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Cultural Representation in EFL Textbooks: An Analysis of “My Book of English Year Four” for Middle Schools in Algeria

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Abstract :

Culture and language are inseparable in their essence; therefore, any textbook developed for foreign language teaching should take into consideration its cultural aspects. The current study aims to investigate the cultural elements presented in the newly introduced English textbook designed for teaching 4th grade Middle School learners. Descriptive content analysis method, based on two coding schemes was adopted to codify the content. The results reveal that the textbook has promoted different dimensions of culture with a focus on products, perspectives and persons. The bias in favor of the source culture is obvious throughout the textbook in terms of the reading, writing and speaking input .

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Awareness, EFL Textbook, Content Analysis, Cultural Content.

ملخص:

اللغة في جوهرها لا تنفصل عن الثقافة. ومن هذا المنطلق فإن أي كتاب مدرسي معد لتدريس اللغة الأجنبية يجب أن يأخذ بعين الاعتبار جوانبها الثقافية. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى التحقيق في كتاب اللغة الانجليزية الذي تم تقديمه حديثاً لتدريس الصف الرابع من مرحلة التعليم المتوسط كلفة أجنبية من حيث العناصر الثقافية. تم اعتماد طريقة تحليل المحتوى الوصفي ، بناءً على مخططين للتشفير لتقنين المحتوى. تكشف النتائج أن الكتاب المدرسي المستهدف قد عزز أبعاداً مختلفة للثقافة المصدر مع التركيز على المنتجات ووجهات النظر والأشخاص. التحيز للثقافة المصدر واضح في جميع أنحاء الكتاب المدرسي من حيث أنشطة القراءة والكتابة والتحدث.

كلمات مفتاحيه الثقافة ، الوعي الثقافي ، الكتاب المدرسي للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية ، تحليل المحتوى المحتوى الثقافي.

1. INTRODUCTION

EFL learners often commit cultural faux pas while communicating with people of other cultures due to their grammar-based language learning. Grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are useful yet not sufficient components for effective communication which needs awareness of

some social conventions. Learning a language is not merely exchanging information, it is also maintaining the way of articulation while communicating with others.

According to Frank (2013) EFL teachers are responsible for preparing students for future intercultural encounters

and to raise their awareness to differences which is a necessary step in developing intercultural competence. The question is, "How can we incorporate cultural knowledge and understanding within the context of our English language classes?"

EFL textbooks are still very much a key element of most English language classrooms the world over. They are said to provide learners with "security, system, progress and revision whilst at the same time saving precious time and offering teachers the resources that they need to base their lessons on." (Tomlinson, 2012, p.157). In this respect, textbooks and their contents affect culture teaching and intercultural communication directly. The idea of culture incorporation into the foreign language contexts is thus granted a position through a so-called paradigm shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence.

Despite these strong arguments, the issue of culture in EFL textbooks is not so clear cut. In Tseng's words "culture is often neglected in the EFL and ESL teaching/learning, or introduces as no more than a supplementary diversion to language instruction" (Tseng, 2002, p.11)

In light of the previous assertions, this study aims to cast light over the topics and the way culture is manipulated in the newly introduced EFL textbook for middle schools, and to investigate the frequency of cultural elements in the book. this paper analyzes the cultural content presented in the EFL textbook in order to explore whether it offers rich content about the source, target and international culture

In line with this aim, the study attempts to seek answers to the following research questions:

- How does the textbook introduce the cultural content?
- What are the cultural dimensions revealed in the 4th year EFL textbook for middle school in Algeria?
- Which culture does it emphasize?

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Towards a definition of culture

The first observation to make regarding attempts to introduce a definition of culture, is that the term is very difficult to pin down. Indeed, Williams (1976) as cited in Kumaravadivelu (2008, p 9) claims that "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language". The term 'culture' cannot be easily defined because its definition has evolved over time. It can mean different things in different contexts. Perhaps the oldest and most common definition of culture is that defined by Edward Taylor (1871) that states that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (p. 1)

Anthropologist John H. Bodley (2011) simply defined culture as, "what people think, make, and do" (p. 12), and his broad definition has been developed and detailed by what is called the 3P model of culture (Frank, 2013): perspectives, practices, and products. Perspectives describe "what members of a culture think,

feel, and value" (Frank, 2013, p. 3). It defines what members of a particular culture consider appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Perspectives shape practices which include the traditions and typical behaviors in a culture. How members interact with one another. The way people communicate can differ greatly from one culture to another, not just in terms of language but also what people talk about; their body language or the gestures they use; their use of eye contact; etc.

