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BRITISH AND AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS USED IN UZBEK UNIVERSITIES

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Key words: British culture, American culture, English language textbooks, Uzbek universities, intercultural competence, ELT materials, cultural representation, critical pedagogy, global coursebooks, language and culture pedagogy.

Abstract: This article examines how British and American cultural values are represented in English-language textbooks used in Uzbek universities. Analyzing four widely used textbook series, it argues that such materials build recognizable cultural scripts through repetition and omission, and it proposes ways teachers can foster critical, reflective intercultural learning.

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O'ZBEKISTON OLIY TA'LIM MUASSASALARIDA QO'LLANILADIGAN INGLIZ TILI DARSLIKLARIDAGI BRITAN VA AMERIKA MADANIY QADRIYATLARI

Iroda Adhamova*Qo'qon davlat universiteti talabasi**E-mail: Irodadhamova2304@gmail.com**Ilmiy identifikatsiya raqami: BFR-0726-0032**Qo'qon, O'zbekiston***MAQOLA HAQIDA**

Kalit so'zlar: britan madaniyati, amerika madaniyati, ingliz tili darsliklari, O'zbekiston universitetlari, madaniyatlararo kompetensiya, IShET (ingliz tilini xorijiy til sifatida o'qitish) materiallari, madaniy talqin, tanqidiy pedagogika, global darsliklar, til va madaniyat pedagogikasi.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston universitetlarida qo'llaniladigan ingliz tili darsliklarida britan va amerika madaniy qadriyatlarining qanday aks ettirilishi tahlil qilinadi. Keng qo'llaniladigan to'rtta darslik seriyasini tahlil qilish asosida, muallif bunday materiallar takrorlash va e'tibordan chetda qoldirish orqali tanish madaniy sinariylarni shakllantirishini asoslaydi hamda o'qituvchilarga tanqidiy va mulohazali madaniyatlararo ta'limni rivojlantirish yo'llarini taklif etadi.

БРИТАНСКИЕ И АМЕРИКАНСКИЕ КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ЦЕННОСТИ В УЧЕБНИКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА, ИСПОЛЬЗУЕМЫХ В УЗБЕКСКИХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: британская культура, американская культура, учебники английского языка, узбекские университеты, межкультурная компетенция, материалы для обучения английскому языку, культурная репрезентация, критическая педагогика, глобальные учебные курсы, лингвокультурная педагогика.	Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается, каким образом британские и американские культурные ценности отражаются в учебниках английского языка, используемых в узбекских университетах. На основе анализа четырёх широко используемых серий учебников автор утверждает, что подобные материалы формируют узнаваемые культурные сценарии посредством повторения и умолчания, и предлагает способы, с помощью которых преподаватели могут развивать критическое и рефлексивное межкультурное обучение.
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Introduction. English-language textbooks used in university classrooms serve a purpose that extends well beyond grammar drills and vocabulary lists. They also carry social imagery, behavioral expectations, and implicit hierarchies of value. As students move through units on travel, employment, family, civic institutions, holidays, or ordinary conversation, they absorb ideas about what a desirable life looks like, what counts as a polite exchange, what marks a successful career, or what defines a modern citizen. Textbooks therefore participate in cultural education even when their authors never state that aim outright [21; p.87-93]. For students at Uzbek universities, where English increasingly serves as a gateway to academic mobility, career advancement, and international communication, this cultural dimension carries particular weight. Learners are not simply mastering forms; they are being shown how English-speaking societies get narrated, simplified, and packaged for the classroom [8; p.1-11].

The issue matters because British and American cultural touchstones still dominate global English-language teaching in disproportionate ways. English today functions as a genuinely global language spoken by people with countless first languages, yet many commercially successful coursebooks continue to organize cultural content around the United Kingdom and the United States, occasionally gesturing toward other Anglophone settings. From a publishing standpoint

this makes sense: British and American contexts remain familiar, marketable, and prestigious within the field. The pedagogical consequence, however, cuts both ways. Learners gain access to a rich store of narratives, customs, and lexical patterns tied to major Anglophone societies, but they may equally absorb condensed, sanitized, or stereotyped portrayals of those societies while their own frames of reference slip into the background [11; p.3-8].

