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ANALYSING THE SECOND EDITION *SPEAKOUT UPPER-INTERMEDIATE* TEXTBOOK FROM AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

KÜLTÜRLER ARASI BİR BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA İKİNCİ SÜRÜM SPEAKOUT *UPPER-INTERMEDIATE* DERS KİTABININ ANALİZİ

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Abstract

As everybody acknowledges, cultural content is an essential element in language teaching nowadays. However, many teachers complain that they find it quite difficult to promote intercultural communicative competence, among other reasons, because the coursebooks that they use with their students do not include appropriate cultural content and activities. This is why this paper attempts to analyse a specific textbook as regards its cultural content, so as to establish whether any shortcomings in this respect are identified. If any shortcomings are revealed, it will be tried to remedy them by suggesting appropriate activities that can be used to promote intercultural competence among the students that use the coursebook. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, first of all this paper analyses the textbook *SpeakOut Upper-intermediate*, second edition from an intercultural point of view to check to what extent it meets Sercu's (1995) criteria in this sense. Afterwards, a number of tasks that could be carried out to improve and exploit this cultural component are presented. These activities may be used for this purpose by those teachers using this coursebook or by those who might decide to use it in the future. It may also serve as the basis to complement any textbook that they are using with their students.

Key Words: Acquisition, analysis, coursebook, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural competence.

Özet

Herkesin bildiği gibi, kültürel içerik günümüzde dil öğretiminde önemli bir unsurdur. Bununla birlikte, birçok öğretmen kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetkinliği teşvik etmeyi oldukça zor bulduklarından şikâyet etmektedir, çünkü birçok neden arasında, öğrencileriyle birlikte kullandıkları ders kitapları uygun kültürel içerik ve aktiviteleri içermemektedir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, belirli bir ders kitabını kültürel içeriğiyle ilgili olarak analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır, böylece bu konuda herhangi bir eksikliğin tespit edilip edilmediğini betimlemektedir. Herhangi bir eksiklik ortaya çıkarsa, ders kitabını kullanan öğrenciler arasında kültürlerarası yetkinliği arttırmak için kullanılabilecek uygun aktiviteler önerilerek düzeltilmeye çalışılacaktır. Bu nedenle, bu hedefe ulaşmak için bu çalışma öncelikle ikinci sürüm *SpeakOut Upper-Intermediate* ders kitabının Sercu'nun (1995) kriterlerini ne ölçüde karşıladığını irdeleyip kültürlerarası bir bakış açısıyla analiz eder. Daha sonra bu kültürel bileşeni iyileştirmek ve kullanmak için gerçekleştirilebilecek bir dizi görev sunulmaktadır. Bu amaçla, bu aktiviteler bu ders kitabını kullanan öğretmenler veya ileride kullanmaya karar verebilecek olanlar tarafından kullanılabilir. Bu aktiviteler aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin kullandıkları kitaplara bütünleyici bir temel olarak hizmet edebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edinim, analiz, ders kitabı, kültürler arası iletişim becerisi.

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1. Introduction

For a long time many authors have acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture (e.g. Dewi, 2019; Kim & Paek, 2015; Teo & Kaewsakul, 2016; Ulum & Bada, 2016; Weninger & Kiss, 2013, etc.). As a result, a new kind of competence, namely, intercultural communicative competence (ICC), has acquired such relevance that it has been considered necessary to be promoted so as to be able to communicate effectively in the global world. While this is true in the case of all languages, it is particularly important as regards English due to its current status of international language or *lingua franca*. Promoting ICC will "avoid misunderstandings between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (Teo & Kaewsakul, 2016, p. 2).

Therefore, education authorities and especially teachers, have the duty to prepare students to communicate effectively by equipping them with the necessary linguistic skills and strategies, as well as with the appropriate cultural knowledge and ICC (Teo & Kaewsakul, 2016, p. 2). As these authors also point out, many agents are involved in the teaching process, namely, teachers, students and teaching materials. Within teaching materials, coursebooks play a paramount role in any language class as regards both language and cultural content (Cunningsworth, 1995). Concerning textbooks in language teaching, Dewi (2019, p. 89) identifies two main types. First of all, those that are internationally or globally produced, which are used in any country. Secondly, those ones which are produced locally, i.e., in the country where they are used.

