee camps, U.S. foreign policy and the way its affects the regional socioeconomic and local politics; insights into Arab politics such as the socio-politics of sectarianism in Lebanon, Egyptian politics under Mubarak's regime, Qaddafi's political Africa, Arab elections, and defense budget spendings.
	Food & drinks	Details on the authenticity of traditional cuisines, characterization of Jordanian diet (e.g., the popularity of Syrian apples, lamb, beef, or chicken and the lack of pork), issues of food intolerance and overeating amongst study abroad students; views on the origins of coffee in Arab culture as a symbol of hospitality and warm generosity; the benefits of the Mediterranean diet (e.g., white meat and olives/olive oil) and its effect on life expectancy.
	Demography	The belief that people of the Arab world consider themselves one people, regardless of ethnic and religious differences; views on the ongoing demographic overflow (e.g. Egypt) as due to rural-urban migration.
	Climate & environment	Views on the weather such as Cairo's rainy seasons or the issue with Jordanian summers and the preference for the Spring due to drought and water shortage, climate resemblance in the Arab world due to dry lands and surrounding deserts, the popular support for renewable energy (e.g., solar and electric vehicles), and shared cultural perspectives on the cause/effects of global warming.
	Transportation & mobility	The perceived convenience and affordability of buses and taxis compared to other means of transportation (e.g., service cars) and discussed issues of careless driving in public transportation.
	Cities & urban structures	Attitudes towards certain parts of the city such as West Amman as modern and trendy and the value of old Amman as a representative of authentic Jordanian culture and tradition (Emily's views as contrasted with those of Fadwa on parts of Amman), perspectives on other Arab cities such as Cairo as the capital of Arab pop-culture, Marrakech as the tourism capital of Morocco, or Aleppo as a vital commercial crossroad given to its historic markets and intercontinental commercial transactions.
	Art & literature	Views on Nizar Qabbani as the prince of modern Arabic romantic poetry, Mahmoud Darwish and Samih Qassim as two eminent poets of the Palestinian cause, the popularity of Egyptian music and films, and the Jewish literary enlightenment during the Islamic Caliphate of Andalusia.
	Sports	Perspectives on Arab sport figures such as Hicham El-Guerrouj as the best Arab runner of his time and Youness El-Inaoui as one of the top ten best Arab tennis players.
	Geography	Modern-day Arab world geographical distribution discerned in four major regions: *Al Maghreb Al-Arabi* (North Africa), the Nile, *Al-Hilal Al-Khassib* (the fertile crescent), & *Al-Jazira Al-Arabia* (Arabian Peninsula).
Practices	Hospitality & politeness	Cultural behavior inviting Emily for tea or coffee (e.g., invitations of the officer at the airport, Fadwa's mother, and the taxi driver), serving guests plentiful food and drinks regardless of the hosts' conditions (e.g., the refugee at the camp), examples of guests and hosts roles (e.g., welcoming guests, serving food and drinks, accepting invitations), polite behavior such as offering help with grocery bags at the market, and acts of courtesy such as returning lost items to Emily and her offering free food as a first-time customer at the restaurant.

	Language & communication	Linguistic practices such as multilingualism, Arabic dialect regional variation, the early use of fuṣḥaa in pre-Islamic poetry, sermons, and books, modern-day domains and functions of fuṣḥaa (e.g., reading, writing, political, academic, and religious discourse), the role of translation in the Abbasid Caliphate transferring Greek knowledge; cultural practices in greetings entailing linguistic and non-linguistic features (e.g., handshakes & cheek kissing), use of honorifics, expressions with the word Allah, phatic communion, storytelling and tea time, bargaining in local markets, expressing good wishes during special occasions, the use of English with Emily as a marker of openness (a fact she rejects as a study abroad student of Arabic), humor and sarcasm, and the tendency amongst native speakers to ask personal questions (e.g., asking Emily personal questions such as marital status or religious beliefs).
	Religious tradition	Religious practices such as *Athan* (or the Islamic public call to congregational prayers in local mosques), Muslims and Christian congregations in local mosques and churches, fasting Ramadan and joint practices during this month such as prayers, Quranic recitations, *amdaah Nabawiya* (Prophetic praise songs), *Haj* or the pilgrimage to Mecca, sectarian practice of *Achoura*, fasting amongst Copts, Easter, and Christmas.
	Family & social relations	Cultural practices in family relationships and interaction, such as the role of grandmothers in family life, avoiding smoking in front of parents as an act of respect, arranged marriage, levirate marriage, the emergent generational shift abandoning arranged marriages, living with parents after marriage, and inter-religious harmony between Jews and Muslims in countries like Morocco, Yemen, and Algeria.
	Divertissement	Popular hobbies and recreational activities such as football (soccer) as the most popular sport, bird hunting amongst villagers, and camel racing in certain parts of the Gulf.