The consequences run deeper than they might first appear. Over time, familiarity with a given textbook tends to shape intuitive judgments about what counts as a good discussion, a persuasive argument, appropriate classroom confidence, or professional self-description. A student who repeatedly encounters enthusiastic American-style self-presentation, or British-style restrained politeness, may begin to treat those habits not as cultural variants but as benchmarks of competent English use. Once that shift occurs, culture stops sitting quietly in the background of instruction and moves toward the center of evaluation. Textbook analysis therefore concerns not only cultural studies but pedagogy itself, since it reveals how linguistic and social norms reinforce each other in ordinary classroom practice.

This article argues that the textbooks circulating in Uzbek universities tend to convey British and American cultural values through recurring micro-scenarios rather than explicit ideological statement. Values surface in the design of tasks: who is allowed to speak confidently, who apologizes, who relocates for opportunity, how disagreement gets softened, which families and workplaces are treated as normal, and which forms of selfhood earn admiration. The aim here is not to rank textbooks as good or bad, Western or non-Western, but to read them as pedagogical narratives worth examining critically. By tracing the most persistent value patterns across a representative corpus, the article shows how British and American culture becomes teachable material — what gets foregrounded, what gets softened, and what this means for English instruction in Uzbek higher education [1; p.34-53].

The discussion unfolds in stages. It begins by explaining why textbooks should be read as cultural representations rather than neutral vessels for language. It then situates the question within the Uzbek university context, where English functions simultaneously as a practical tool and a symbolic marker of transnational participation. After describing the corpus and method, the article treats the dominant British and American value scripts in turn before examining where they overlap, what they leave unsaid, and what pedagogical choices those silences require. This structure matters because the underlying question is not only what textbooks say about culture but how classroom routine turns culture into knowledge that feels ordinary, repeatable, and authoritative.

Any inquiry into textbook cultural values must first address what “culture” itself means — a term with a long and unstable history. It can denote artistic achievement, a national way of life,

systems of shared symbols, everyday practice, or contested meaning-making. For the purposes of textbook analysis, a representational understanding proves most useful: culture as the network of meanings through which social life becomes intelligible and open to evaluation [21; p.87-93]. Textbooks do not merely reflect such meanings; they select, arrange, and circulate them. A unit on weekend leisure, a café dialogue, or a reading about university internships offers more than vocabulary — it offers a tacit model of what an ordinary social world looks like. The textbook, in this sense, functions less as a transparent window than as a curated stage.

This point is well established in language-and-culture scholarship. Claire Kramsch influentially argued that language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality, meaning linguistic forms cannot be separated from the social worlds that give them value [11; p.3]. Michael Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence shifted the pedagogical goal away from native-like imitation and toward interpretive skill, critical comparison, and self-understanding relative to others [1; p.50-63]. Karen Risager later broadened this conversation by proposing a transnational paradigm for language-and-culture pedagogy, one that resists treating culture as bounded within national containers [18; p.1-17]. These perspectives matter for the Uzbek university setting because they suggest cultural content should not be handled as decorative trivia about London or New York, but approached as an invitation to examine how discourse constructs social life and how learners position themselves within that construction.

At the same time, globally distributed coursebooks operate under commercial pressures that complicate any idealized vision of intercultural learning. John Gray has shown that the contemporary ELT coursebook frequently pairs language instruction with a gentle promotion of consumer lifestyles, cosmopolitan ambition, and largely conflict-free images of global modernity [7; p.7-25]. Because such textbooks are built for international markets, they tend to sidestep openly divisive politics, narrowly local knowledge, or difficult historical trauma. The resulting world is smooth and highly teachable: urban, mobile, friendly, employable, visually appealing. Cultural difference still appears, but usually in manageable forms — people sampling food, comparing festivals, discussing career plans, travelling abroad — while structural inequality, ideological conflict, and historical violence stay at the margins. British and American values represented in such textbooks should therefore be read within this broader logic of global publishing rather than as a direct portrait of either society.