Consequently, the analysis of textbooks in terms of the cultural content that they include is becoming more and more necessary. As a result, several authors such as Chen, 2010, Chen, 2011, Wu, 2010, Xiao, 2010, etc. have become particularly interested in this sort of analysis in English Language Teaching (ELT). According to Nuñez-Pardo (2018), the interest in the analysis of coursebooks as a research avenue started in Europe. This author adds that these research studies have mainly focused on how racism, sexism, cultural representations and dominant ideologies were presented in the textbooks analysed.

1.1. Different criteria to analyse the cultural content of textbooks

Once the importance of teaching culture as part of students' learning process has been established, when it comes to deciding what culture to include in ELT coursebooks, there seems to be some disagreement on this issue. As Dewi (2019, p. 89) highlights, some authors advocate just focusing on the target language culture. However, other authors such as McKay (2012) support the inclusion of cultural contents from both English-speaking countries and any other country.

Those authors who have decided to analyse the cultural content that some of the coursebooks used in different countries include have done so by focusing on different criteria. For instance, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) classify the cultural content that is included in textbooks as target culture, source culture and international culture. Target culture refers to that typical of English-speaking countries, e.g. the UK, the USA, Ireland, Canada, etc.; source culture as that of the students' own country and international culture as that which is common to many countries all over the world, both English- and non-English-speaking countries.

Another common classification is that of big 'C' culture and small 'c' culture. The former refers to the arts, history, education, business, festivals, etc., of a country, which according to Lee (2009) are quite noticeable and easy to learn by students. The latter refers to "the way of life, daily living, socio-culture values, norms and beliefs, way of thinking, behaviour, etc." (Teo & Kaewsakul, 2016, p. 4). On his part, Yuen (2011) focused on four aspects in his analysis of foreign culture in English textbooks, namely, products, practices, perspectives and people. Yassine (2012) identified five different types of cultures in her analysis of three textbooks, namely, national or local, target or foreign, global or international, from other English-speaking countries, and western or European. Nuñez-Pardo (2018) states that some researchers have analysed how authentic the cultural components or contents included in textbooks were.

Despite the different criteria employed to analyse culture, experts seem to agree that the key concepts are similar in all cases (Dewi, 2019, p. 91).

1.2. Examples of previous analyses of the cultural content of textbooks

As Ulum and Bada (2016), as well as Liu (2016), highlight several research studies have been conducted over the last few years to analyse to what extent specific textbooks contain cultural contents. Just as an example, a few of them may be mentioned: Aliakbari (2004), Chen (2010), Liu and Laohawiriyanon (2013), Sadeghi and Sepahi (2018), Xiao (2010), Wu (2010), etc.

Weniger and Kiss (2013) remark that many research studies have analysed culture in ELT textbooks. According to these authors, the interest in this field of research reached its peak in the 1990s, when the debate was whether target or source culture should be taught in ELT textbooks. As these authors also highlight, recently there has been resurgence in the interest in analysing textbooks from a cultural point of view, particularly in several Asian countries, as the above- mentioned examples prove.

Similarly to Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Byram (2008, 2011), Weniger and Kiss (2013, p. 695) also believe that rather than target culture, 'global cultural consciousness' and 'intercultural citizenship' should be fostered for effective language learning. As a matter of fact, these authors manifest that "not only should students acquire intercultural communicative competence, but they should also need to learn to be politically conscious citizens of a modern society" (p. 698).

1.3. Results of the analyses of the cultural content of textbooks

There seems to be widespread agreement that most coursebooks mainly include target culture, some international culture and very little source culture or none at all (e.g. Dewi, 2019; Lario & Vázquez, 2013; Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013; Nuñez-Pardo, 2018; Sándorová, 2014; Xiao, 2010, Yassine, 2012, etc.). However, in some cases there seems to be a balanced distribution of the three types of culture, with a slightly higher emphasis on international culture (Teo & Kaewsakul, 2016, p. 9). In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Liu and Laohawiriyanon (2012) unveiled that over 50% of the cultural content included in the textbooks that they analysed was classified as unidentifiable culture source.

