Politeness Value in Local and Global English Textbooks.

Nor Sanak Binti Mohd Nabil[*a], Paramjit Kaur[b],

[a]*SMK Tunku Anum Tunku Abdul Rahman, Jitra,, Malaysia*
[b]*School of Education and Modern Languages*, *Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the value of politeness that is inculcated in local and global English textbooks. A qualitative textbook analysis is used to analyze data for this study. The samples in this study are two English textbooks used by Form 1 students in all public secondary schools in Malaysia. For sampling, two units are chosen from both textbooks; Form 1 English Textbook and Pulse 2 textbook. Utterances, phrases, and statements that denote or signify the selected values were analyzed and coded from the materials. From the results, it was found that the values of politeness were found to be portrayed in both textbooks. Positive politeness value was portrayed in both the local and global textbooks. The study concludes with implication to classroom practices where teachers are suggested to be aware of how politeness value is portrayed and explicitly used them in teaching and learning English and implication towards the development of English materials.

Keywords: Politeness, value, local textbook, global textbook, textbook analysis,

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of values are emphasized through the recent education reforms in Malaysia. In the Malaysia Education Blueprint, it is stated that Malaysian education aims to produce Malaysian citizens "who internalize values and strengthen values education thus ensuring the spiritual and moral development of Malaysian students" (Ministry of Education, 2015). In secondary school, the latest syllabus following the Standard-Based Curriculum for Secondary School (KSSM) which was introduced in 2017. As a result of this curriculum change, a new locally designed Form 1 English textbook was introduced. The new textbook was created in accordance with the Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools (SBELC).

However, after one year of using the local Form 1 English Textbook, in 2018, the Malaysian Government introduces a global textbook for Form 1 students, called Pulse 2. The change was decided based on the claim that the local textbook has not been able to meet the CEFR levels (Harlina, 2017). Among the issues highlighted are the suitability of the global textbook with Malaysian students' context and culture and the values portrayed in the textbook which might be different from local Malaysian values. Some education practitioners such as teachers and academicians are against the use of the global textbook since they are concerned with the portrayal of values in the global textbook ("Let's have our", 2018).

In this research the value of *politeness* was selected to be examined that it was mentioned to be lacking among Malaysians. For instance, Lee (2017), observations from attending occasions, found that *politeness* is among the value that has yet to be practiced among Malaysians . In addition, this value is also selected since it is emphasized in both the Malaysia Ministry of Education guide for values in curriculum and the values outlined by the Spanish Ministry of Education. Thus, this paper aims to examine this value in the global textbook named Pulse 2 and the local textbook, named Form 1 English Textbook.

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[*]Corresponding author. Tel.: +60135917981; Fax:
E-mail: sanak.nabil@gmail.com

1.1 The importance of textbooks

In English lessons, one way to help learners internalize values is by the use of teaching materials such as textbooks. According to Akin, Dunne, Palontares and Schilling (1995), a textbook is important as a means to deliver content knowledge and as a tool to help deliver moral values. In a research by Urip, Supiani, Kailani, & Lestariyana, 2020) they concluded that the textbook writers place greater emphasis on selected values in the textbooks in as much as they may want to teach these values at an early age.

Therefore, textbooks not only determine the topics learnt in the classroom, but also ideas and moral values to be implemented in the education system as a whole. It is vital to analyze English textbooks. This is because English textbooks are reckoned to be the most relevant source of learning English worldwide (Allehyani, Burnapp, & Wilson, 2017; Ebadi & Naderifarjad, 2015).

Textbooks function as a guide for learners and instructors to make them engaged in practices and ensure both the teaching and learning activities to thrive (Margana & Widyantoro, 2017). Well-known linguists and authors such as Sheldon (1988), Hutchinson and Torres (1994), Cunningsworth (1995), Cortazzi and Jin (1999) shared the belief that textbooks are necessary tools for language teaching and learning. English textbooks help students improve their language skills, learn about the subject content, and become familiarized with the cultures and living ways of people from foreign countries. Moreover, textbooks can help teachers as well, serving as teaching programme and support for less experienced teachers to gain confidence, to test new methodologies, and to become aware of the pedagogical issues. Therefore, the analysis of English textbooks is important.