Materials researchers repeatedly describe textbooks as cultural mediators. Cortazzi and Jin called pedagogical materials “cultural mirrors” that may reflect a source culture, a target culture, or an international culture shaped by the design of the textbook itself [4; p.196-219]. Brian Tomlinson likewise insisted that materials are never neutral, since they always shape what learners notice, feel, and imagine in relation to language use [20; p.3-15]. Empirical work on textbook

culture tends to find a familiar imbalance: culture is present but frequently simplified, diversity is acknowledged but often depoliticized, and national life is shown through safe everyday scenes rather than contested histories [22; p.458-466]. These findings apply directly here. Where British and American values surface in Uzbek university textbooks, they do so in stylized patterns that reward certain readings of Anglophone life while discouraging others.

A further caution is theoretical. Speaking of “British values” or “American values” risks sliding into essentialism, since no nation holds a single moral vocabulary and values are always distributed unevenly across class, region, ethnicity, generation, and political leaning. Adrian Holliday’s critique of “large-culture” thinking remains essential here: analysts must resist converting complex societies into fixed cultural personalities [9; p.1-20]. In this article, then, “British” and “American” values refer not to timeless truths about either country but to recurrent textbook framings associated with them — heuristic labels for patterned representation. The relevant question is not whether every British or American person actually lives by the textbook script, but how often textbooks invite learners to read those societies through particular moral and emotional cues.

This caution grows more pressing once the multimodal character of contemporary textbooks is considered. Cultural meaning travels not only through reading passages and listening scripts but through photographs, typography, layout, task sequencing, and the gap between what gets illustrated and what merely gets mentioned. A smiling office meeting, a stylish café, an airport lounge, or a university seminar room can normalize entire social worlds before a single sentence is analyzed. Pragmatics, in other words, is visual as much as verbal. Students absorb who looks at ease in public, whose mobility gets celebrated, which bodies occupy cosmopolitan space, and which emotions read as appropriate in academic or professional settings. A serious textbook analysis has to attend to this wider semiotic environment, since values are often made persuasive precisely through repetition across small, seemingly innocent design choices.

There remains an unresolved tension between native-speaker cultural framing and the reality of English as an international language. Teachers and learners alike know English now circulates well beyond Britain and the United States, yet textbook organization still often depends on these two symbolic centers because they supply familiar accents, institutions, and lifestyle references. What results is a pedagogical compromise: textbooks may add occasional global characters or international case studies, but the deeper pragmatic norms of credibility, professionalism, and modern selfhood frequently stay anchored in Anglophone scripts. Recognizing this tension does not require discarding British or American content; it requires understanding that such content represents one influential variety of English-related cultural meaning rather than the final horizon of what English users can legitimately sound like, value, or become.

Within Uzbek higher education, English has become tightly bound up with modernization, international academic exchange, digital access, and employability. University students generally approach English less as a literary subject than as a practical resource for scholarship, travel, graduate study, business, and cross-border communication. This instrumental orientation does not remove culture from the picture; it changes the form culture takes. Students need English to engage with foreign instructors, online sources, research communities, and international institutions, so textbook portrayals of British and American life can quietly shape expectations around classroom discussion style, professional etiquette, argumentation, self-presentation, and public interaction. Culture enters not merely as factual content but as a script for participation.

This setting produces both opportunity and tension. Exposure to British and American materials can widen students' comparative horizons and enrich lexical, pragmatic, and interpretive skill. At the same time, Uzbek classrooms carry their own ethical traditions, educational expectations, and communicative norms — strong deference to teachers, an ongoing emphasis on collective responsibility, and a layered relationship between local identity and global aspiration. The pedagogical challenge, then, is not whether to include Anglophone culture but how to mediate it. Where textbooks present British and American behavior as the unquestioned norm of modernity, local identities risk being framed as merely preparatory or lacking; where textbook content is instead taught dialogically, students gain the tools to analyze, compare, question, and appropriate cultural material on their own terms [12; p.146-170].

A further factor concerns the material reality of university instruction. In many courses, the textbook effectively becomes the curriculum, since teachers work under time pressure, students prepare for standardized assessment, and supplementary resources are unevenly available. Under these conditions, even minor textbook choices carry outsized weight. A unit that repeatedly links English with extroverted participation, competitive self-presentation, or highly individualized career planning may start to feel less like one cultural option among several and more like the natural grammar of educated modern life. Conversely, when instructors deliberately slow textbook discourse down, invite students to compare scenarios against Uzbek social practice, and solicit counterexamples from local experience, the same material becomes an instrument of critical literacy rather than quiet normalization.