Regarding Lee's (2009) classification of big 'C' and small 'c' culture in Teo and Kaewsakul's (2016) analysis, there seems to be a preference for the former in the textbooks that they analysed.

Specifically referring to ELT coursebooks, Nuñez-Pardo (2018) argues that they "are not neutral as they [do] not only depict and reproduce values, behaviours, cultural patterns, traditions and dominant ideologies, but they also reinforce stereotypes and support the idea that one nationality is superior to others" (p. 232).

As regards sexism, several authors such as Dabbahg (2016), Datzman (2013), Hall (2014), Kim (2012), Lee (2014), Nofall and Qawar (2015), Pereira (2013), Syarifuddin (2014), Van Craeynest (2015), etc. conclude that sexism continues to prevail in many coursebooks through stereotypes. Similarly, Melliti (2013) came to the conclusion that female characters appear less frequently than male ones in the textbook that he analysed. He also adds that when they did appear, they were presented as women from western countries.

As for what culture seems to be considered superior, Guijarro (2005) agrees with Cunningsworth (1995) that western cultures are regarded as superior to others, "and are taken as the natural and legitimate scenarios for teaching English" (Nuñez-Pardo, 2018, p. 236). In a similar vein, Kim and Paek (2015) state that some researchers revealed that the coursebooks that they analysed focused on white characters from a western origin. They also presented fragmented information on aspects such as food, festivals, clothes, etc., which seemed to reinforce the supremacy of target or international culture. Similarly, Yassine (2012) highlights that in the three books that she analysed, international culture was mainly associated with western or European countries. However, some authors such as McKay (2012) recommend including source culture in coursebooks as well so as to strike some kind of balance, especially between target and source culture.

Teo and Kaewsakul (2016, p. 8) remarked that in their research study, whenever target culture was included, British cultural content was preferred to that of other English-speaking countries such as the USA or Ireland, both in the student's and teacher's book. However, it is worth mentioning that these authors highlight that in the textbooks that they analysed, the speaking and writing activities ask students to refer to their own culture.

Sándorová (2014) remarks that textbooks do not include appropriate cultural content, which has obliged teachers to complement them in this respect. In this regard, Teo and Kaewsakul (2016, p. 15), as well as Liu (2016), hold that research studies analysing the cultural content of coursebooks are a good way of raising teachers' awareness concerning the importance of the inclusion of cultural contents in their classes and of developing their students' ICC.

1.4. Description of the textbook *SpeakOut Upper-intermediate, Second edition*

This paper presents the analysis of the textbook *SpeakOut Upper-intermediate, Second edition* published by Pearson in 2015, whose authors are Frances Eales and Steve Oakes. All the units that the textbook is made up of – 10 units altogether – have a similar structure, which is the following:

First part. It focuses on vocabulary, speaking and either listening or reading, which introduces the grammatical point that will be dealt with in this section. There is also a writing section in this part of the unit.

Second part. It includes vocabulary, pronunciation awareness exercises, speaking, and either reading or listening, which presents the grammatical point that will be dealt with in this section. In this part there is a special focus on vocabulary, which is expanded on by referring students to the section *Vocabulary Bank* at the end of the book.

Third part. It deals with vocabulary once again, and the emphasis is specially placed on different functions. These are later put into practice through a flow chart exercise which requires students to write out a conversation based on the function that has been worked on. Speaking has also an important role in this section.

Fourth part. It is centred on an extract from a BBC documentary. The section contains a short text – normally a paragraph – which serves as an introduction to the documentary which is used as the basis for this part of the unit. After the documentary, there is a listening exercise, which is usually based on the topic of the documentary. This listening exercise focuses on the key phrases that are useful to carry out an oral activity similar to the content of the listening. Finally, this section includes a writing exercise which is somehow related to the topic of the documentary.