1.2 The concept of *politeness value*

Value is a term that is vastly defined in various contexts. Defining *value* is also a controversial issue because scholars from different fields have defined *value* differently. In this research, the definition of *value* by Schwartz (1992) is used as it is more comprehensive whereby *value* is defined as the general criteria against which actions, policies, people and states of affairs are judged. In this study, *intrinsic* value is adapted to be used. *Intrinsic* value is a term that can be defined as the motivational property of activities that people engage in and introduce to others (Langford & O'Connor, 2010). *Intrinsic* value has been established as the central part of ethics (Zimmerman, 2002). Defining *intrinsic* value is quite difficult because it depends and varies upon how individuals judge the value (Kumar, 2017). However, some philosophers take *intrinsic* value as moral judgments and associate *intrinsic* value with the concept of appropriateness (Bradley, 2006). Hence, in this research, *intrinsic* value is used to refer to the concept of appropriateness. The researchers in the present paper had specifically selected *intrinsic* value to be investigated and *intrinsic* values chosen is *politeness*.

In 1987, Brown and Levinson proposed the *politeness* theory by utilizing the notion of *face*. *Face* is the self-image every person wants to protect. By having *positive* and *negative* politeness, *politeness* is regarded as having *dual* nature. Apart from the notion of *dual* nature in politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) also proposed the politeness strategies to help understand the notion of politeness better.

Politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) classified human politeness behavior by using four strategies, which are *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *positive politeness*, and *off record* or *indirect* strategy. The *positive politeness* strategy shows the recognition that hearer (H) has a desire to be respected. *Positive* politeness also confirms that the relationship is friendly and used to express group reciprocity. The *bald on record* strategy does nothing to minimize threats to the H "face" thus it is usually used in close relationships or when information needs to be shared quickly. There were different kinds of *bald on record* strategies which were direct imperatives for great urgency or desperation, sympathetic for advice or warnings, welcomings, farewells, and offers (Retnowaty, 2015).

The *negative* politeness strategy recognizes the H's face but it also recognizes how the speakers's (S) are imposing things on them. For instance, rather than saying, "I don't want to bother you but..." the S may use "I was wondering if...". Lastly, *off record* or *indirect* strategies take some of the pressure off of S. For instance, in order to try avoiding the direct face threatening act (FTA) of asking for a drink, S would want it be offered to him/her once H sees that S wants one. It is known that *off record* strategies are often favored by many Eastern cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The examples of the mentioned *politeness* strategies can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Example of politeness strategies by Brown & Levinson (1987)

Politeness Strategies	Example
Bald on record	I want some beer
Positive Politeness	Is it ok for me to have beer?
Negative Politeness	I hope it's not too forward, but would it be possible for me to have some beer?
Off record	It's so hot. It makes you really thirsty

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON POLITENESS VALUE IN TEXTBOOKS

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of *politeness*, other researchers have also examined *politeness* and *impoliteness* in EFL contexts (Culpepe, 2011; Kawai, 2013). Khomeinjanifarahani and Molkizadeh (2013) have studied the application of *politeness* strategies in disagreement by Iranian advanced EFL learners where their study revealed that there was no significant difference between the two genders with regard to the type of politeness strategies in the disagreement speech act. The result of the study showed that male and female studentsuse almost the same types of *politeness* strategies in disagreement speech acts.

Existing study of moral values portrayed in textbooks is primarily quantitative with the focus on teachers' and students' perceptions of the textbook element (Ramazani, 2013). Other study conducted by Aldrovandi (2014) examined the application of politeness theory in the EFL textbooks where they found that teaching of politeness values were not effective as teachers failed to detect the value in EFL textbook.

This current study is based on the Aglasi and Casta (2017) study that examined the values promoted in language textbooks for high school students. This study examines and compares how the value of *politeness* is portrayed in the Form 1 KSSM English Textbook and Pulse 2. The study also compares and contrasts the portrayal of *politeness* value in Form 1 English Textbook and in Pulse 2. This study focuses only on the portrayal of the values of *politeness* in these two textbooks.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research uses the textbook analysis approach. Although the term textbook evaluation and textbook analysis are sometimes used interchangeably, in this research the term textbook analysis is used. This is because according Ellis (2002), textbook analysis describes what is there in a textbook, which is different from textbook evaluation where the focus is on the effect of an ELT textbook. Since this research only studied the *politeness value* in the global and local textbook, the best term to be used is textbook analysis and second level analysis which include the analysis of content including phrases, utterance, dialogue and statement was employed in this study (Littlejohn, 2011).

