

TEACHERS' PRACTICES TOWARD CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS IN AN EFL TEXTBOOK: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

by Dian Novita

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TEACHERS' PRACTICES TOWARD CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS IN AN EFL TEXTBOOK: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

² ¹Dian Novita, ²Moh. Yamin

¹English Lecturer, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

²English Lecturer, Faculty, University, Country
 Co. Author Email: diannovital@umsida.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History Received: Revised: Published:</p> <p>Keywords Teachers' practices; Cultural representations; EFL textbook; Cultural integration</p>	<p><i>Textbooks serve as the primary resources in English Language Teaching (ELT) instruction since they accomplish the course objectives and offer guidance for the planning of lessons. Besides, students obtain most of their exposure to the target language through the textbook. In addition to linguistics, cultural contents are extensively covered in the textbooks. Limited research has been devoted to pedagogical analysis compared to the extensive concentration on content analysis in ELT textbook studies. The study aims to examine the teachers' approaches to cultural depictions in an international English for Foreign Language (EFL) textbook, intending to educate students on a global worldview. The present study employed a qualitative research method with a case study design. The study recruited two junior high school English teachers who taught seventh-grade students at a private school in East Java, Indonesia. These teachers had incorporated cultural elements into their teaching. To accomplish the research purpose, the instruments used were observation and post-observation interviews. The study's findings have verified that in presenting foreign cultural elements from the supplementary book to enhance English language learning, teachers utilized a comparative approach. Exploring the students' culture and contrasting it with foreign cultures has the potential to inspire greater participation from students in classroom activities. Using this strategy enables students to develop their English language proficiency in both linguistic and cultural aspects.</i></p>

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INTRODUCTION

Today, English serves as a global language for a vast array of cultures and communities around the globe. The research indicates that 80 percent of global English conversation occurs amongst non-native speakers (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2020; Sharifian, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to teach English with ELT materials, including cultural content reflecting that English is spoken worldwide and meets students' needs for communicating in various settings, including their own (Zhang & Su, 2021). In this way, they can grasp and strengthen their own identities

(i.e., local) and have a greater understanding of the identities of others (i.e., global) (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999).

Students can benefit from the teaching of cultural knowledge in ELT by developing language skills and cultural competence. In addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing, AbdAlgane (2020), Kovács (2017), and Shahed (2013) assert that teaching culture in ELT makes it the fifth language competence that students must acquire because of the global significance of the English language and globalization.

Presently, a wide variety of cultures and groups worldwide use English as an international language (Keles & Yazan, 2020; Matsuda, 2012). Following the statement, Ali and Mohideen (2016) advise that it is beneficial to learn and educate about the target culture in addition to the curriculum to solve communication problems that may arise in situations when a lot of a foreign language is used internationally and in social interactions. The teaching of foreign languages has always included cultural references before the mention of the target culture. It gives the students the mindset and skills to adapt their use of English to enable them to learn about, identify, and comprehend the virtues of other people's ways of doing things and the distinctive characteristics of various cultures. Understanding how language can be utilized to respect varied behavioral styles, be adaptable, and recognize differences is a cultural ability.

To broaden horizons and reduce the challenge of incorporating culture in the EFL classroom, Kramsch and Hua (2016) describe how culture functions. First, thinking at the theoretical level employs culture as a tool. Second, at this critical point, culture transforms into the societal viewpoints held or created by interpretive, reflexive, historically informed, and politically aware individuals. In a realistic level of culture in EFL teaching, teachers prompt the students to acknowledge that they may have varying definitions of particular terms they use in English or varying perspectives on a given issue. Therefore, sociolinguistic variation should be taught to students to aid them in understanding the meaning of the differences based on the situation and context. Additionally, cultural awareness enables students to communicate effectively (Novita & Purwati, 2021). In other words, to become fluent in English, students should not only study the language's linguistics but also its culture.

Regarding the approaches used by ELT teachers in EFL classrooms, there are two types of techniques: mono-cultural and comparative (Abbaspour et al., 2012). Teachers in the mono-cultural category focus solely on the country's culture in which the learners are studying the language. Meanwhile, comparing the learners' culture to the other is the focus of the comparative category.