Fifth part or *Lookback*. It includes revision exercises of the contents dealt with in the unit.

As well as this, and as mentioned above, there is a vocabulary section, called *Vocabulary Bank*, at the end of the book. This is usually divided into two parts, and it includes photographs or pictures to help understand or learn the vocabulary items presented in each unit. Along with this section, there is a grammar reference, known as *Language Bank*, communicative activities, called *Communication Bank*, as well as the transcript of the listening exercises, named *Audio scripts*.

Apart from this, each unit comes with a video listening exercise based on street interviews, called *BBC interviews* where people are usually asked three questions related to the topic of the unit. These interviews were held in the streets of London, and more specifically in the city centre, and several people – normally between 7 and 8 – are asked some questions related to the topic of the unit. It must be mentioned that not all the interviewees are asked all the questions, but most of them are. The interviews begin with a short introduction so as to let us know what the main topic of the interviews is. Then, there are different kinds of exercises for each of the questions (gap filling, true or false, who said what, etc.), and the last exercise focuses on the language used by the people interviewed, rather than on the content of their answers.

Throughout each unit there are several photographs and/or pictures, which are in colour in most of the cases. As a matter of fact, the first page of each unit includes the title of the unit on a large photograph which is related to the topic of the unit. At the bottom of the page there are four smaller photographs illustrating each part of the unit, and the title of each section comes as the caption for each photograph, together with the page number where it

begins. Besides, in the right-hand side corner there is a photograph of a hand holding out a microphone to present the *BBC Interviews* section of the unit, together with its title.

The promotional booklet of the method, specifically states that "Speakout 2nd edition offers engaging content using authentic BBC material to really bring topics to life and motivate students to learn. [...] Authenticity is important to learners, and many texts come from the BBC's rich resources (audio, visual and print) as well as other real-world sources" (p. 8).

The contents of each unit, together with the specific BBC documentary video clip and the topic of the BBC interviews for each unit, are presented in Table 1:

Table 1.
Title of the units and video activities that come with them

	Title	**BBC Documentary**	**BBC Interviews**
Unit 1	New things	50 Things to do before you die	What makes a good flatmate?
Unit 2	Issues	A quiet revolution	Does money make you happy?
Unit 3	Stories	Tess of the D'Urbervilles	What was the last book you read?
Unit 4	Downtime	The Happiness Formula	What's the perfect way to switch off?
Unit 5	Ideas	Genius	If you could start a business, what would it be?
Unit 6	Age	Horizon: How to live to 101	What was the best period of your life?
Unit 7	Media	The funny side of the news	What kind of news stories interest you?
Unit 8	Behaviour	The human animal	What kind of behaviour gets on your nerves?
Unit 9	Trouble	Horizon: How to survive a sea disaster	Do you have any phobias?
Unit 10	Culture	The Culture Show: The People's Palace	What areas of the Arts do you enjoy?

2. Methodology

Throughout the years several frameworks, criteria and checklists have been developed in order to analyse the cultural content to be found in textbooks, e.g., Cortazzi and Jin (1999), Crystal (2003) and Lee (2009). Many authors have either employed these frameworks or criteria, adapted them or developed their own focusing on the aspect that they wanted to investigate.

As Sándorová (2014, p. 95) notes, one of the most common research methods employed in the analysis of the cultural content that comes in textbooks is content analysis, e.g. Ajideh and Panahi (2016); Kim (2012); Kim and Paek (2015); Wu (2010), etc. Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010) explain that this research method "focuses on analyzing and

interpreting recorded material to learn about human behavior. The material may be public records, textbooks, letters, films, tapes, diaries, themes, reports, or other documents" (p. 30).