Politeness value was analyzed using the *politeness s*trategies framework by Brown and Levinson (1987). In this framework, Brown and Levinson (1987) classified human *politeness* behaviour by using four strategies, which are *bald on record*, *negative politeness*, *positive politeness*, and *off record*. In this research only two strategies were investigated which were *positive politeness* and *negative politeness*. *Positive politeness* is known as somewhat direct strategy while *negative politeness* is referred to somewhat indirect strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The textbooks in the study were chosen following a purposive sampling as it is the intention of the researcher to include the two textbooks which were Pulse 2 and Form 1 English Textbook. This is because Form 1 English Textbook used to be a compulsory English textbook learnt by all Form1 students in public secondary schools in Malaysia in 2017. While in 2018, the local textbook is used as supplementary material and Pulse 2 is used as a compulsory textbook. Accordingly, the following Table 2 shows the materials that were used as samples in this study.

Table 2. List of English Textbooks analyzed.

Textbook	Chapters / Units
Pulse 2	1 & 4
Form 1 English Textbook Form	3& 4

The samples of this research was dialogues, utterances and statements in the local and in the global textbooks chosen. 6 dialogues, 57 utterances, 2 emails and 26 statements from the local and global textbook were analyzed. The researcher coded textual data by categorizing keywords and identifying the relationships among these words. The list of coding systems used to annotate politeness strategies in local and global textbooks is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Coding for *politeness* strategies

Politeness Strategy	Coding
Positive Politeness	PP
Negative Politeness	NP

4. FINDINGS

The value of *politeness* was portrayed in the Form 1 English Textbook and Pulse 2 through *positive politeness* and *negative politeness*. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the portrayal of *positive politeness* value in the local textbook and the global textbook.
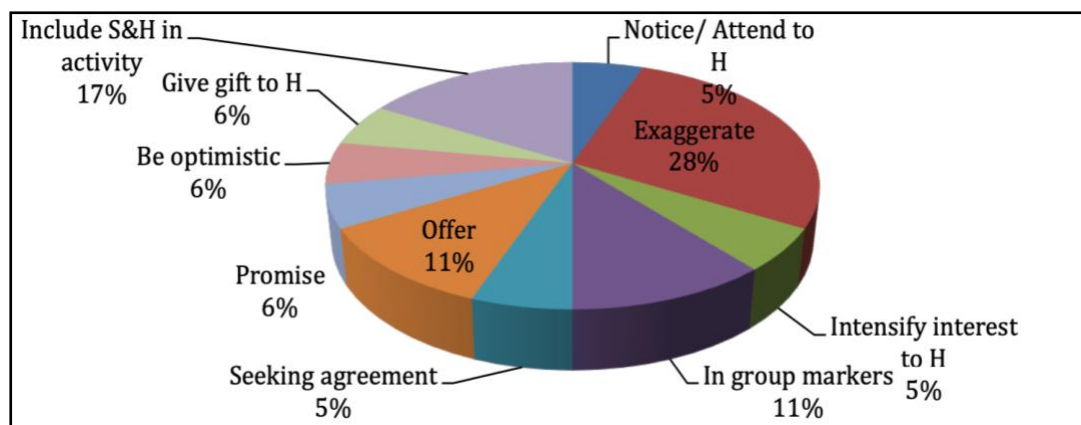

Fig.1.Positive Politeness in Form 1 English Textbook

Figure 1 shows that the most frequently portrayed *positive politeness* in Form 1 English Textbook was through *exaggeration*. *Exaggeration* is used not only to associate with intensifying interest but also function on its own. For example, exaggeration in the local textbook was used with exclamation marks at the end of utterance to emphasize the intonation, stress of modifiers used by characters in the textbook. The examples were, "What a good bargain!" (p.38), "That's...great idea" (p.9) and "We'll have ...most wonderful New Year celebration" (p.9). Thus, in the local textbook, *exaggeration* shows the sense of excitement and excessive manner portrayed by characters. It was also an example of communication which relates to the culture of Malaysians. This is because, according to Karappan (2016), *exaggeration* is frequently used among Malaysians as a communication strategy to enhance positive face, showing sincerity, and creates relationships among people. Therefore, in the local textbook, *exaggeration* is also used to show friendliness and being warm towards each other.