Products may be easily identified. they are presented in artifacts such as food, clothes, music, literature, etc. Culture is strengthened through its expression. Perspectives, practices and products are reinforced when people really engage in the ways of living of their own culture. A tradition becomes a strong one, only by practicing it for a long time.

Culture is not static, but rather is developed as society evolves from one state to a better and higher condition. The development is not only taking place in the essence and content of culture, but also in the practice and practical way of the behaviors of the people who belong to that society. A culture's perspectives, practices, and products can change over time.

Most anthropologists believe that civilization is nothing but a special kind of culture, or rather, a sophisticated form of culture. Therefore, they never adopted the distinction that sociologists made between culture and civilization. This means that culture guides a person to values, where he exercises choice and expresses himself in the way he desires, and thus identifies

himself and reconsiders his accomplishments and behaviors. Despite this, any culture that does not constitute a closed system, or stereotypes, must be identical to the behavior of all members of society.

Thus it can be said: Culture - in its general framework - is nothing but an abstract concept used in anthropological studies for cultural generalization, and that the necessity of culture to understand events in the human world, and predicting the possibility of their existence or occurrence, is no less important than the need to use the principle to understand the events of the world Natural and predictable.

2.2. Culture and foreign language teaching

There is an undeniable bondage between language and culture. In portraying this interrelationship between the two, Hall (2008) points out that "no two concepts are more intimately linked than language and culture" (p. 45). Language is an aspect of culture because it is predominantly shared and learned by humans as members of a society. In EFL context, learning culture of the target language is a step ahead of effective teaching-learning. Furthermore, for effective communication, cultural awareness is as significant as any other language skill.

If...language is seen as a social practice; culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency.... Culture in language

teaching is not an expendable fifth skill, tracked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. (Kramsh. 1993. P 1)

Lusting and koester (2003) believe that the aim of teaching language is to facilitate people to communicate others of different cultures background. Language teachers must be interested in the study of culture, not for the desire to teach other countries' culture, but for the necessity to teach it. Teaching language without the culture in which it operates, means teaching meaningless symbols. EFL teachers must realize that dealing with life and people exceeds the language to include values, beliefs, social manners which are the embodiment of culture. These aspects of life are missing in EFL classrooms in Algeria.

The lack of consensus on how to introduce cultural elements in the classroom is one of the main challenges a teacher might faces. Many EFL teachers have had no formal training in incorporating cultural elements, and there is no universally accepted set of criteria that instructors can use as a guide (Byrnes 2008). One approach would be to adapt Michael Paige's dimensions of culture learning model (Cited in Cohen et al. 2003). Paige groups culture learning into categories:

- the self as cultural
- the elements of culture
- intercultural phenomena (culture-general learning)

- particular cultures (culture-specific learning)
- acquiring strategies for culture learning

By exploring these dimensions, teachers can help students connect to the target culture, raise their awareness of cultural differences, and improve their "intercultural communicative competence" (Frank, 2013, p 2).

It is crucial for "EFL teachers to be cultural informants as well as language experts. Teachers' professional development plans should include active, ongoing familiarization with the cultures associated with English speakers through individual research and collaboration with peers.

2.3. Culture in EFL textbooks

2.3.1. Textbooks as a material for foreign language teaching:

In order to communicate, people have always resorted to common language because of the absence of a shared mother tongue, and over the past 40 years, there has been a dramatic decline in the use of other languages as English has become increasingly popular (Phillipson, 2010)

The necessity to learn a foreign language goes far beyond learning grammar, syntax and phonetics. Learners need to foster "Global cultural consciousness" (Kumaravadilu, 2008, P. 7). This consciousness allows students to learn the appropriate ways of interaction with new, different cultures.