Furthermore, Toledo-Sandoval (2020) asserts that to allow students the chance to discuss their reality, ELT materials should consider their cultural background. It suggests that when English is a foreign language for the students, it becomes crucial to include cultural elements similar to their home culture or reality to support their language learning. Accordingly, Rahim and Daghigh (2019) advise that for students to understand a foreign language, teachers should include elements of the learners' culture in the teaching materials and the target culture. Rather than requiring teachers to provide instantaneous cultural knowledge, the approach aims to empower learners of foreign languages to generate meaning for themselves. Mainly,

teaching culture enables students to better comprehend foreign cultural practices by using their insider perspective to understand the intercultural context.

Students should get assistance in making the shift from a focus on language skills to how languages function as a means for interaction (Byram, 2008). Additionally, English language instruction aims to provide students with the skills they will need in the present and future for life outside of the classroom (Chvala, 2020; Hornberger, 2006). Therefore, for communication to be successful, language use must be consistent with speakers' culturally accepted conduct.

In ELT instruction, it is inconceivable to overlook the value of textbooks. According to Brown and Lee (2015), Mishan (2021), and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018), textbooks take center stage in ELT and become a popular type of material assistance for language instruction. In addition, Alhamami and Ahmad (2018), Gray (2016), McGrath (2013), and Rathert and Cabaroğlu (2022) claim that textbooks are beneficial for both educators and students. For teachers, they provide a form of framework for fulfilling the course's goals and objectives and provide direction for lesson planning. Aside from the input they receive from their language teacher, the textbook is the primary way that students are exposed to the target language.

Regarding the contents, it is reasonable to prevent students from being exposed to other cultures and to prioritize source culture in English language learning resources (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). To communicate with non-natives from the Outer or Expanding Circles as well, Joo et al. (2019) recommend that English be taught and learned as a global language. International culture will pique students' interest when it is included in ELT textbooks. Put another way, the way textbooks are used in the classroom, and the viewpoints and knowledge of the teachers have a significant impact on the development of intercultural competences and cultural learning (Glas, 2013).

Concerning the effect of international English Language textbooks as the medium for English Language Teaching (ELT), there are two main research directions: (1) content analysis and (2) pedagogical analysis. Research works worldwide have been centered on content analysis (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2020; Alemi et al., 2013; Awayed-Bishara, 2015; Keles & Yazan, 2020; Lee & Li, 2020; Lestariyana & Nurkamto, 2022; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017; Zhang & Su, 2021) and a few studies have focused the pedagogical analysis (i.e., how textbooks are utilized in the classroom) (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Hoa, 2020). A study relating to pedagogical analysis must be undertaken to fill the gap since textbooks can influence teaching and learning in the classroom by providing instructions on how topics and activities should be implemented.

In the Indonesian setting, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) has published regional EFL textbooks countrywide to suit the curriculum objectives. However, the government continues to allow schools to use instructional resources other than the mandatory texts to fulfill the goals of the curriculum. The focus of the current study is on how Indonesian junior high school teachers adapt to the required EFL textbook. According to Richards (2014), to consider the requirements of a particular teaching situation, adaptations can be necessary. To do this, the teachers modified the required EFL textbook to provide the students with additional instructions while utilizing an international EFL textbook. More specifically, the

study addresses the following question: *How do Indonesian junior high school teachers respond to cultural representations in an international EFL textbook to prepare students for a global lens?*

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study aims to identify the teachers' practices toward cultural representations in an international EFL textbook to prepare students for a global perspective. The following sections are essential for the purpose.

Research Design

The research aims to examine teachers' practices concerning the representation of cultures in the *Global English Coursebook 7*, an EFL textbook published by an international publisher (Cambridge, 2014). For this, a qualitative research method was used, especially a case study design. As defined by Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), a qualitative method is a way of gathering and interpreting data centered on interpretation and meaning. It discusses the "how" and "why" of processes and human actions and their influencing factors. To be more precise, it is an approach to investigating phenomena that primarily uses "words" as data. Since the findings of the present study do not reflect all actual phenomena, a case study design is relevant to meet the objective of the research.