Similarly to Teo and Kaewsakul's (2016) research study, the analysis presented in this paper focuses on the different kinds of activities and exercises, i.e., it is another example of content analysis. It especially focuses on reading and listening exercises and activities, as well as the photographs and pictures included in the student's book, together with the extra material to be found on the ActiveTeach application that comes with the selected method for analysis, especially the BBC Interviews. Ajideh and Panahi's (2016) research study also considered the visual elements of the coursebooks for their analysis. However, Weninger and Kiss (2013) believe that they should be analysed in conjunction with the exercises included in the textbooks to explore the potential that these activities may realise as regards ICC.

In the present analysis, just as in Teo and Kaewsakul's (2016) research study, the parts which contained cultural content were later categorised basically as target or international culture, as no source culture was found, since the authors did not aim at any specific country where the textbook was supposed to be used.

As regards the technique employed, namely, quantitative or qualitative, in the case of Dewi (2019), the design in her analysis is mostly descriptive, and it is "qualitative research that tried to describe the cultural content of the textbook" (p. 92). Besides, in some cases it has also added a quantitative element. Weninger and Kiss (2013, p. 699) highlight that most studies employ quantitative rather that qualitative techniques. To collect the data, many authors use checklists. However, according to Sándorová (2014), "high quality studies combine both qualitative and quantitative analysis of texts and mixing methods is generally acknowledged as an effective way to ensure the trustworthiness of the research in terms of validity and reliability" (p. 96). As this author also states, the combination of both techniques is an effective way of triangulation, which will ensure the study's reliability. In a similar vein, Mineshima (2008) illustrates how both techniques may be used to analyse the same aspect. For example, he used a quantitative technique to establish the number of male and female characters in the whole coursebook as well as in each unit, whereas he employed a qualitative method to describe the general picture of how gender is represented in the coursebook he analysed. This has sometimes been done in the analysis of the textbook selected for this paper too.

The analysis presented in this paper is similar to Dewi's (2019) as regards the kind of methodology employed and the technique for data collection. As already mentioned, there are several criteria when it comes to analysing coursebooks. In order to analyse the textbook selected, Sercu's (1995) criteria for a cultural analysis, i.e., representativeness and realism, the characters in the book, the language and the pupil, were taken into consideration. At the same time, the different types of culture that may be found in the coursebook have been differentiated. Sercu's (1995) criteria have been selected because they seem to examine relevant elements concerning the analysis of cultural content, and also because it is important to limit the number of criteria used to manageable proportions (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 2). Otherwise, one may be overwhelmed by too many data. As Sándorová (2014) points out, most studies tend to focus on one or two criteria as regards cultural content in ELT textbooks.

Before starting the detailed analysis, it is worth mentioning that most of the cultural elements in the textbook are to be found in the last section of the unit centred on the BBC documentary and sometimes also in the BBC interviews.

3.   Analysis of the textbook from an intercultural point of view

As already mentioned, there are several criteria when it comes to analysing coursebooks. In order to analyse the textbook selected, Sercu's (1995) criteria for a cultural analysis, i.e., representativeness and realism, the characters in the book, the language and the pupil, were taken into consideration, as well as the different types of culture that may be found in the coursebook. Even though all the four criteria are equally important, it is the first criterion that occupies the longest part of the analysis, as it tries to illustrate whether the textbook selected presents a representative and realistic view of the world. As can be easily inferred, it mainly focuses on the type of culture it intends to present, mostly, target or international culture.

Just like Teo and Kaewsakul (2016), in order to identify the kind of culture as regards the first criterion, apart from the actual name of the countries, words related to countries such as the names of cities, nationalities, the currencies of specific countries, the names of TV or radio programmes, typical musical instruments, etc. have been taken as reference. However, unlike these authors who differentiated between 'international culture' when the cultural content belonged to more than one country at the same time, and 'unidentified source of culture' when the specific source of culture could not be found, in the analysis of the textbook selected for this paper international culture is used to refer to either case.

The description of the second criterion, namely, characters, is also rather long, which is in accordance with many other research studies already mentioned. As has already been mentioned, the way characters are presented, and particularly if this is done in a stereotyped way, has concerned many authors.