A variety of materials is used in foreign language teaching. Tomlinson (2012) defines materials as “anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language, including coursebooks, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, Though, much of the literature focuses on printed materials” (p. 143)

A textbook is a published book designed to function as a learning tool and a teaching material. Its main role is to help learners to improve their linguistic and communicative abilities. Textbooks are usually accompanied with other materials such as the teacher’s book/ guide, manuscripts, etc. they occupy a crucial role in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) as most teachers depend on them to save time and financial resources.

The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook. (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p. 315)

According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), textbooks function as “a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner and an ideology”. (p199)

2.3.2. The need for textbooks evaluation

Textbooks have a massive impact on the teaching/learning process. In that sense, the content of the textbook might be so important that it can determine the success or failure of the course. Sheldon (1988) states that there are plenty of reasons for a textbook evaluation. he proposed that the selection of an English language textbook often demonstrates an important administrative and educational decision which involves considerable amount of professional, financial, and even political investment.

According to Ellis (1997), material evaluation could be conducted at three stages:

- Predictive/ pre-use evaluation
- In-use evaluation (which is used in this study)
- Retrospective/ post-used (reflective) evaluation

2.3.3. The Algerian textbooks

The Algerian linguistic background is very rich and complex too. When compared to some African countries, Algeria is far left behind in English speaking ability as French is imposed on Algerians. In fact, learners are not exposed to English until they pass the primary school exam and be admitted to middle schools. In other words, children do not start learning English until the age of 11/12 whereas French is reintroduced into the third grade of primary school after the 2002 national education reform.

The Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic. The lessons from the Algerian situation may be usefully applied to analogous situations by states planning their linguistic, educational and cultural policies. (Tabory &Tabory, p. 63)

The ministry of education launched new reforms four years ago, and education in Algeria witnessed a paradigm shift from teacher to learner centered approach in the official curriculum. These reforms resulted in the embracement of the second-generation approach for middle school years of English study.

This study focuses on the analysis of the 'My Book of English, Middle School Year Four' since it was the latest to be introduced in the series entitled 'My Book of English' intended for middle school learners which was issued in 2019 for learners, aged 14/15 years old, who has already spent three years learning English.

As stated in the 4MS teacher's guide 2019/2020, the book addresses English as the two-way process of communication to tell about oneself, and to know others through their various aspects of life. It is also stated that the learner is the center of the teaching and learning process. The

teacher is merely responsible of refining the learner's prior knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Many Algerian researchers investigated Algerian textbooks. Lakhil ayat (2008) reflected the progress and flaws of the educational system. Merrouche (2006) focused on the presence of cultural information in the textbook. He stated 'culture remains the weakest component of the Algerian FL class due to its uneven treatment in the coursebook, lack of familiarity among teachers, and the techniques needed to teach it and the learner's unawareness of its relevance'

Yacine (2012) highlighted the role of textbooks in encouraging the otherness conceptions by the Algerian English learners. He concluded that 'the Algerian textbooks present an unbalanced and biased cultural contextualization'

It should be noted that these scholars had analyzed different books because of the constant educational reforms.

3. Method and tools

3.1. The sample

The sample used in the present study is the latest book in the 'my book of English series' intended to teach English to middle school students in Algeria. This book was distributed and used for the first time in the academic years of 2019/2020 by the curriculum development center of Algeria. The textbook writers have made efforts to align most of the tasks of the book to international standards in order to prepare learners to international exams when

needed. Teacher's guide and audio recordings are accompanying materials.

Needless to say, the book is designed to include the four major language skills and to develop learners' communicative competence. It comprises three sequences :

- Sequence one: Me, Universal Landmarks and outstanding figures in history, literature and arts.
- Sequence two: Me, my personality and life experience.
- Sequence three: Me, my community and citizenship.

Each sequence contains seven lessons (I listen and do, My pronunciation tools/I pronounce, My grammar tools, I practice, I read and do, I learn to integrate, I think and write, I play and enjoy, I read for pleasure)

In addition to the three term projects and an additional section 'I get ready for my BEM exam' at the end of each sequence, and another one in the last pages of the book which provides the learners with a list of English irregular verbs.

the teacher's guide of book 4 states that the book addresses English as the two-way process of communication: to tell about oneself, and to know others through their various aspects of life.

