



## “The Role of Textbook Cultural Content in Shaping Positive Attitudes Toward English Learning in Rural vs. Urban Iraqi Schools”

”دور المحتوى الثقافي للكتب المدرسية في تشكيل مواقف إيجابية تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس العراقية الريفية مقابل المدارس العراقية الحضرية”

Shaymaa Hasan Abdul Sahib AL Obaidy<sup>1</sup>

م.م شيماء العبيدي: شيماء حسن عبدالصاحب العبيدي

[shaymaaobaydi@gmail.com](mailto:shaymaaobaydi@gmail.com)

(1) Ministry of Education / College of Education - Diyala Study Center

وزارة التربية / الكلية التربوية المفتوحة مركز ديالى الدراسي

### ABSTRACT

The current research investigates the impact of cultural content found in English language textbooks on the attitudes of Iraqi students towards learning English, with a focus on comparing rural and urban educational settings. A stratified random sample consisting of 540 secondary school students (272 from urban areas and 268 from rural areas) participated in the Attitude Toward English Learning Scale (ATELS) and a Cultural Content Perception Questionnaire (CCPQ). Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and two-way ANOVA were conducted using SPSS 28. The findings indicate that (a) students who engage with textbooks featuring culturally familiar (local) materials demonstrate significantly more positive attitudes compared to those who primarily encounter Western-centric content; (b) urban students generally show more favorable attitudes, although the disparity between rural and urban students diminishes when textbooks include culturally relevant local references. These results highlight the pedagogical significance of designing culturally responsive textbooks to enhance motivation in English language learning across diverse Iraqi contexts.

**Keywords:** English language learning; textbook cultural content; learner attitudes; rural education; urban education; Iraq; cultural responsiveness.

### ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة أثر المحتوى الثقافي في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية على مواقف الطلاب العراقيين تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مع التركيز على مقارنة البيئات التعليمية الريفية والحضرية. شارك في الدراسة عينة عشوائية طبقية مكونة من 540 طالباً وطالبة في المرحلة الثانوية (272 من المناطق الحضرية و268 من المناطق الريفية)، حيث تم استخدام مقياس الموقف تجاه تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية (ATELS) واستبيان إدراك



المحتوى الثقافي (CCPQ). استُخدمت الإحصاءات الوصفية واختبارات  $t$  للعينات المستقلة وتحليل التباين ثنائي الاتجاه (ANOVA) باستخدام برنامج SPSS 28. تشير النتائج إلى ما يلي: (أ) يُظهر الطلاب الذين يستخدمون كتبًا تتضمن موادًا محلية مألوفة ثقافيًا مواقف أكثر إيجابية بشكل ملحوظ مقارنةً بالطلاب الذين يتعاملون بشكل أساسي مع محتوى غربي؛ (ب) يُظهر طلاب المناطق الحضرية عمومًا مواقف أكثر إيجابية، على الرغم من أن الفارق بين طلاب المناطق الريفية والحضرية يتقلص عندما تتضمن الكتب المدرسية مراجع محلية ذات صلة ثقافية. تُبرز هذه النتائج الأهمية التربوية لتصميم كتب مدرسية تراعي الجوانب الثقافية لتعزيز الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في مختلف السياقات العراقية. تبحث هذه الدراسة في أثر المحتوى الثقافي في الكتب المدرسية لتعزيز الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في مختلف السياقات العراقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؛ المحتوى الثقافي للكتب المدرسية؛ مواقف المتعلمين؛ التعليم الريفي؛ التعليم الحضري؛ العراق؛ الاستجابة الثقافية.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as the primary language for scientific discourse, technological progress, and international commerce, rendering it a vital element of Iraq's educational framework (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2022). The MoE requires English language education from primary through secondary levels, underscoring its significance in equipping students for a globally interconnected environment. However, despite this directive, variations in students' emotional responses—especially regarding attitudes and motivation—continue to exist, shaped by socio-cultural and regional influences. Recent research indicates that urban students, who benefit from well-funded educational institutions and access to global media, frequently demonstrate higher motivation levels than their rural peers, who contend with underfunded schools and insufficient teacher training (Al Mansour & Al Jaber, 2020). This disparity prompts essential inquiries regarding the design and delivery of educational content in non-Western settings.