Participants

The participants in the study were junior high school English teachers of seventh-grade students at a private school in East Java, Indonesia, who had integrated cultural elements into their EFL classrooms. Additionally, they used the Indonesian MoEC's (2017) national EFL textbook, *Bahasa Inggris "When English Rings a Bell,"* as the primary source and *Global English Coursebook 7*, published by Cambridge (2014), as an additional resource.

Regarding the consideration of choosing junior high school teachers as the participants, formal English instruction begins at the junior high school level, as stated in the Republic of Indonesia's Decree Number 262/M/2022, which is issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Therefore, the researchers need to discover how junior high school teachers prepare their students for a worldwide experience in EFL classes. For this, the purposive sampling technique was implemented in the study. The following are the participants' characteristics. Teacher 1 (T1) was a female teacher with six years of experience who did not interact with the native speakers. In addition, Teacher 2 (T2) was a male teacher with seventeen years of experience who frequently interacted with the native ones. Moreover, both are certified teachers.

Instruments

Observation and post-observation interviews were employed as the instruments—the observation aimed to know how the participants practiced the cultural representations in the international textbook. The observations were supported with field notes and video recordings to ensure the researchers obtained reliable data. Additionally, the classroom observations were conducted for five meetings for each participant.

To ensure the activity did not interfere with the teaching and learning process, the observers conducted the observation from the back of the class. After that, the observers noted anything pertinent to the study's findings. The observation activity lasted around 80 minutes for each meeting.

Immediately following the teaching and learning process, post-observation interviews were conducted with the study participants. The interview aimed to clarify the researchers' comprehension of particular incidents during the observation activities. In other words, the interview aimed to determine if the participants' reasons behind their conduct matched the researchers' understanding.

Data Analysis

The study employed Yin's (2016) five-phase cycle, which involved the compilation, disassembly, reassembly, interpretation, and conclusion of the data. During the compilation stage, the researchers systematically arranged all the notes from the observation and post-observation interviews. Through the disassembly procedure, the database was fragmented into smaller pieces and subsequently labeled or encoded. In the study, the researchers chose data that focused on the participants' attitudes and behaviors toward cultural representations in an international EFL textbook.

Then, in the reassembly phase, the labeled data was organized into thematic categories relevant to the analysis, either in the form of lists or tables. The following stage involved analyzing the reconstructed data as a narrative. Ultimately, the present study concluded to address the research topic.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

This part presents the study's finding and aims to address the specified research topic. Furthermore, the study's findings were derived from observations conducted in classes and subsequent interviews after the observations. The observations for this study were carried in two classes: Class 7A, which was taught by T1, and Class 7C, which was taught by T2.

During the observations, T1 employed *Global English Coursebook 7* textbook in Meeting 5, particularly when addressing the topic of Dates. Meanwhile, T2 utilized the supplementary book in Meeting 1 and 4 to explore the topics of Greetings and Dates. The following are the findings of the study for each participant.

Participant 1 (T1)

Meeting 5

T1 reviewed the materials about Dates and the use of prepositional time during Meeting 5. In the meeting, T1 supplemented the materials with the text discussing celebrations from around the world that contained the dates and prepositional time phrases.

(Dialog 1)

....

T1 : The first thing we'll do today is continue to tell dates and use the time phrases. Let's read about three festivals now. (T1 shares the materials from *Global English Coursebook 7*, pages 138 - 139. T1 then tells the students to listen to the six students

- to read the texts.)
In the texts, there are three celebrations. Can you mention them?
- Students : Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, and Maslenitsa...
- T1 : Okay, that's right. Please do Task 4 to see how you comprehend the festivals. Did you find any problematic words in the text?
- Students : (The students mention seven difficult words.)
- T1 : (T1 helps the students how to find out the meaning from the dictionary.)
- Students : (Students fill out a table discussing several festivals, including their origins, dates of celebration, duration, and the essential aspects of the festivals.)
- (10 minutes later)
- T1 : All right, if you finish, let's discuss your work. (T1 provides the feedback.) Out of the three celebrations, which one takes place in our country?
- Students : The occasion is Eid al-Fitr, ma'am.
- T1 : That's excellent. Do you celebrate Eid al-Fitr event just like in the text? In our country, we call it Lebaran Day, right?
- Students : Yes... We do the same, ma'am.
- T1 : Do you eat ice cream in Lebaran Day?
- Students : No, we don't.
- Student C1 : We eat ketupat for the supper, ma'am.
- T1 : This is exceptionally tasty. Indeed, ketupat is a distinctive culinary delight of Indonesians. Well, would you like to explain the customs and traditions relate to Lebaran Day celebration? Please write your answers in a paper of four to five sentences. Ensure to include a sequential arrangement like "first", "second", and so on to show the order. Here is an example that I provide you. (T1 writes the example on the whiteboard.)
- Students : Sure, ma'am... (The students follow the directions.)
-