3.1.   First criterion. Representativeness and Realism

As regards this criterion, it must be said that currently most ELT methods aim to present an international image as they want to promote the use of English as a *lingua franca* or international language. This means that they attempt to be as objective as possible in the sense that they try not to show any cultural elements associated with a specific country, but they prefer to present images and values which could be identified with any country in the world. They do so by focusing on aspects that may be found in most countries or that have become habitual in most places due to globalisation. Consequently, they tend to include international culture as much as possible.

Having said that, and as stated above, the textbook selected is greatly influenced by the BBC, as part of its contents are taken from it, which in cultural terms means that British culture, i.e., target culture, has a significant presence in the method, despite its efforts to incorporate international cultural elements in the same way as its rivals do.

The textbook presents a realistic and current view of what is going on in the world, and particularly in the western world. As matter of fact, many of the texts used for reading

comprehension exercises or that serve as the basis for listening comprehension exercises are based on true stories. However, this is neither indicated in the student's nor in the teacher's book, which is a pitfall of the method from an intercultural point of view. If this fact were stated, and some background information were provided, it could be used so as to promote and improve intercultural awareness.

Even though the method tries to present a global image, it is true that both a British and American emphasis stand out. This can be clearly seen throughout each part of every unit, with amounts expressed both in sterling pounds and in American dollars, and through some photographs of elements which are typically and easily identified as British. For example, a typical litter bin to be found in any British street, police officers wearing yellow raincoats, a grandmother and her granddaughter doing some gardening in a typical British garden, etc. Apart from this, one listening exercise is based on the British TV series *Fawlty Towers*, which was quite popular in the UK in the 1970s, and which since then has been identified as part of British culture. There is also one exercise devoted to common sayings or proverbs in English, which are part of people's cultural heritage. Some popular radio programmes, which are still broadcast, are mentioned in the textbook, mainly in the listening comprehension exercises. There is also a short text about the Oyster Card, which is really useful when getting around in London. Furthermore, body language in Britain is also slightly introduced in a short text.

As well as this, one of the BBC documentaries is an extract from the BBC docudrama *Tess of D'Urbervilles*, based on the novel of the same name by Thomas Hardy, who is a remarkable example of a British Romantic novelist. In this specific section, there is a large photograph that spreads into both pages of the section, which shows a typical English farm with the farmhouse, the fences, the trees, sheep, etc. Other documentaries centre on popular British TV programmes such as *Genius*, *Top Gear*, *Horizon*, *The Culture Show*, etc.

As already mentioned, some texts make a reference to some BBC Radio 4's programmes, such as *Today*, *You and Yours*, which are still broadcast, and which, therefore, reflect an important part of British culture. Another reference to a specific British element is the Longitude Prize. However, it is only mentioned and no background information about this competition is provided.

Apart from this clear preponderance of references to British culture throughout the method, there are two photographs of a music festival in Dublin where typical elements of Irish culture are portrayed. However, they are not exploited from an intercultural point of view, and they are not even mentioned, namely, the typical Irish dance *Ceili*, and a specifically Irish musical instrument like the *bodhran*.

However, despite the predominance of references to British and American cultural elements, more international ones may be found in the textbook. For example, there are references to amounts in euros; some stories are set in Europe, Canada, Australia, in Asian settings, etc. However, sometimes it is not possible to establish the location of the place being shown in the photographs, which would correspond to Liu and Laohawiriyanon's (2013) unidentifiable culture source. Apart from this, well-known international figures such as Cervantes, Jocelyn Lavin, Nadia Comaneci, Gabriel García Márquez, etc. appear in the method. It is curious that the first time that the title of García Márquez's novel *Cien años de*

soledad is mentioned, it is written in Spanish rather than in English, as opposed to what happens later. Sometimes, there are photographs which are more typically associated with eastern rather than with western cultures, as opposed to what it is revealed in other research studies such as Yassine's (2012). For example, there is a photograph which depicts two yurts, another one of two oriental businessmen bowing, a photograph of a Japanese woman leaning on a window sill, etc. One text also includes a photograph of a barefoot black young man smiling while walking with his bicycle full of bananas along a sand track.