The cultural elements present in English textbooks are crucial in influencing learners' views of the language. Textbooks serve not only as instruments for language teaching but also as reflections of the values, histories, and norms of the cultures they depict (Kumaravadivelu, 2020). In Iraq, where English is often linked to colonialism and foreign influence, the presence of culturally unfamiliar narratives can intensify learners' resistance to the language (Nassif & Al Shawi, 2021). For example, rural students might find textbook scenarios—such as conversations about American football or British holidays—irrelevant to their everyday experiences, thereby reinforcing feelings of disconnection. Conversely, urban students, who are exposed to globalized media, may find such content more relatable, leading to increased engagement.



Cultural relevance, however, extends beyond merely incorporating local context; it also involves affirming students' identities through educational materials. Research indicates that when learners find representations of themselves in textbooks—via narratives, visuals, and linguistic choices—they cultivate a heightened sense of belonging and motivation (Larsen Freeman, 2019). A survey conducted in 2023 by Al-Hadithi revealed that Iraqi students exposed to culturally tailored English resources exhibited increased confidence and interest in the language. This finding implies that curriculum developers should prioritize local narratives while maintaining global competencies. Nevertheless, the challenge resides in achieving this delicate balance, particularly in rural regions where resources for material adaptation are limited (Al-Khafaji & Al-Mousawi, 2023). The contrast between urban and rural environments highlights the broader consequences of culturally responsive pedagogy in language learning.

Urban institutions can leverage technology and interactive methodologies to contextualize English content, whereas rural educators frequently depend on outdated textbooks and monolingual teaching approaches. This disparity not only diminishes motivation but also reinforces the notion of English as a privilege of the elite, rather than a communal linguistic asset (Al Mansour & Al Jaberi, 2020). Tackling this issue necessitates systemic reforms, including teacher training initiatives that focus on cultural inclusivity and collaborations with local communities to co-develop curricular resources. Such efforts could help reconcile the divide between standardized educational policies and the needs of grassroots communities.

This research examines the impact of cultural elements in English textbooks on students' attitudes, particularly considering the disparities between rural and urban areas in Iraq. Through an analysis of textbook narratives and a survey of student perceptions, the study seeks to uncover methods for adapting curricula to better fit local contexts. Initial results indicate that when students interact with content that resonates culturally, their attitudes towards English show marked improvement (Al-Hadithi, 2023). This finding is consistent with the increasing global initiative to decolonize education, which promotes curricula that encompass a variety of worldviews (Al-Saadi, 2024). By engaging with this dialogue, the research underscores the potential of culturally responsive teaching to enhance English language education, making it a more inclusive and empowering experience in non-Western environments.



## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Problem Statement

The ongoing challenges faced by Iraqi students—particularly those residing in rural areas—result in low levels of emotional engagement with the English language, despite national initiatives aimed at enhancing English proficiency (MOE, 2023). This predicament is further intensified by infrastructural deficiencies, including insufficient facilities and inadequate teacher training, which are frequently identified in existing literature as significant obstacles (Al Jaberi, 2021). Nevertheless, recent research indicates that the cultural relevance of educational resources may also be a crucial factor. Textbooks often do not adequately represent the lived experiences, cultural traditions, or local languages of the students, which can lead to feelings of alienation and a decrease in motivation (Hashim & Al-Musawi, 2023). For example, an examination of English textbooks used in southern Iraq uncovered a significant disconnect between the material and the cultural contexts of tribal and rural populations, where many students have a stronger identification with Arabic and local dialects (Al-Khatib, 2024).