Corpus and Method. This study relies on qualitative content analysis of four internationally distributed textbook series regularly used in university-level EFL instruction: English File, New Headway, Speakout, and Outcomes [15; 19; 3; 6]. These series were chosen not because they exhaust the materials circulating in Uzbekistan, but because together they represent the kind of globally marketed textbook that shapes classroom practice across many tertiary settings. The analysis concentrates on intermediate and upper-intermediate units, where cultural content is most

visible — in reading passages, discussion prompts, listening scripts, visual design, and functional-language tasks. Rather than searching for explicit statements such as “British people value X” or “Americans believe Y,” the study traces how values surface through the recurring design of scenarios.

Five coding questions guided the reading. First, what kinds of people appear as socially competent or admirable? Second, what forms of public behavior get modeled as polite, efficient, or mature? Third, how are work, education, mobility, and success narrated? Fourth, how are diversity, ethnicity, and belonging framed in relation to English-speaking societies? Fifth, what stays underrepresented or absent? These questions push the analysis beyond surface references to famous landmarks or holidays toward a deeper reading of value patterns. A unit on job interviews, for instance, may encode assumptions about confidence, initiative, and individuality even without stating them directly; a dialogue about apologizing in public may stage assumptions about privacy, personal boundaries, and civic restraint.

The study also distinguishes explicit from implicit cultural messaging. Explicit messaging directly names places, institutions, customs, or social facts tied to the United Kingdom or United States. Implicit messaging tends to matter more: it surfaces in role-play design, in prompts that reward particular kinds of opinion-sharing, in sample emails and presentations, in interview models, and in the emotional tone attached to successful speakers. For this reason the analysis pays close attention to ordinary pedagogical genres — small-talk exercises, problem-solving discussions, listening tasks about study, travel, or work — since these are the places values are most likely to appear not as doctrine but as common sense. This distinction helps explain why textbooks can exert durable cultural influence even while containing very little overt cultural explanation.

The method here is interpretive rather than strictly quantitative. Recurrence matters, but culture is not treated as a matter of countable keywords alone; what matters more is the clustering of scenes, roles, and evaluative cues across units. Even so, it is worth summarizing the dominant patterns that emerged, shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Value cluster	Typical British framing	Typical American framing	Likely classroom effect
Civility and public behavior	understatement, apologizing, queueing, compromise	friendliness, openness, confidence, direct self-presentation	teaches pragmatics through different politeness scripts

Mobility and aspiration	travel as refinement, urban competence, educational choice	relocation, reinvention, opportunity, ambitious career planning	links English to upward mobility and global participation
Work and professionalism	reliability, punctuality, teamwork, procedural order	initiative, leadership, innovation, networking	normalizes employability discourse
Identity and diversity	regional difference, heritage, institutions, class signals	multiculturalism, immigration, self-definition, personal narrative	encourages comparison but may simplify social conflict
Everyday modernity	cafes, transport, media, leisure routines	consumer choice, technology, entrepreneurship, lifestyle design	presents Anglophone life as attractive and teachable

The table should not be read as a rigid binary. Most units blend national, international, and generic urban-global imagery. Still, the recurrence of these clusters across the corpus suggests textbooks do not distribute cultural meaning randomly; instead, they organize British and American reference worlds around preferred scenes of normality, examined in more detail below.

A final methodological point concerns limitation and usefulness. Because the corpus consists of globally circulating textbooks rather than locally authored Uzbek materials, the analysis cannot claim to represent every classroom with equal intensity — individual instructors may skip units, supplement heavily, or reinterpret tasks in ways that weaken a textbook's ideological pull. Even so, close reading retains real value. Textbooks continue to supply the baseline script from which adaptation begins, and identifying the values built into that baseline helps explain why some activities feel culturally smooth, why others provoke hesitation, and why certain communicative behaviors come to seem educationally natural even before they are openly discussed.

British Cultural Values in the Textbook World

British cultural values in the corpus emerge largely through a discourse of civility. Dialogues and reading passages repeatedly normalize careful turn-taking, modest self-presentation, indirect disagreement, apologizing in shared spaces, and a general preference for measured public conduct. These features rarely appear as stated ideological principles; instead they sit inside the ordinary mechanics of social interaction — a speaker says “sorry” before asking a question, softens criticism with hesitation, or avoids large emotional claims about personal success. Encountering these patterns across multiple units invites students to associate British social competence with

restraint, tact, and procedural politeness — a useful pragmatic lesson, though one that can flatten British interaction by overstating moderation and underplaying conflict or regional variation.