As demonstrated in Dialog 1, T1 intended to enhance the cultural awareness of the students. As the same time, they learned English by assigning them readings regarding the *Maslenitsa*, *Diwali*, and *Eid al-Fitr* festivals. Furthermore, T1 assisted the students in making connections between the newly acquired knowledge and their personal experiences by posing the following question: "*Out of the three celebrations, which one takes place in our country?*" Students identified *Eid al-Fitr* as the ceremony which had taken place in Indonesia. Following this, T1 instructed the students to draw similarities between the *Eid al-Fitr* celebrations of Muslim countries and Indonesians, as illustrated in the dialog with the underlined sentences.

To ascertain the rationales behind T1's instruction to compare *Eid al-Fitr* celebration celebrated in Moslem countries and Indonesia, the researchers interviewed her after completing the observation. The response is presented in the following excerpt:

(Excerpt 1)

T1: Because most students are Muslims, I selected *Eid al-Fitr* as the discussion topic. I'm sure that they would be more interested in getting involved if I encouraged them to elaborate on a subject that was related to their everyday life. By doing so, I would be able to impart the theories that correspond to the learning objectives.

T1 implied that students could comprehend a new theory clearly if the discussion commenced with a familiar topic from their own experiences. Therefore, the students would attain the learning objectives easily.

Participant 2 (T2)**Meeting 1**

In Meeting 1, T2 explained the first topic *Good Morning. How Are You?* and the sub-topics were *Greetings* and *Saying Thank You*. After delivering the materials from the mandated textbook about *Greetings* in English, T2 instructed the students to read a passage from *Global English Coursebook 7* textbook page 8 discussing greetings from countries such as Singapore, Argentina, India, and Thailand, as shown in the dialog below.

(Dialog 2)

- ...
- T2 : Ari, read the first passage. Please pay attention to Ari.
- Student A1 : "I'm from Singapore. When we meet someone for the first time, we usually nod our heads and smile. In formal situations, we shake hands."
- T2 : Do you get each point that the text conveys? (T1 summarizes the sentences in Indonesian to make the students understand.)
We are now going on to the following text. Lani, please read it.
- Student A2 : "In Argentina, women give one kiss on the cheek when they greet friends and family. In formal situations, people shake hands."
- T2 : Do you understand?
- Students : Yes...
- T2 : Excellent, let's go on to the following texts. Text 3 will be read by Bian, while Text 4 will be read by Reza.
- Student A3 : "In India, close friends and family members hug when they meet, but they do not kiss. You only kiss babies and very young children."
- Student A4 : "In Thailand, we don't hug or kiss each other when we meet. We greet friends and colleagues with "wai". Wai is a gesture. You put your hands together and bow your head. The tips of your thumbs should touch your chin for a friend and your nose for someone older than you. However, today younger people usually wave and even hug."
- T2 : Ok, great. Thank you for reading the texts. You may now become familiar with the customs of greeting people from many nations, like Thailand, India, Singapore, and Argentina. Now, I would like to know what you do on your first meeting with someone your age?
- Students : Shaking their hands...
- T2 : All ok, nice. That's what Indonesians do. Typically, we shake hands. And what happens the first time you meet an adult?
- Student A5 : I give him or her a handshake before giving them a kiss on his or her hand.
- T2 : Fantastic! It shows our respecting to adults. Now, look at page 5 and 7. There are pictures that similar to what you have practiced to adult.
-

Dialog 2 shows that T2 enhanced the students' cultural knowledge through the reading passage. Then, he asked the students to talk about their culture related to greetings, as seen in the underlined sentences of the dialog. It shows they recognized the proper behavior to practice while meeting someone for the first time. Additionally, they might practice different cultures with friends and adults.