In Figure 1, the least frequent *positive politeness* strategy in the local textbook was found to be *notice /attend to H*. *Notice/attend to H* strategy can be defined as S who notice H's conditions such as the interests, wants, goals, needs and changes which is significant because it looks as though H wants S to notice and accept his goals (Abdul Majid, 2009). Since this strategy is usually used in face to face interactions, limited use of this element of *positive politeness* was shown in the local textbook and the only example that was found in a conversation between a coach and Wei Hoong. The instance is seen when the coach said, "You are punctual, Wei Hoong. That is the first step to be a disciplined football player" (p.3).
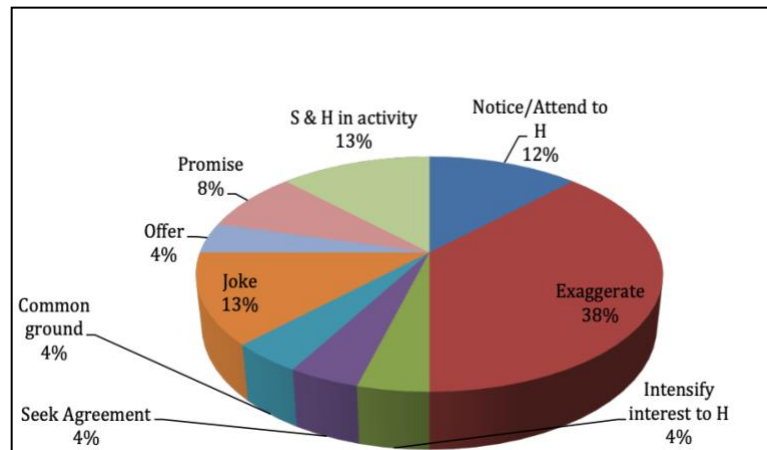
Fig.2. Positive *Politeness* in Pulse 2

In Figure 2, it can be seen that there were nine *positive politeness* strategies that were portrayed in the global textbook, Pulse 2. The highest frequency of usage was *exaggeration* and most rarely used was *offer*, *common ground* and *seek agreement.* It can be seen that almost 40% of the two units analyzed consisted of *exaggeration* and it may be because it was associated with intensifying the interest. In addition, *exaggeration* might be used most of the time with the aim of intensifying the meaning and giving praises. Brown and Levinson (1987) specify that an element of *exaggeration* distinguishes that kind of behaviour from positive *politeness* redress. However, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), it is undeniable that *exaggeration* may result in insincerity to some extent.

Table 4. Negative Politeness in Form 1 English Textbook

Politeness Strategies	Kinds of Strategies	Data
Negative politeness strategies	Be conventionally indirect	May, did you check the expiry date? (p.38)
		Shylock, can you lend three thousand ducats to Antonio for three months? (p.43)
		Do you want to help in the zoo gift shop/ticket hall (p.48)
	Give deference	Mr Vinash (p.3) , Yes sir (p.3) , Is that all sir? (p.3)
	Hedge	Thank you very much (p.3)I think we should buy this brand of coffee instead because it is sugar-free (p.38)
		Mum, can you please tell me where I can find a packet of chips (p.39)

Table 5. Negative Politeness in Pulse 2

Politeness Strategy	Kind of Strategies	Data
Negative Politeness Strategy	Give deference	We're having lots of adventures on our holiday (p.35)
	Question, hedge	Do you prefer hot or cold weather? I definitely prefer hot weather (p.36)