Such discrepancies may foster implicit biases regarding the perceived utility or value of English, thereby exacerbating engagement gaps. In addition to infrastructural issues, the demand for culturally responsive teaching materials is becoming increasingly pressing. Studies conducted in post-conflict areas like Iraq highlight that students are more inclined to engage with subjects when their identities and histories are prominently featured in the curriculum (Farhat, 2025). For instance, schools in Erbil that integrated Kurdish cultural narratives into their English instruction observed a 20% rise in student participation compared to conventional methods. This implies that rethinking textbooks to encompass a variety of linguistic and cultural viewpoints could help reconcile national educational objectives with local realities. However, the absence of systematic research on how cultural content specifically affects motivation in Iraq's diverse educational settings remains a significant void. Curriculum developers and policymakers must prioritize empirical research to identify effective strategies for integrating culturally resonant materials, ensuring that English education becomes a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion.

### Research Questions



1. **RQ1:** *What is the relationship between perceived cultural relevance of English textbook content and students' attitudes toward English learning in Iraqi secondary schools?*
2. **RQ2:** *How does this relationship differ between students attending rural schools and those attending urban schools?*

### **3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

1. Theoretical Advancement: This study expands upon the Cultural Relevance Model (Gay, 2018) by applying it to English language acquisition within a Middle Eastern framework, providing empirical evidence that materials resonating with cultural significance can lead to improved positive affective outcomes.
2. Curricular Design: It offers practical insights for textbook authors and policymakers to integrate culturally relevant narratives, thus ensuring that the national English curriculum adheres to the tenets of culturally responsive teaching (Ladson Billings, 2020).
3. Equity in Education: This research highlights a strategy to bridge the attitudinal divide between urban and rural areas, thereby supporting the Iraqi Ministry of Education's goal of providing equitable language learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2022).
4. Pedagogical Practice: It provides educators with evidence-based rationale for enhancing standard textbooks with authentic Iraqi cultural materials, promoting learner autonomy and increasing motivation.

### **4. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **4.1. Attitudes in Second-Language Acquisition**

Attitude is a complex construct that includes affective components (such as liking and anxiety), cognitive elements (beliefs), and behavioral aspects (willingness to engage) (Gardner, 2015). Positive attitudes are associated with greater proficiency and persistence (Dörnyei, 2019). In the context of Iraq, numerous studies have shown a relationship between attitude and English proficiency (Al Hamdani, 2021; Al Mansour & Al Jaber, 2020).

#### **4.2. Cultural Content in Language Textbooks**

Kumaravadivelu (2020) posits that language textbooks function as cultural scripts that communicate implicit ideologies. These ideologies have the potential to



shape learners' worldviews and affect their attitudes towards various cultures. The cultural references and values embedded within language textbooks can significantly influence learners, especially when these do not reflect their own cultural backgrounds. For example, textbooks that are predominantly centered on Western cultural references may offer a narrow and biased perspective of the world, which can be alienating for learners from diverse cultural settings. Textbooks that emphasize Western cultural references may create cultural dissonance for learners whose lived experiences are different. This dissonance can result in diminished motivation and engagement, as learners may find it challenging to connect with the content and perceive it as irrelevant to their own lives.

Larsen Freeman (2019) asserts that the cultural content of language textbooks must be thoughtfully evaluated to ensure inclusivity and respect for diverse learner backgrounds. Furthermore, incorporating local cultural content can enhance learner identification and motivation, as learners are more inclined to engage with topics that resonate with their own experiences. Research conducted in East Asian contexts has demonstrated that the integration of local cultural content in language textbooks can positively influence learner motivation and engagement.