	Politics	Accounts of political unrest during the Arab Spring (e.g., Tunisia & Egypt) and others worldwide (e.g., Green Party), police brutality and govemment corruption that troubled Emily during her visit to Syria, the right to vote and electing female politicians as heads of governmental agencies, the role of intellectual resistance in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
	Holidays & festivities	Festive practices such as *Amazigh* new year, New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving and Christmas, determining holidays (e.g., moon-sighting and calculations), celebration of common national holidays, and differences between Coptic and Catholic or Protestant Christmas Eve (i.e., 7 January for the former and 25 December for the latter).
	Mobility & transportation	Nomadic (Tuareg) travels and caravans, the use of camels as a cultural symbol, predominant use of public transportation mainly buses and taxis amongst students and other demographics in Jordan, etiquette in public transportation (e.g., disregarding the no-smoking sign as reported in Emily's diaries), the account of the teacher who toured the world with an electric vehicle as step forward towards renewable energy.
	Gastronomy	Dietary habits and customs such as Arabs eat food with large amounts of fat and sugar, Emily's reporting on Jordanian friends and family eating more than what she is used to in her home country, ways of prepping coffee and tea and regional preference, the popularity of meat and dairy products as compared to other international cuisines, Mediterranean diet (e.g., the story of Abdellah: the villager), sharing a meal on the floor with a group of family members or friends, and generational outdoor dining.
	Shopping	Examples of price bargaining and upselling techniques at local markets.
	Health and hygiene	House call medical consultations, and showers during the summer and the shortage of water.
	Housing	Local ways of finding an apartment (Emily's arrival to Jordan).
Products	Cultural expressions	Idiomatic and pragmalinguistic structures, honorifics, proverbs, and expressions with the word Allah (e.g., *Yasslamu idiik, Salaamtik, Maasha'Allah, ala raassi wa 'eeni, assalaamu alaykum, bi'mashii'ati Allah, inshaa'Allah, rahemaka'Allah, ta'addadat al-asmaa wal mawtu waahid* (causes vary but death is one), *char al-balaa yddahik, e'itii al-khobz lil' khabaaz walaw yaklou kuluh* (give the bread to the baker even if he eats it all), and the like.
	Architecture	Spatial information of iconic architecture and symmetrical designs including fountains, minarets (Al Hussein Mosque), domes (Al-Quds Mosque), the Holy Kaaba (the Holy Cube) of Mecca, the Cross of the Old Orthodox Church of Palestine, *Kasbahs* or citadels, Arabesque, wall art, buildings and street layouts.
	Clothing	Clothing styles and culturally unique material such as thobe, headbands, *hijab, abaya, kufiya, shmaagh, jellaba*, wedding dresses, *abaaya*, camel leather, camel wool, Aleppo silk and cotton, and Aleppo's leather.
	Food, drinks, and entertainment	Items from the Arabic cuisine including popular dishes, deserts, and local drinks: *hummus, kebaab, couscous, falaafel, mansaf, shawaarma, tabouli, maqlouba*, chicken and vegie stew, and other culturally unique items such as camel milk and meat, *baklava, kunaafa*, flat bread; Arabic coffee, Arabic *shaay*, Miranda (soda) and *argila* or hookah.
	Religion	Abrahamic religious books such as the Quran, the Bible, and the Torah, religious text such as verses of the Quran (Surat At-tin) and Bible (Genesis), and religious artifacts such as tasbih (prayer beads) and lanterns (lit. fanous).

Transportation	Means of public transportation such as (micro)buses, taxies, and service cars.
Flags & currencies	Recurrences of flags such as the Jordanian, Syrian flags, and the Egyptian Pound.
Signage & information domains	Street signs, business signs, drive-thru signs, institutions signs such as cultural and religious centers, universities, and hospitals, local and international magazines and newspapers such as *Al-Ahraam*, *Al-Ghad* magazine, *Al-Jadiid* magazine, *Al-Etihaad* magazine, Forbes magazine, and the Wall Street Journal.
Literature, film & music	Arabic and international novels and poems such as One thousand and one nights, War and Peace, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Qays wa Layla, poems of Nizar Qabbani, Qassim Amin, and Mahmoud Darwish, films (e.g., Egyptian films and the American movie Amreeka), and thematic Fairuz songs "*Habbaytak fi sayf*" (lit. I loved you in the summer) and "*zourouni*" (lit. visit me!).
Holidays and festivities	Tangible artifacts pertaining Ramadan and weddings such as *Fanous* (lanterns), cannons, gifts of porcelain plates, marriage invitation/congratulation cards, national and commercial festivities such as Eid of Tahrir Sinai, Labor Day, Military Forces Day, Police Day, and Valentine's Day.
Sports	Common popular sports such as football (soccer), swimming, Ping-Pong, volleyball, and basketball.
Educational artifacts	Textbooks and school programs such as a law dictionary, volume sets encyclopedias, antique books, computer programs for architectural design, Arabic language grammar programs, and diplomas (e.g., the bachelor).
Governmental documents	Passports, visas, and national constitutions.
Other languages	References to languages (un)related to the Arabic language such as English, Aramaic, Syriac, Sumerian, and Hebrew.
Warfare	Warfare artifacts such as F16, Abrams tanks, German landmines, and British tanks.