A second recurrent script ties British culture to heritage and institutional continuity. The corpus draws often on familiar reference points — museums, historic city centers, public broadcasting, literary reputation, university tradition, iconic urban space. Even in units that are primarily lexical, British settings frequently function as shorthand for depth, continuity, and public memory. The underlying message is subtle: modern life gains value when institutions keep it legible, connecting present routine to historical inheritance — part of why British textbook worlds so often feel orderly, with streets, campuses, transport systems, and civic rituals moderated by shared convention. Students learn not just about Britain as a place but about a kind of moral geography in which institutions quietly organize everyday conduct.

The textbooks also render Britishness socially appealing through humor and self-deprecation. Short texts about awkward encounters, dry jokes, unusual habits, or mild embarrassment recur often, suggesting that wit and irony soften social hierarchy and ease public life. Rather than celebrating heroic self-assertion, many British-oriented units reward the ability to laugh at oneself, hold conversational balance, and avoid sounding too certain or too grand. For Uzbek learners this can be genuinely useful, since it introduces a pragmatic register different from direct translation-based communication, though it may also leave the misleading impression that British culture is fundamentally consensual and emotionally cool, when class, race, region, and politics in fact shape communicative style far more unevenly.

A fourth pattern involves privacy and bounded intimacy. In many British scenes, relationships build through incremental trust rather than immediate disclosure; neighbors, colleagues, and classmates grow familiar through routine contact while personal space stays visible. Overly direct questions, enthusiastic interruption, or premature intimacy tend to read as slightly uncomfortable. This matters pedagogically because it teaches students that fluency involves not only more English but an awareness of interpersonal distance. Yet the representation remains selective: privacy appears as a civilized virtue, while harsher dimensions of social distance — loneliness, exclusion, class-coded reserve — stay outside the frame. British values are made attractive through usable etiquette rather than through social contradiction.

A quieter but still important thread involves class, accent, and service interaction. Global coursebooks generally avoid explicit class politics, but they often encode social distinction through pronunciation models, housing references, leisure activities, restaurant behavior, and assumptions about cultural confidence within public institutions. Certain speakers appear naturally at ease with museums, travel planning, university debate, or polite complaint in customer-service settings, while others surface mainly through anecdote or comic irregularity. The result is a soft middle-

class norm that students may struggle to name yet readily absorb. Textbook Britishness, in effect, is not simply national — it is frequently metropolitan, educated, and institutionally literate, a narrowing of perspective that presents one social slice as though it were the ordinary baseline of British life.

Public institutions offer another revealing lens. British-oriented units often assume buses run to visible rules, complaints can be phrased politely and resolved procedurally, libraries and museums stand as open civic resources, and public space is shared through mutual restraint. Real Britain is more uneven than these images suggest, but the pedagogical pattern is consistent: good citizenship is linked to following systems without theatrical confrontation. This exposes learners to useful, high-frequency language for requests, complaints, directions, and public etiquette, but it also performs quieter cultural work — making institutional trust look ordinary and tying linguistic competence to comfort inside established bureaucratic environments. For students reading from rather different public-service experiences, that link may feel illuminating, aspirational, or at times alienating.

Speech-act training reinforces this same image. Units built around suggestion-making, tactful disagreement, softened requests, or apology for inconvenience often carry an implicit British pragmatics of measured interaction, whether or not the textbook names it as such. The successful speaker is rarely the loudest or most emotionally expansive one; success more often belongs to whoever calibrates tone, avoids embarrassment, and keeps social friction manageable. Such modeling genuinely broadens students' communicative repertoire beyond literal translation, but it also calls for critical framing — without it, learners may mistake one historically and socially situated interactional style for universal sophistication. A more reflective lesson can show that these speech habits are powerful and useful precisely because they are culturally specific, not because they are naturally superior.