To answer the question that led this analysis, my book of English (4) was examined, every page was scanned in order to detect those activities in which culture was incorporated

3.2. Instruments

This study aims to identify the variety of categories, topics of culture and their distribution in the in-use EFL textbook for middle school, year 4 (the latest in the introduced series 'my book of English). To this end, descriptive content analysis method is employed. "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorf ,2004, p18)

The content could be themes, ideas, words, pictures and any messages that are planned to be communicated.

3.3. Analysis Procedure:

To answer the questions that led this analysis, each sequence of the book was examined, every single page was scanned. Two coding schemes were employed, there were two rounds of analysis: the entire sections of the book were scrutinized for their inclusion of the different dimensions of culture, then in the second round of the analysis was based on the cultural category. Two coding schemes were used to codify data in this study.

3.3.1. The Five Dimensions of Culture:

Applied to examine the variety of cultural dimensions and its related topics of the target textbook. It was mainly derived from Moran's perspectives (2001) who argues that the triangular concept of culture (products, practices and perspectives, is not complete as these three elements cannot function without people. On that account, he added two more elements: persons and communities, by doing so, he established the five dimensions of culture: *products, practices, perspectives, persons and communities*. After that, he proposed a new

definition of culture as ‘the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared

set of perspectives on the world, and set withing specific social contexts’ (Moran 2001, p24)

TABLE 1: A Brief Summary of the Five Dimensions of Culture (Moran, 2001, p 25)

Dimensions	Examples
Products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Artifacts</i>: food, language, money, tools 2. <i>Places</i>: buildings, cities, houses 3. <i>Institutions</i>: family, law, economy, religion, education, politics 4. <i>Artforms</i>: music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture
Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Operations</i>: manipulation of cultural products 2. <i>Acts</i>: ritualized communicative practices 3. <i>Scenarios</i>: extended communicative practices 4. <i>Lives</i>: stories of members of the culture
Perspectives	They represent the <i>perceptions, beliefs, values</i> and <i>attitudes</i> that underlie the products and guide people’s behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but often they are implicit, outside conscious awareness.
Communities	They include the specific <i>social contexts</i> (e.g. national cultures), <i>circumstances</i> (e.g. religious ceremonies) and <i>groups</i> (e.g. different <i>social clubs</i>) in which members carryout cultural practices.
Persons	They refer to <i>individual members</i> who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. Personal identity and life history play key roles in the development of a cultural person.

3.3.2. The Main Categories of Culture:

It was developed according to the suggestions from scholars promoting the development of intercultural communicative competence. Broadly speaking, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the three categories in which cultural information can be investigated in teaching materials are:

The Source Culture, The Target Culture, and The International Culture

TABLE 2: The Main Categories of Culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999)

Cultural Categories	Explanations
• Source Culture (SC).	(Here) It refers to our culture
• Target Culture (TC).	It includes English-speaking countries
• International Culture (IC).	It includes cultures of all countries in the world

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Cultural Dimensions Presented in My Book of English 4:

Tables: 3,4,5,6,7: The frequency and the percentage of the sub categories of the cultural dimensions:

Subcategories (products)	Frequency	Percentage
Artifacts	4	27.47%
Places	15	
Institutions	1	
Art forms	5	

Table 3.

Subcategories (practices)	Frequency	Percentage
Operations	/	23.07%
Acts	3	
Scenarios	/	
Lives	18	

Table 4.

Subcategory (perspectives)	Frequency	Percentage
Perceptions	3	23.07%
Values	7	
Beliefs	6	
Attitudes	5	

Table 5.

Subcategory (Communities)	Frequency	Percentage
Social contexts	7	8.79%
Circumstances	/	
Groups	1	

Table 6.

Subcategory (Persons)	Frequency	Percentage
Individual Members	18	19.78

Table 7.

Cultural Dimension	Product	Practices	Perceptive	Communities	Persons
Percentages	27.47%	23.07%	23.07%	8.79%	19.78%

Table 8. The percentages of Cultural Dimensions

In order to make reasonable inferences about the data, only one use of each cultural element was taken into account. In other words, the repetition of the cultural elements should be calculated as one since nothing different was expressed with the same cultural element.