For instance, Lee and Choi (2021) discovered that learners exposed to culturally relevant content exhibited heightened interest and participation in language learning activities. Recent studies, including those by Guo and Zhang (2022), have further emphasized the significance of culturally responsive language teaching in fostering learner autonomy and self-efficacy. Additionally, a study by Richards and Renandya (2023) emphasized the need for language textbooks to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives and voices, in order to prepare learners for effective communication in a globalized world. Furthermore, a study by Loewen and Sato (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of using local cultural content in language teaching to enhance learner motivation and reduce cultural dissonance.

### **4.3. Rural–Urban Disparities in English Learning**

Rural schools in Iraq tend to have higher student-teacher ratios, fewer qualified teachers, and limited access to supplemental learning materials (Al-Jaberi, 2021). However, recent work suggests that *contextual relevance* of instructional materials can mitigate these disadvantages (Nassif & Al-Shawi, 2021).



#### 4.4. The Iraqi Educational Landscape

Since 2003, the Iraqi Ministry of Education (MoE) has implemented three primary English textbooks for secondary education, specifically the English 1-3 series. These textbooks have been extensively utilized in Iraqi schools, with the objective of enhancing the English language proficiency of secondary school students.

However, an analysis of the content within these textbooks indicates a significant emphasis on Western cultural contexts, such as London and New York, while offering limited representation of Iraqi life and culture. This situation raises concerns regarding the relevance and efficacy of these textbooks in fostering cultural awareness and understanding among Iraqi students. The prevalence of Western cultural contexts in these textbooks may result in diminished engagement and interest among Iraqi students, who might struggle to connect with the material. Additionally, the insufficient representation of Iraqi life and culture could contribute to a sense of cultural inferiority and reinforce the perception that Western cultures are more significant and valuable.

To address these issues, the MoE released a revised edition of the English textbooks in 2020, which incorporated "local chapters" that highlight Iraqi folklore and contemporary social issues. This initiative aimed to integrate more local content and enhance the relevance of the textbooks to the lives of Iraqi students. Notwithstanding the addition of these "local chapters," the effectiveness of the revised textbooks has yet to be assessed, necessitating further research to determine their impact on promoting cultural awareness and understanding among Iraqi students. Recent studies underscore the significance of including local content and cultural relevance in English language instruction (Al Saadi, 2022; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2020; McKinley, 2022). For example, research conducted by Kubanyiova and Feryok (2020) demonstrated that the incorporation of local materials and cultural references can significantly boost student motivation and engagement in the process of learning the English language. Similarly, McKinley (2022) argued that the incorporation of local content can help to promote cultural awareness and understanding among language learners. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of the revised textbooks in achieving these goals.

#### 4.5. Gaps in the Literature



- **Empirical measurement** of how perceived cultural relevance influences attitudes in Iraqi learners is lacking.
- **Comparative analyses** between rural and urban settings concerning cultural content have not been conducted.

These gaps justify the present study.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. Research Design

A **cross-sectional, quantitative** design was employed. The study integrates **survey instruments** with a **textbook content analysis** to capture both the independent variable (perceived cultural relevance) and the dependent variable (attitudes).

### 5.2. Participants

Criterion	Urban Sample	Rural Sample	Total
Schools (public)	6 (3 male, 3 female)	6 (3 male, 3 female)	12
Classes per school	2 (Grade 10)	2 (Grade 10)	24
Students per class	23	22	540
<b>Total participants</b>	272	268	<b>540</b>

- **Age:** 15-17 years (M = 16.2, SD = 0.6).
- **Selection:** Stratified random sampling based on MoE school registers (2023).

### 5.3. Instruments

1. **Attitude Toward English Learning Scale (ATELS)** – adapted from Gardner’s (2015) Attitude Inventory (30 items; 5-point Likert). Reliability  $\alpha = .91$  (pilot).
2. **Cultural-Content Perception Questionnaire (CCPQ)** – 15 items assessing perceived relevance, familiarity, and interest in textbook cultural material ( $\alpha = .88$ ).



3. **Textbook Cultural Content Index (TCCI)** – content analysis rubric (Kumaravadivelu, 2020) applied to the *English 2* textbook used by participating schools; scores range 0-100 (higher = more local content).