Next, as shown in Table 4 and 5, *politeness* value was also portrayed by *negative politeness.* Out of the 10 strategies that make use of *negative politeness*, only 3 were portrayed in the local and the global textbooks. These are *give deference*, *hedge* and *be conventionally indirect.*
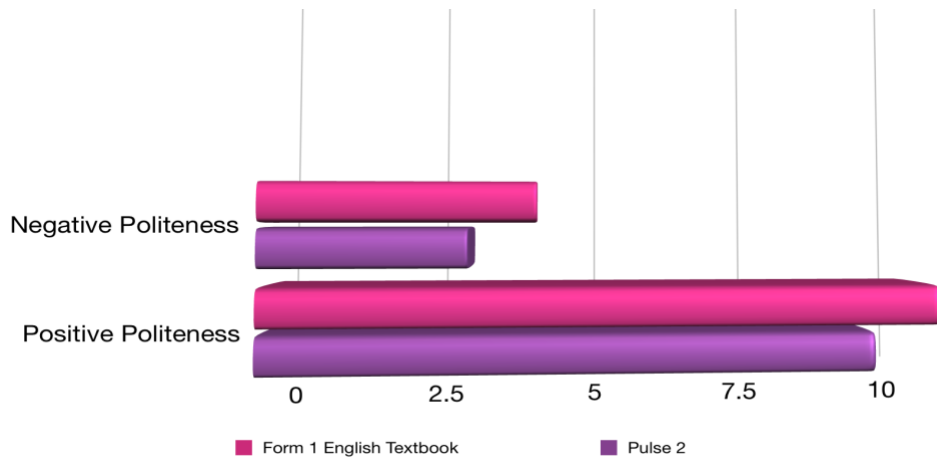
Fig.3. *Politeness* Strategies in Form 1 English Textbook & Pulse 2

Figure 3 shows the similarities where *positive politeness* in the local and the global textbook were portrayed more than *negative politeness* in both global and local textbooks. What was interesting in Figure 3 was the high frequency of *positive politeness* portrayed in both textbooks.

Form 1 English Textbook portrayed *positive politeness* in term of e*xaggeration* as the most frequently presented strategy. Likewise, it was quite surprising to find that the most frequently occurred *positive politeness* strategy in Pulse 2 textbook was also in the form of *exaggeration*. This finding shows that there are similarities between how Malaysian and the Spanish people perceive *exaggeration* in *positive politeness.* As Brown and Levinson proposed (1987), culture is one of the main elements that will affect how people expressed *positive politeness*. It can be seen that in both Malaysian and Spanish cultures, it is important to indicate similarities amongst interactors and appreciate interlocutor self-image as a way to be polite to each other.

The use of *positive politeness* in both textbooks may also be influenced by the society norms. For example, to see the relationship in a society, the concept of power distance was proposed in Hofstede cultural dimensions (Hofstede Insight, n.d). Power distance refers to the degree of acceptance or relationship between the unequal distribution of power in society (Hofstede Insight, n.d). High power distance (PD) countries like Malaysia and Spain (Callahan, 2006 ; Hofstede Insight, n.d), usually have people who accept hierarchical order where everyone has place in social hierarchy in which people of higher power are considered autocrats and people of lower hierarchy are expected to be told what to do.   Therefore, the use of *exaggeration* in high PD countries and in textbook may be related to the act of pleasing people and to show the hierarchy of power among characters in the textbook.

The similarity is unexpected in English textbooks used but since Malaysia and Spain are both countries with high PD (Solomon & Schell, 2009), the use of exaggeration in conversation might be made to please people of higher social status. Although this strategy may include somewhat exaggerated elements or 'element of insincerity', it plays an important role when forming good interpersonal relationships (Yuka, 2009). This is because it is quite typical for Malaysians to show friendliness when communicating among each other by the use of *positive politeness*.

In addition, the use of *exaggeration* in textbook may help to increase the attention of students towards the textbooks. This is because a study by Maros and Rosli (2017) found that Malaysian teenagers frequently used *positive politeness* as compared to other *politeness* strategies when they are speaking with each other. It was employed as the most commonly used strategy when speaking on online platform where the same study (Maros & Rosli, 2017) suggested that the use of positive politeness is frequent among people as it encourages interpersonal communication and allow the freedom of expression among its users. Therefore, it can be inferred that that the local textbook writers tried to capture students' attention by using their every day's languages so that the textbook will be interesting and not feel unknown or alien to them.