The distribution of cultural dimensions in this study reveal that 'my book of English 4' has covered to some extent different aspects of culture (see table 8 for further details). The highest representation of cultural dimensions goes to the dimension of products. The subcategory 'places' occurs 15 times (table3) and makes up more than half the total value. Perspectives and practices show similar results although most topics introduced in the dimension 'practices' reflect mainly 'lives' which has the highest frequency with 18 occurrences which is the same frequency of the dimension Persons (tables 4,5,7). The dimension Communities has the lowest frequency with only 8 occurrences (8.79%).

The results indicate that cultural dimensions addressed in the textbook do not include all cultural issues mentioned in Moran's framework. Products which scored the highest percentage of cultural points mentioned in the book mainly deals with touristic sights and figures. It includes information about top touristic attractions such as Big Ben, the house of parliament, the leaning tower, etc. which are static aspects and do not provide insights about the deep culture. This type of cultural information is unchanged and easily observable.

4.2. Cultural Categories Presented in My Book of English 4:

Content	IC	TC	SC
Reading	21.42% (3)	28.57 (4)	50% (7)
Writing	15% (3)	35% (7)	50% (10)
Listening	41.66% (10)	29.16% (7)	29.16% (7)
Speaking	18.18% (2)	18.10% (2)	63.63% (7)
Pictures	59.37% (19)	25% (8)	15.62% (5)

Table 9: The percentage and frequency of cultural categories

sequence one opens vistas on famous landmarks and outstanding figures, Mostly European ones, such as London's land mark and William Shakespeare (England), the piazza and Leonardo DaVinci (Italy), Topkapi palace and the architect Sinan (Turkey), The Great Mosque of Tlemecen

and Mohamed Dib (Algeria). Plus, the writing task which eager learners to find out about the roman past of Algeria. Sequence two centers around dreams, experiences and memories lived by children from different nationalities (England, India, America, Palestine and Algeria). In addition to that,

the famous writer J.K Rowling and Kateb Yacine are presented. The first shares her experience with writing whereas Kateb Yacine teaches a lesson about the Algerian history, national identity and colonialism.

Sequence three sheds lights on ideals and values such as charity, compassion and the love of study, freedom, justice, citizenship and solidarity.

When analyzing the main cultural categories in reading texts and writing tasks, SC outperformed others with a 50% of the total percentage.

Moreover, it is found that about 63% of the speaking activities in the target textbook were coded as SC with equal percentages 18% of IC and TC. Yet, most of these speaking practices focused on a particular topic rather than thoughtful intercultural comparisons and discussions 41% of listening scripts were coded as IC with equal representation between TC and SC. Similarly, pictures representing IC scored the highest percentage, SC scored the lowest percentage 15%. It is worth mentioning that the distribution of pictures in the text book is uneven. Most pictures appeared in the first sequence representing the most famous touristic attractions and outstanding figures. Only four pictures appeared in the second sequence, and no pictures at all in the last one. There is an obvious bias in favor of the source culture in the distributions of the three main cultural categories throughout the textbook.

4.3. Discussion

According to the results discussed above, the sequences of the target textbook

are found to contain a general content that emphasizes the practices of linguistic knowledge in relation to the theme of each sequence. The most prominent cultural dimensions in the textbook deals with 'products' with specific emphasis on 'places' and 'art forms'. The IC plays key role to present the cultural content through the main listening scripts and pictures; whereas the SC is dominant in the main reading, writing and speaking tasks. The cultural content of the first sequence suggests that the learner is expected to build up an extensive image of universal landmarks and outstanding figures (mainly artists and writers) from Algerian and European countries. Presenting popular places such as touristic areas is important as it grants learners information about the world around us. Moreover, the learner is expected to value travelling as a source of knowledge and to be aware of the importance of landmarks, figures, literature and arts as a vehicle for cultural identity. In relation to English language learning, students find it easier to learn a language through content which they are familiar with and interested in.

The cultural content of the second sequence urges learners to value human experiences and their role in shaping personality. It stresses the role played by national and historical figures in the fight against colonialism. The main input of this sequence aims at raising awareness of the importance of memory in shaping the national identity.