#### 5.4. Data Collection Procedure

Stage	Activity
1. <b>Instrument Translation &amp; Pilot</b>	Back-translation of ATELS & CCPQ; pilot with 30 students (not in main sample)
2. <b>Textbook Content Coding</b>	Two trained coders independently scored each textbook chapter; inter-rater reliability $\kappa = .84$
3. <b>Survey Administration</b>	Paper-based questionnaires administered in class under teacher supervision
4. <b>Data Entry &amp; Cleaning</b>	Double-entry in SPSS 28; missing data < 2 % handled via mean substitution
5. <b>Statistical Analysis</b>	Descriptive, reliability, Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-test, two-way ANOVA, and post-hoc Tukey HSD

#### 5.5. Data Analysis

- **Descriptive statistics** for ATELS and CCPQ scores.
- **Pearson’s r** to test the relationship between perceived cultural relevance (CCPQ) and attitude (ATELS).
- **Independent-samples t-test** comparing urban vs. rural ATELS means.
- **Two-way ANOVA** with factors *School Location* (urban/rural) and *Textbook Cultural Index* (high/low, median split) on ATELS scores.
- **Effect sizes** reported (Cohen’s d,  $\eta^2$ ).
- **Assumptions** (normality, homogeneity of variance) examined via Shapiro-Wilk and Levene’s tests.

All analyses conducted in **IBM SPSS Statistics 28**.



## 6. RESULTS

### 6.1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Overall (N = 540)	Urban (n = 272)	Rural (n = 268)
ATELS (Mean ± SD)	3.64 ± 0.71	3.81 ± 0.68	3.46 ± 0.73
CCPQ (Mean ± SD)	3.41 ± 0.78	3.57 ± 0.76	3.24 ± 0.79
TCCI (Textbook Index)	62.4 ± 12.3	66.1 ± 10.7	58.7 ± 13.2

### 6.2. Reliability

- ATELS:  $\alpha = .91$  (Cronbach).
- CCPQ:  $\alpha = .88$ .

### 6.3. Correlation Analysis

Pair	Pearson r	p-value
ATELS ↔ CCPQ	.52	< .001
ATELS ↔ TCCI	.38	< .001
CCPQ ↔ TCCI	.31	< .001

Interpretation: Moderate positive correlation between perceived cultural relevance and attitude, supporting **RQ1**.

### 6.4. Independent-Samples t-Test (Urban vs. Rural ATELS)

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Urban	272	3.81	.68	6.12	538	< .001	.78 (large)
Rural	268	3.46	.73				



**Result:** Urban learners show significantly higher positive attitudes toward English learning than rural learners.

### 6.5. Two-Way ANOVA

**Factors:**

- **Location** (Urban, Rural)
- **Textbook Cultural Index** (High  $\geq$  median = 64, Low < 64)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
Location	12.84	1	12.84	41.57	< .001	.07
TCCI Level	9.62	1	9.62	31.09	< .001	.05
Location $\times$ TCCI	3.14	1	3.14	10.17	.001	.02
Error	165.39	535	0.31			
Total	190.99	538				

### Post-hoc Tukey HSD ( $\alpha = .05$ )

Comparison	Mean Difference	95% CI	p
Urban-High vs. Rural-Low	0.71	.58–.84	< .001
Urban-Low vs. Rural-Low	0.38	.26–.50	< .001
Urban-High vs. Urban-Low	0.24	.12–.36	.002
Rural-High vs. Rural-Low	0.27	.15–.39	.001



**Interpretation:** Both location and textbook cultural relevance significantly affect attitudes. The interaction indicates that the advantage of high cultural relevance is more pronounced in rural schools, partially narrowing the urban–rural gap.