American Cultural Values in the Textbook World

Where British textbook worlds tend to privilege moderation, American ones more often privilege initiative. Across the corpus, American settings connect with action, self-definition, future planning, and the idea that individuals should make visible choices about who they want to become. Career-advice tasks, personal success narratives, campus-life discussions, and entrepreneurial case studies all reinforce a cultural script of agency: speakers describe goals confidently, present achievements without embarrassment, and narrate obstacles as opportunities for growth. The pragmatic lesson is clear — English can be used not merely to participate politely but to project ambition. For Uzbek university students, whose relationship to English is often tied to educational and professional aspiration, such scripts can feel motivating, aligning language learning with possibility.

American values in the corpus also connect strongly to openness and informality. Conversations set in cafés, offices, classrooms, and public spaces often model easy first-name address, energetic small talk, visible enthusiasm, and low barriers between strangers. Interpersonal warmth reads as a sign of confidence rather than intrusion, and even conflict tends to be narrated as something resolvable through direct expression and personal honesty — a different tone from the British preference for understatement. The American script assumes self-expression can be socially productive and that saying what one thinks is compatible with friendliness. This framing widens students' pragmatic repertoire but can also oversimplify U.S. communicative culture by obscuring how race, region, class, and institutional context shape which forms of directness actually get rewarded.

Mobility forms a particularly prominent American value cluster. Students repeatedly meet stories of moving to a new city, changing majors, taking risks, launching projects, or turning hobbies into professions. Geography itself becomes narrative energy: the United States appears less as a historically layered nation-state and more as a landscape of routes, options, and reinvention. Within this landscape English works as a language for pitching ideas, networking, interviewing, collaborating, and adapting — the point where textbook American culture overlaps most strongly with global neoliberal discourse, in which the ideal subject stays flexible, optimistic, and permanently improvable [7; p.82-109]. Such lessons build useful professional vocabulary, yet they also normalize a demanding vision of adulthood where worth gets measured by visible progress and strategic self-management.

The corpus additionally presents the United States as a privileged site of diversity, though usually in celebratory rather than conflictual terms. Units on neighborhoods, cuisine, family history, music, or personal identity regularly frame multiculturalism as energy, creativity, and openness; learners meet immigrants, mixed backgrounds, regional accents, and personal stories of belonging. This corrects older textbook models that equated English with a narrow white middle-class norm, but the portrayal often stays carefully optimistic — structural tensions around race, inequality, borders, or political polarization get minimized, and diversity becomes a positive classroom theme rather than a historical struggle. Students may therefore receive a picture of American pluralism that inspires without being complete.

Another recurring script concerns educability and performative positivity. University campuses, training programs, motivational stories, and volunteer activities are frequently narrated as spaces where character improves visibly through effort, planning, and confidence. Mistakes become learning opportunities, risk gets moralized as courage, networking counts as a legitimate social skill, and enthusiasm itself often serves as evidence of competence. This pattern appeals clearly to students who see English as a route to academic advancement, yet it also carries pressure

— implying that successful subjects should stay verbally energetic, emotionally resilient, and permanently ready to narrate themselves persuasively. Textbook Americanness, in this sense, teaches a rhetoric of optimism alongside vocabulary and grammar, tying language mastery to the performance of upwardly mobile self-belief.

This tendency becomes especially visible in units on leadership, volunteering, and innovation. American-centered materials regularly celebrate students who start projects, join campaigns, build businesses, or use technology creatively to solve everyday problems. Collective action does appear, but usually filtered through charismatic individuals who spot a problem and take initiative, so social good gets read through a personalized ethics of agency. For Uzbek learners this can inspire by expanding the imaginative range of what English might be used for in future careers, but it can also obscure other models of contribution grounded less in personal visibility and more in durable community ties, institutional continuity, or quiet obligation. A related consumer-culture strand runs through many American-coded units as well, built around lifestyle choice, branded leisure, and the freedom to reinvent oneself through entrepreneurial initiative; textbooks fold this into a recognizably American narrative of freedom-through-choice, encouraging learners to compare options and treat decision-making as a mark of mature individuality. The relevant question, in all of this, is not simply whether these lessons feel positive but what kind of moral subject they repeatedly ask students to admire.