5.   IMPLICATION OF STUDY

There are three significant implications that will be discussed in this section which are methodological, societal and pedagogical implications. Firstly, in this study, the researcher only employed the second level analysis based on Littlejohn's (2011) three levels textbook analysis. The second level analysis was used to analyse the content of the textbook which was the value of politeness portrayed in the textbook. Thus, from the findings, the researcher found that it will be beneficial to investigate the first and third level which includes the level of access to information and resources by teacher and students and the third level which include the implications of the content analysis.

The societal implication of this study includes the need not to fear the implementation of global textbook in Malaysia. The two English textbooks have been selected to be used among Form 1 students because it is anticipated that they will offer very different views about the various interesting topics and characters involved. The result from the analysis of politeness value found the similarity between local and global textbooks used by Form 1 students in public secondary schools in Malaysia. The global textbook also portrayed positive politeness as the most frequently portrayed politeness strategy which shows cultural similarity between both textbooks. Therefore, Malaysian parents, teachers and students do not have to worry about the global textbook which may portray impolite values as it is found to be absent. which are not aligned with Malaysian values.

The implication of this research towards classroom practice is seen through the need to inculcate the use of both global and local textbook in English lessons. This is because the use of exaggeration in both textbook can be said to be the intention of the textbooks writers. This is because the exaggerative language use will be able to allow students feel familiar since they use somehow the same language in their daily conversation
.Furthermore, even though the global textbook is used as the compulsory textbook, in order to introduce the diversity of Malaysian cultures, the use of local textbook will be of benefit.

The last implication is on teaching and learning English. The results from this study show that politeness value is portrayed in both textbooks. Even though initially there were arguments from many people on the suitability of the values in the global textbook, this research found that the politeness value portrayed in the local textbook was also portrayed in the global textbook. Hence, in the teaching and learning teachers need to be more critical, resourceful and be aware of the values inculcated in the global textbook. Teachers can implicitly or explicitly teach the politeness value since they are infused in both textbooks. Furthermore, teachers may try to explore the available resources from the Macmillan ELT Website and make use of pictures in the textbook to help inculcate values in the teaching and learning process. It is important for teachers to avoid being prejudiced towards the global textbook in order to inculcate moral values among students.

6.   LIMITATION OF STUDY

The limitations of this research include limited textbooks chapters analysed, limited number of textbooks and the use of manual coding. In this research only two chapters from each textbook were chosen. For instance, in local textbook and global textbooks, two chapters for each textbook were selected. Thus, the researcher cannot avoid the tendency for the selected values to be portrayed or presented in other chapters. Thus, the findings were quite limited and it cannot be generalized to the whole textbooks.

Apart from that, only two English textbooks were analyzed. These two textbooks are used by Form 1 students in Malaysian public schools. Thus, the findings from the analysis of the two textbooks cannot be generalized to other English textbooks used by students from other levels. Moreover, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to different English textbooks being used in other school systems in   Malaysia such as private schools. In order to analyse data from the local and global textbook, only manual coding system were used. The researcher only annotation the text by the use of alphabets based on the framework of analysis used. Some weaknesses of the manual coding include the tendency to overlook selected values included or the miscoding of values.

7.   RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the limitations that were discussed, the researcher has a few recommendations and suggestions for the future researchers who have interest in investigating local and global English textbooks. Firstly, it will be more

interesting if a comprehensive analysis of local and global textbooks for form 1 students is being conducted. Since only two chapters were randomly selected to be analyzed from each book, the findings of the value portrayed is quite limited. A comprehensive analysis of all chapters in the local and global textbooks will provide an overview of the value of *politeness* in the textbooks selected.

8.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that the value of *politeness* is portrayed in local and global English textbooks. The analysis of the textbook showed that the portrayal of *politeness value* is not only available in local textbook but also in global textbook since everyone in this world shares the universal value of *politeness*. Furthermore, the portrayal of the value is quite similar, even though it was portrayed differently in local and global textbooks. The incorporation value in class and through cultural comparisons can make the learning environment in English classes to be more interesting and relevant. Hence, pupils will get more exposure to other cultures which can widen their horizons. Thus, since English textbooks is considered as the heart of the education system (Gholami, Nooreen & Shameem, 2017) , it is important for teachers to be aware of the presence of this value in order to help students develop not only their language skill but also their attitude and communication skills. Finally, it is hoped that this study will encourage more researchers to venture into in depth analysis of the latest English textbooks chosen for secondary school students in Malaysia.

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