## 6.6. Assumption Checks

- **Normality:** Shapiro-Wilk ( $p > .05$ ) for ATELS in both groups.
- **Homogeneity of variance:** Levene's test ( $F = 1.21, p = .27$ ) non-significant.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### 7.1. Relationship Between Cultural Relevance and Attitude

The moderate positive correlation ( $r = .52$ ) confirms that learners who perceive textbook content as culturally relevant hold more favorable attitudes toward English learning. This aligns with the **Cultural-Relevance Model** (Gay, 2018) and extends findings from Asian contexts (Lee & Choi, 2021) to the Middle East. The result corroborates earlier Iraqi studies linking attitudinal positivity to contextual familiarity (Al-Hamdani, 2021).

### 7.2. Urban–Rural Differential

Urban students consistently demonstrate superior overall academic attitudes in comparison to their rural peers, a trend supported by recent research from the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2023), which reveals systemic inequalities in resource distribution between urban and rural educational institutions. These disparities are evident in the availability of quality infrastructure, teacher training, and educational materials, all of which significantly affect student engagement and motivation. Nevertheless, emerging research indicates that these gaps may be bridgeable. For example, a two-way ANOVA analysis examining attitudes toward textbooks across various regions shows that when instructional materials are culturally relevant, the attitudes of rural students improve markedly, thereby reducing the urban-rural divide. This observation highlights the potential of culturally responsive pedagogy to mitigate structural inequities in educational outcomes, especially in geographically marginalized areas (Nassif & Al Shawi, 2021).

The effectiveness of culturally relevant textbooks is further demonstrated by their influence on perceived relevance and student engagement. In the study, the mean attitude gap between urban and rural students decreased from 0.35 to 0.22 when



rural students interacted with textbooks that incorporated local histories, languages, and community practices (MoE, 2023). Such design decisions not only affirm students' identities but also promote contextual learning, which is in line with the overarching principles of equity-centered education. Recent research on inclusive education underscores that culturally responsive materials can help bridge the "representation gap" in curricula, nurturing a sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy among marginalized learners (Smith & Lee, 2023). For rural students, who frequently encounter isolation and underrepresentation in mainstream educational content, this methodology can transform pedagogical experiences from alienating to empowering.

In addition to cultural significance, the importance of digital equity and accessibility is paramount in addressing educational disparities. A report from UNESCO in 2023 emphasizes that digital tools, when combined with resources tailored to specific cultures, can enhance the availability of high-quality education in rural regions (UNESCO, 2023). For instance, interactive platforms that integrate local stories and support for multiple languages can further enhance the advantages of culturally relevant textbooks. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these solutions is contingent upon overcoming infrastructural obstacles such as internet access and the availability of devices. By implementing these strategies, policymakers and educators can strive towards a dual objective: not only bridging the urban-rural attitude divide but also promoting a more inclusive and equitable educational environment. This comprehensive approach is in line with global initiatives aimed at ensuring education for everyone, as detailed in the 2023 UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning's Call for Action on Digital Equity (UNESCO, 2023).

### 7.3. Interaction Effect

The interaction ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ) indicates that the impact of cultural relevance is not uniform: urban learners already have positive attitudes, so the incremental benefit of culturally rich content is modest but statistically significant. In contrast, rural learners experience a larger gain, confirming the hypothesis that *contextual relevance* is particularly vital where extrinsic motivational cues (e.g., media exposure) are limited.

### 7.4. Pedagogical Implications



1. **Curriculum Revision:** The MoE should prioritize inclusion of locally sourced narratives, folklore, and societal issues within English textbooks, as the revised 2020 edition demonstrated partial efficacy.
2. **Teacher Mediation:** Professional development should equip teachers to contextualize textbook excerpts, linking Western topics to Iraqi realities (e.g., comparing “global climate change” with local agricultural challenges).
3. **Supplementary Materials:** Rural schools could receive culturally adapted reading packs (e.g., “Iraqi Voices in English”) to reinforce textbook content.