Shared Anglophone and Global Middle-Class Values

Although distinguishing British from American value patterns proves analytically useful, the corpus also reveals a substantial zone of overlap. In both textbook worlds the ideal speaker is adaptable, articulate, cooperative enough to get along, and confident enough to participate. Both traditions prize communicative competence, self-management, and the ability to function within multicultural urban environments. The differences often sit in tone rather than substance — British scenes favor understatement where American scenes favor projection — but both assume the learner should become a socially mobile, verbally competent, globally legible subject. This common ground reflects the fact that many ELT textbooks no longer teach national culture in a classical sense; they teach a transnational middle-class habitus in which cafés, airports, universities, open-plan offices, and digital platforms serve as recurring stages.

This shared habitus carries clear pedagogical advantages, giving students access to widely circulating forms of academic and professional interaction. But it also narrows the field of cultural imagination: working-class speech, rural life, religious practice, political dissent, disability, aging, and economic precarity remain relatively marginal unless converted into short human-interest stories. Complex collective identities get filtered through individualized narratives. Textbooks, in this sense, do not simply represent Britain and America; they repackage both through the visual

and moral language of global marketability, producing less a national archive than a portable lifestyle model compatible with international education and soft cosmopolitan aspiration [17; p.46-52].

Digital culture intensifies this convergence. Across the corpus, podcasts, smartphones, online profiles, international video calls, app-based routines, and social-media discussion topics build a sense that contemporary English use happens within always-connected environments where personal branding, constant responsiveness, and curated self-presentation feel normal. This further blurs the line between specifically British or American values and a broader transnational pedagogy of communicative flexibility. Students are encouraged to become people who can speak in meetings, write concise messages, describe achievements, manage impressions, and stay culturally adaptable across platforms. Such skills are genuinely useful, but they also show how textbook culture increasingly ties language learning to producing a polished, digitally legible subject for the global knowledge economy.

Silences, Frictions, and Local Readings

What textbook culture leaves unsaid is often the most revealing part of it. In this corpus, British and American societies appear far more as sites of everyday competence than as sites of historical conflict. Colonial legacies, class inequality, racialized institutions, religious contestation, and polarized media ecologies rarely occupy central classroom space — understandable given the pedagogical and commercial pressure on publishers to produce materials that travel safely across markets and age groups. Still, this silence carries interpretive consequences. When textbooks repeatedly present attractive fragments of Anglophone normality without their deeper social contradictions, students may come away with an image of cultural values detached from power: civility without exclusion, diversity without struggle, success without failure, mobility without border regimes. Such omissions matter because they shape what learners imagine English-speaking societies to actually be [2; p.57-78].

Learners, however, are never blank slates. Uzbek students bring their own moral vocabularies, linguistic repertoires, and experiences of social belonging into the classroom. They do not simply absorb textbook values; they weigh them against family expectations, university culture, gender norms, and local ideas about respectability, achievement, and community. A lesson celebrating independent decision-making may read as empowering to some students and as a challenge to family or collective reputation for others; a unit praising outspoken self-promotion may sound professionally useful in one context and socially uncomfortable in another. This friction is not a problem to eliminate — it is precisely where intercultural learning becomes intellectually productive, and the classroom can become a place where values get interpreted rather than simply consumed.

Gender, religion, and family structure illustrate this interpretive pressure with particular clarity. International textbooks generally favor socially unmarked, relatively secular, lightly individualized depictions of everyday life, since such depictions travel more easily across markets. Questions of religious commitment, intergenerational duty, marriage expectations, and gendered responsibility therefore often appear only indirectly or in softened form. For Uzbek students these issues may sit close to the center of how adulthood and public respectability get understood, so when textbooks understate them, the issues themselves do not disappear — they merely shift into a realm of unspoken comparison. A critical classroom can surface these comparisons without turning the lesson into a culture-war debate, helping students see not only what the textbook includes but the ideological comfort zone international textbook culture generally prefers to occupy.

Implications for Uzbek University Teaching

For teachers, the first implication is that textbook culture needs to be made discussable. Rather than presenting British and American scenes as self-evidently natural, instructors can ask what kind of behavior a given task rewards, what assumptions it makes about success or politeness, and whether a comparable situation would unfold differently in an Uzbek context. Such questions shift the lesson from imitation toward analysis, letting students compare apology routines, interview self-presentation, family expectations, classroom participation, or notions of privacy across contexts without reducing either side to caricature — an approach consistent with intercultural competence models that privilege interpretation, decentering, and critical reflection over rote memorization of facts [1; p.101-111].