Another dimension in the textbook is that of 'persons' which refers to the individual members who embody the culture. Personal identity and life history play key role in the development of a

cultural person (Moran, 2001). One of the learning objectives as stated in the curriculum is to build learners' character; subsequently, the second sequence includes symbols of struggle that may enable learners to familiarize themselves with their own culture and other cultures, especially in the national history context. Students are bound to find Presenting national heroes and national history interesting because they are familiar with the figures in the stories. The inclusion of national heroes and innovation may build learners' awareness of the importance of taking lessons from them. Students are expected to take these lessons and hold onto them as basic principles in their lives, thus contributing positively to their countries.

The representation of the dimension 'perspectives' was dominant in the third sequence. It aimed to raise awareness of the importance of charity and national solidarity. It also sheds light on the pros and cons of globalization which is considered as a threat to national identity. Presenting various forms of belief and behavior may give students wider perspectives of tolerance. This is aligned with the main aim of the curriculum: developing students with good character and behavior.

The dimension that considered least represented is that of communities (only 8.79%). It is represented through specific social contexts which are related to the national culture.

As mentioned before, the sequences of the textbook comprise a relatively high number of tasks. The focus on the source culture is obviously demonstrated through the text the main input. The authors are deliberately focusing on the source culture

in order to prepare, link learners to their local culture and national identity. The final analysis of the findings revealed that my book of English 4 covered, to some extent, the three categories of culture with an obvious bias to the source culture. It does not include all the dimensions of culture presented by Moran, namely practices and circumstances. It rather focuses on products (places and art forms), perspectives (beliefs, values and attitudes) and persons.

5. CONCLUSION

As pre-mentioned, the current study aimed to investigate how the cultural content is presented in the newly introduced EFL textbook. A content analysis was used based on two coding schemes, the five dimensions of culture and the main categories of culture, to identify the cultural implications of the main tasks in the target textbook.

Overall, the textbook was shown to include a diverse range of topics. It includes some explicit cultural materials, activities, and discussion which may help develop students' cultural knowledge however, there are few, if any, activities which would further develop students' intercultural communication skills. The cultural dimension has been touched throughout the textbook. It appears through the primary tasks related to the reading, listening and writing inputs. It can also be found in the appended sections 'I play & enjoy' and 'I read for pleasure'.

The findings revealed that the target culture (one of the cultural categories) and products (one of the cultural dimensions) play key roles to present the cultural content in the study. A closer examination also

reveals that the listening passages and pictures reflect the international culture IC, mainly the European countries whereas the source culture is dominant in the main reading, writing and speaking tasks.

The dominance of a cultural element in terms of the frequency does not suggest that a textbook raises students' cultural awareness. the incorporation of cultural elements without detailed information can't help learners in obtaining adequate information about that society's culture. It is rational for any textbook to include cultural elements in a comparative way. Despite the adequate number of cultural elements, few detailed information was provided. In other words, the textbook should include culture-specific topics rather than presenting pure facts.

Teachers role, here, is crucial in raising the learners' awareness of the importance of using the English language as a tool to convey their own culture, values and experience; in return, to be able to observe other cultures, values and experience. Teachers must also take into account the learners' young age and limited experience. Learners need to be trained to analyze and compare cultural aspects and values in order to develop their critical thinking.

Comparison tasks are beneficial for learners as they address the cultural differences directly and explicitly. This allows learners to keep in mind specific cultural information which is kind of difficult to achieve when considering the high numbers of tasks.

Although the editors have tried to include other international cultures, they tend to spin

around European cultures. No interest has been put on the introduction of American or Asian countries. Moreover, the obvious inclusion of the source culture would possibly be interpreted as an obvious attempt of the editors to encourage students to feel proud of their culture and belonging. The understanding of one's own culture is crucial. This way, the learner can compare their own culture with that of the target language or international cultures

It is very important to evaluate the content of any textbook especially by the teachers as they have the first and direct contact with pupils in the classroom and can witness their reaction and response to the presented input. The results of such evaluation can cast light on the probable weaknesses. This way teachers can plan in accordance and try to fill in the gap when needed.

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