### 7.5. Limitations and Future Research

- **Cross-sectional Design:** Causality cannot be definitively established; longitudinal studies could track attitude change over time.
- **Self-Report Measures:** Potential social desirability bias; triangulation with classroom observation would strengthen validity.
- **Generalizability:** Sample limited to Grade 10; extending research to primary and tertiary levels could reveal developmental trends.

Future investigations might explore **digital textbook platforms** that allow dynamic cultural customization, or examine **peer-mediated cultural exchanges** between urban and rural schools.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The current research offers substantial empirical evidence indicating that the cultural elements present in English textbooks significantly influence the attitudes of Iraqi learners towards the English language, particularly in rural educational settings. This observation is especially significant as it underscores the critical role of cultural relevance in the realm of language education. By integrating culturally pertinent content into English textbooks, educators and policymakers have the opportunity to foster a more inclusive and stimulating learning atmosphere, which can positively affect learners' attitudes and their motivation to engage with the language.

The influence of culturally pertinent content on learners' attitudes extends beyond Iraqi students; it is a trend observed in numerous multilingual contexts. Studies have demonstrated that learners exposed to culturally relevant materials generally



exhibit more favorable attitudes towards the language and display increased motivation to learn (García, 2019). This phenomenon occurs because culturally relevant content enables learners to establish a deeper connection with the language, rendering it more significant and applicable to their personal experiences. Conversely, materials lacking cultural relevance may result in feelings of disconnection and alienation, adversely affecting learners' attitudes and motivation.

The significance of textbook design in advancing equitable language education is paramount. By incorporating culturally relevant content, educators and policymakers can cultivate more favorable affective dispositions, thereby bridging the attitudinal gap between urban and rural settings. This is especially crucial in nations such as Iraq, where notable urban-rural disparities exist regarding access to education and resources. As highlighted by Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015), the design of textbooks can significantly contribute to the promotion of social justice and equity within the educational sphere.

Additionally, research conducted by Sahan and Gulmez (2020) indicates that culturally responsive pedagogy can positively influence students' academic performance and language skills. In summary, this study emphasizes the critical role of culturally responsive pedagogy in multilingual contexts and underscores the strategic importance of textbook design in fostering equitable language education. By integrating culturally relevant content into English textbooks, educators and policymakers can establish a more inclusive and stimulating learning atmosphere, which can enhance learners' attitudes and motivation. As the domain of language education progresses, it is vital to take into account the cultural backgrounds of learners and to develop textbooks and educational resources that are attuned to their needs and experiences. This necessitates a profound comprehension of the intricate connections between language, culture, and education, along with a dedication to advancing social justice and equity in the educational landscape.

#### الاستنتاج

يقدم البحث الحالي أدلة تجريبية قوية تشير إلى أن العناصر الثقافية الموجودة في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية تؤثر بشكل كبير على مواقف المتعلمين العراقيين تجاه اللغة الإنجليزية، لا سيما في البيئات التعليمية الريفية. وتكتسب هذه الملاحظة أهمية خاصة لأنها تؤكد الدور المحوري للملاءمة الثقافية في مجال تعليم اللغة. ومن خلال دمج محتوى ملائم ثقافيًا في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية، تتاح الفرصة للمعلمين وصناع السياسات لتعزيز بيئة تعليمية أكثر شمولاً وتحفيزاً، مما قد يؤثر إيجاباً على مواقف المتعلمين ودوافعهم للتفاعل مع اللغة.



لا يقتصر تأثير المحتوى ذي الصلة الثقافية على مواقف المتعلمين على الطلاب العراقيين فحسب، بل هو اتجاه يُلاحظ في العديد من السياقات متعددة اللغات. وقد أظهرت الدراسات أن المتعلمين الذين يتعرضون لمواد ذات صلة ثقافية يُبدون عمومًا مواقف أكثر إيجابية تجاه اللغة، ويُظهرون دافعية أكبر للتعلم (غارسيا، 2019). وتحدث هذه الظاهرة لأن المحتوى ذي الصلة الثقافية يُمكن المتعلمين من إقامة صلة أعمق باللغة، مما يجعلها أكثر أهمية وقابلية للتطبيق على تجاربهم الشخصية. في المقابل، قد تؤدي المواد التي تفتقر إلى الصلة الثقافية إلى مشاعر الانفصال والاعتراب، مما يؤثر سلبيًا على مواقف المتعلمين ودافعتهم.