Second, teachers can pair global coursebooks with locally responsive materials. Short parallel texts on Uzbek university life, workplace etiquette, public holidays, neighborhood relations, or multilingual communication can help rebalance the symbolic economy of the classroom. The point is not to replace British and American content with national content but to put the two in dialogue. When students examine an Anglophone unit alongside a locally produced case study, they start to see that all textbook culture is selective and constructed — a recognition that guards against both uncritical admiration and defensive rejection, and instead builds comparative literacy.

Third, instructors can widen the range of Englishes and identities students meet in class. Textbooks centered on Britain and America deserve to be placed within the broader reality that English today circulates internationally among speakers from many linguistic backgrounds. Readings, audio, and discussion tasks featuring South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and other transnational users of English can prevent correctness from being equated with a narrow Anglophone norm [13; p.1-18; 10; p.24-48; 5; p.3-29]. This matters practically as well as

symbolically for Uzbek students, many of whose future English interactions will likely involve peers, researchers, and professionals from other multilingual settings rather than Londoners or New Yorkers — meaning a more plural classroom ecology strengthens rather than weakens communicative preparation.

Assessment practices can also be redesigned so cultural interpretation becomes part of language learning rather than an optional extra. Beyond grading fluency or grammatical accuracy alone, teachers can build in short reflective commentaries, comparative response journals, oral presentations on contrasting politeness norms, or brief analyses of textbook images and scenarios. Such tasks do not soften linguistic rigor — if anything they demand more from students in terms of vocabulary, argument structure, discourse markers, and pragmatic awareness — while also teaching students that learning English means reading representations critically, not simply reproducing them smoothly.

Finally, teacher preparation matters. When instructors themselves have little time to question global coursebooks, even well-designed materials risk being taught mechanically. Departmental professional-development sessions could therefore focus on textbook adaptation, classroom-oriented critical discourse analysis, and strategies for connecting global content with Uzbek academic and social realities. Collaborative resource banks, locally written discussion prompts, and short comparative case studies would make this work more sustainable.

One especially productive strategy would connect textbook analysis with student-generated research. Learners could interview peers about communication preferences, gather examples of local public notices or workplace etiquette, compare university websites, or examine how English-language social media used in Uzbekistan departs from textbook scripts of politeness and self-presentation. Such activities would diversify classroom content while repositioning students as knowledge producers rather than passive recipients. Short bilingual writing tasks, moving between English and Uzbek when describing values or social expectations, can further reveal where direct equivalence breaks down and where hidden assumptions surface, reminding students that translation is cultural interpretation as much as linguistic transfer — an insight especially valuable in courses preparing future teachers, translators, or international specialists.

Conclusion. British and American cultural values remain deeply embedded in the English-language textbooks used at Uzbek universities, though embedded in subtle, patterned ways. Britishness tends to be framed pedagogically through civility, restraint, humor, privacy, and institutional continuity; Americanness more often through initiative, openness, mobility, diversity, and future-oriented self-fashioning. Neither pattern is random or neutral — both emerge from the interaction of language pedagogy, publishing economics, and globally circulating middle-class aspiration.

At their best, such textbooks give students rich material for pragmatic development, cultural comparison, and interpretive growth. At their worst, they offer simplified, depoliticized scripts of Anglophone life while leaving local knowledge symbolically secondary. The task facing Uzbek university teaching, then, is not to reject these materials but to read them critically, supplement them intelligently, and place learners at the center of intercultural meaning-making. When that happens, the textbook stops functioning as a one-way channel for imported values and becomes instead a space for scholarly inquiry, linguistic practice, and reflective comparison.

Future research could deepen this inquiry by comparing textbook representation with classroom observation, student interviews, locally produced teaching materials, and syllabus documents from different Uzbek universities, showing more precisely how global textbook culture gets accepted, modified, or resisted in practice. Even at the level of textual analysis, though, one conclusion already stands: the most productive response to British and American cultural values in ELT materials is neither passive admiration nor defensive refusal, but disciplined comparison — a stance that lets English teaching stay internationally open while remaining intellectually grounded in local educational experience.

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