Afterward, T2 was interviewed to determine the reasons behind his encouragement, engaging the students to discuss their culture after comprehending the texts related to the greetings from Singapore, Argentina, India, and Thailand. The responses are provided in the following excerpt.

(Excerpt 2)

It might be fun for the students to learn about the others' cultures. The students will be able to connect what they learn to their own lives. Students find it easy to talk about their

experiences in English when they compare them to other cultures in this way. There won't be any problems with speaking English in the classroom. I mean, they become more active in speaking English during the subject. Also, they won't be so quick to think that their culture is better than others.

According to T2, learning the others' cultures and connecting them with the students' culture could trigger the students to be more active in speaking English in the classroom. Besides, T2 stated that understanding the other cultures would make the students respect the other people.

Meeting 4

During the meeting, T2 explained about *Dates*. In this topic, the students learned to say dates in ordinal numbers. To support the explanation, T2 provided the materials from the supplementary book. The activities are presented in Dialog 3.

(Dialog 3)

...

T2 : (T2 delivers supplementary materials about Festivals celebrated around the world. The materials are taken from *Global English Coursebook 7*, pages 136 - 137.) Risa, please read the text about Chinese New Year aloud.

Student A8 : Yes, Sir.

T2 : Chinese also celebrate the new year, not only in Indonesia. They call it the Chinese New Year. We've just read the passage. Have you ever read or seen the celebration?

Students : No, Sir... Not yet.

T2 : Well, it's okay. The Chinese New Year is one of the Chinese cultures. After reading the text, did you find any difficult words?

Students : (Some students mention some difficult words.)

T2 : (T2 explores the text content. He emphasizes the Chinese traditions during the Chinese New Year celebration.) Look at the second sentence. Chinese New Year is also known the spring festival. It marks as the beginning of the planting season for crops. You know, Javanese also have this tradition. Are you familiar with the term "Adat Keleman"?

Student A9 : Sure, Sir.

Students : No... (In the class, only one student recognizes the tradition mentioned by T1.)

T2 : Adat Keleman is a tradition similar to the Chinese New Year. It is a set of ceremonies carried out by the people in various locations in East Java during the rice planting season. The people believe that through the celebration, they will have abundant harvest production. Also, it can prevent any crop disaster. The process typically starts on the day before the rice planting season. In ancient times, people spent the entire night in the fields to complete the rituals. The Keleman ceremony is conducted in the fields or at sites of spiritual or religious. Fery, where do you typically observe the event?

Student A9 : I can find the rituals at Candi Pari, Sir.

T2 : Do you live, Fery?

Student A9 : I live near the temple, Sir.

T2 : Oh, I see. Well, the others can ask Fery about Adat Keleman.

Student A10 : When you saw the rituals, were there any special meals?

Student A9 : Indeed, the food prepared was traditional food, such as sweet potatoes, peanuts, tumpeng, which is equipped with vegetables and grilled chicken, and others.

Student A11 : It sounds so delicious.

....

T1 : Please read the text about the Chinese New Year again and list the steps you need to take to celebrate the holiday. You can use ordinal numbers to show the order, like "First, the people clean the houses." What happened after that? Do you get it?

Students : Yes, Sir.

....

As seen from Dialog 3, T2 introduced the Chinese New Year as one of the festivals in the world while explaining dates. To make the students understand better, T2 also discussed about one of Javanese traditions similar to the Chinese New Year in terms of the purpose of the people celebrated it. One of the students in the class was familiar with the ritual, and he could explain the kinds of food prepared in the event.

T2 explained in the post-observation interview session the rationale behind his introduction to Chinese culture and encouraged the students to identify similarities with a traditional Javanese ceremony presented in Excerpt 3.