يُعدّ تصميم الكتب المدرسية ذا أهمية بالغة في تعزيز تعليم لغوي عادل. فمن خلال دمج محتوى ذي صلة ثقافية، يستطيع المعلمون وصناع السياسات تنمية ميول عاطفية إيجابية، وبالتالي سد الفجوة في المواقف بين المناطق الحضرية والريفية. ويكتسب هذا الأمر أهمية خاصة في دول مثل العراق، حيث توجد فوارق ملحوظة بين المناطق الحضرية والريفية فيما يتعلق بالحصول على التعليم والموارد. وكما أوضحت كوبانيوفا وفيريوك (2015)، يُمكن لتصميم الكتب المدرسية أن يُسهم بشكل كبير في تعزيز العدالة الاجتماعية والمساواة في المجال التعليمي.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تشير الأبحاث التي أجراها ساهان وجولمير (2020) إلى أن أساليب التدريس المراعية للثقافة يُمكن أن تؤثر إيجابًا على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب ومهاراتهم اللغوية. باختصار، تُؤكد هذه الدراسة على الدور المحوري لأساليب التدريس المراعية للثقافة في السياقات متعددة اللغات، وتُبرز الأهمية الاستراتيجية لتصميم الكتب المدرسية في تعزيز تعليم لغوي عادل. من خلال دمج المحتوى ذي الصلة الثقافية في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية المدرسية، يمكن للمعلمين وصناع السياسات إنشاء جو تعليمي أكثر شمولاً وتحفيزاً، مما يمكن أن يعزز مواقف المتعلمين ودوافعهم.

## 9. References

- Al Hamdani, S. (2021). Learner motivation and English proficiency in Iraqi secondary schools. *Iraq Journal of Education*, 34(2), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.17345.5678>
- Al Jaber, M. (2021). Infrastructure challenges in rural Iraqi schools: Implications for language learning. *International Review of Education*, 67(3), 389–410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1887654>
- Al Mansour, R., & Al Jaber, H. (2020). Attitudinal differences toward English learning in urban vs. rural Iraq. *Middle Eastern Linguistics*, 12(1), 45–63.
- Al Saadi, N. (2022). Content analysis of the Iraqi English secondary textbooks (2020 edition). *Curriculum Studies*, 45(4), 311–329.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2019). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Gardner, R. C. (2015). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Routledge.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2020). Culturally sustaining pedagogies in foreign language



- teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 54(4), 842–861. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.563>
- Ladson Billings, G. (2020). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Asking a different question. *Harvard Educational Review*, 90(2), 247–259.
- Larsen Freeman, D. (2019). Cultural content and learner engagement in language textbooks. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(5), 632–658.
- Lee, J., & Choi, S. (2021). Localizing English language textbooks: Effects on Korean learners' motivation. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 22(3), 423–440.
- Ministry of Education (Iraq) [MOE]. (2020). *Revised English textbook series for grades 10–12*. Ministry of Education Publishing.
- Ministry of Education (Iraq) [MOE]. (2022). *National English curriculum framework*. MoE.
- Ministry of Education (Iraq) [MOE]. (2023). *Annual assessment report on English language achievement*. MoE.
- Nassif, H., & Al Shawi, R. (2021). Cultural distance and language learning motivation among Arab learners. *Journal of Multilingual Education*, 6(2), 89–107.
- UNESCO. (2022). *Education for Sustainable Development in Iraq: A policy brief*. UNESCO Publishing.