(Excerpt 3)

I intend to facilitate the students' comprehension of the subject matter. The topic in this meeting is Dates, especially learning about ordinal numbers. To encourage the students to be more active in learning English, I incorporated Chinese culture into the course materials. According to the text, the Chinese people celebrate the Chinese New Year to mark the cultivation season. To familiarize the students with the festival, I connected it to the local culture around them. Since most of my students are Javanese, I chose Adat Keleman, which is comparable to the Chinese New Year celebration. The students were more motivated to discuss the subject in English after I explained Adat Keleman. I observed them endeavoring to communicate in English enthusiastically. It can be a bridge for the students to learn English well.

T2's responses indicated that the aim of inviting the students to connect between the students' culture and foreign cultures was to motivate the students to learn English more actively. In addition, T2 believed that it would be simpler for the students to understand new concepts if the new knowledge is connected to what they have already known. As evidence of the statement, the researchers found that the students had no difficulty learning about ordinal numbers.

Discussion

This section connects theories and previous studies to summarize the research findings. The discussion addresses the concern that the study examined, that is, the teachers' practices toward the international EFL textbook cultural representations.

Based on the classroom observations and post-observation interviews, T1 and T2 intended to insert cultural integration into their teaching. To reach the learning objectives, they supported the materials with the cultural content taken from the supplementary book. This finding is consistent with the recommendations made by Toledo-Sandoval (2020) and Rahim and Daghigh (2019) that teachers should incorporate the cultures of their students into instructional materials. By permitting students to communicate their realities, their language learning would be enhanced. In other words, establishing connections between foreign cultures and one's native culture enables individuals to derive deeper meanings from the foreign language learning experience.

It can be seen from the data presented in the findings that T1 and T2 invited the students to discuss their culture after comprehending the foreign cultures that existed in the textbook. Indeed, in doing so, the participants helped the students become more aware of cultural awareness to make them able to communicate effectively. The fact is coherent with the studies conducted by Chvala (2020) and

Hornberger (2006), which assert that English language instruction is to give students the abilities they will need for life outside of the classroom both now and in the future. Therefore, language use must align with speakers' culturally accepted behavior for communication to be successful.

Additionally, in explaining the foreign cultures in the supplementary book, T1 and T2 attempted to ask the students to compare and make connections between the foreign cultures and their own. The evidence shows that they employed the comparative technique in their instruction. The finding revealed is in line with Abbaspour et al.'s theory (2012), which state that comparative approaches focus on comparing the students' culture to the foreign cultures.

When T1 and T2 accompanied the materials with the international cultures from the supplementary textbook to enhance the students' understanding of the topics discussed, the students became more active in learning English. Here, the students felt confident communicating their ideas in English during the subject. The evidence confirms the argument made by Joo et al. (2019) that including material on international culture in ELT textbooks will stimulate students' interests.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the present study is to scrutinize the junior high school teachers' practices toward the cultural representations in an international EFL textbook. In this case, the textbook is the supplementary book for complementing the mandated textbook published by the Indonesian MoEC. The result of the study has confirmed that teachers incorporate cultural content into their instructions. Integrating the cultural content in the EFL classroom is beneficial for the students in aiding cultural awareness.

In addition, regarding teachers' practices in delivering materials containing foreign cultural components from the supplementary book to support the students in learning English, the study indicates that the teachers use a comparative approach. Employing the technique serves the students to acquire English skills for both linguistics and cultural knowledge. Moreover, discussing the students' culture and comparing it with foreign cultures could motivate them to be more active and engaging in classroom activities.

As a result of the evidence presented in the preceding section, the present study provides two points that may be elaborated upon to illustrate the significance of the study's results. The research findings offered educators significant perspectives on how to enhance students' cultural awareness and promote a more balanced cultural knowledge by introducing foreign cultures. Educators may enhance the required textbook with supplementary materials such as online resources and supplementary books. Additionally, the research suggests that by incorporating cultural content materials into the study of English linguistics, integrating culture into the EFL classroom may serve as a conduit for students to learn new English concepts.

The present research acknowledges the limitations that arose during the investigation. A substantial sample size comprising participants from various educational institutions and proficiency levels is advisable for future research. Additionally, future research may investigate from the students' point of view about implementing of cultural integration in ELT lessons; the present study concentrates on the teachers.

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