As happens with other methods, whenever possible the photographs are deprived of any clues which could help identify or associate them with a particular country or culture, namely, Liu and Laohawiriyanon's (2013) unidentifiable culture source or simply international culture. For example, there is a photograph of an airport which could be anywhere in the world. The same happens with the photographs about natural disasters. They could have been taken in any country, rather than in Britain or the USA. There are also photographs of a disco, holiday resorts, sunsets, crime scenes, etc., which could have been taken in any country.

Apart from the photographs, this international dimension is tried to be portrayed in different ways. For example, the quizzes in the textbook are not focused on any specific country. Another instance is a section which resembles the online comments about an article posted on a website, where the authors are based in different countries like Australia, Poland, the USA, Germany, etc. This is a clear reflection of what can be easily found nowadays on any website where people from different countries post their comments as the internet is not spatially limited. Sometimes, this international perspective is achieved by referring to an international organisation or institution such as the World Health Organisation (WHO). In a covert way, this may also be perceived through the adaptation of TV programmes which were originally developed in other countries, but were later broadcast in the UK adapting them to British peculiarities or to what a British audience would prefer as regards these kinds of programmes. Once again, this reflects something which is terribly common in any country in the world, not just in the UK.

It is also important to mention that most texts or activities are illustrated by photographs related to the topic dealt with in the text. Some pictures are also found in the textbook, but mainly for the vocabulary sections, usually to illustrate the meaning of the items or phrases being dealt with. Almost all the photographs and pictures are in colour. The only ones in black and white or in a brown background try to depict past events or represent moments or elements of earlier times.

The textbook also includes some historical perspectives through extracts of British TV programmes, typical photographs of earlier moments, historical events such as the sinking of the ferry Estonia. However, they are not used to explain specific features of the British character or way of thinking, as the method attempts to portray an international scope rather than a British one.

In unit 3, the unit devoted to stories and literature, the books shown in the photograph are real novels, by North American writers. Specifically one of them is an Afghan-American novelist. Some international magazines such as the Spanish one *¡Hola!*

also appear, with its title in Spanish and with an opening and closing exclamation mark. As regards the section devoted to films in unit 10, reference is made to three American films.

The Street interviews are all held in the streets of London, more specifically in the city centre, and real people are shown. A reflection of this is that the last part of this section is about the language that these people use in their answers, once the content has previously been dealt with.

Some photographs represent a touristic point of view. However, quite often it is very difficult to associate them with a particular place. Most of them seem to have been taken in the Caribbean or holiday resorts, and typical elements expected to be found in these places are shown, for example palm trees, parasols, outdoor terraces, a swimming pool, etc.

Even though the textbook deals with a wide range of topics, it tends to focus on current ones, and it mainly focuses on the 21st century, which means that most of the photographs are similar to the ones to be found in any current newspaper, magazine, website, TV programme, online forum, etc. Even in those cases where genuine elements are not shown, e.g. the exercise presenting the parts of a news website, the authors try to include one resembling a real one. A curious topic is the reference to the website *futureme* (https://www.futureme.org/), which reflects a trend that is becoming popular with some people – writing a letter to yourself that will be emailed to you in a few years' time so that you can compare your expectations as to what you thought your life would be like by the time you receive it with what it is actually like.

3.2.   Second criterion. Characters

As regards the characters, the first thing that has to be said in this respect is that unlike former textbooks, it does not include a set of characters who are seen throughout the textbook as if you were learning about their lives. It presents different characters who are somehow related to the topic in hand in each case.

It attempts to show a balance between male and female characters depicted in the photographs. It is true that in some photographs there are more men than women, or the other way round, but on the whole, there is a balance between them. This can be clearly seen in the introductory part of the BBC interviews. There are ten altogether and five of them are presented by a man, whereas the rest are presented by a woman. As for the people interviewed, there are more women than men. However, this does not necessarily mean that it was the authors' intention to be in this way. It must be taken into account that not everybody likes being interviewed, and especially filmed. Therefore, this fact may have been a coincidence in the sense that more women than men were willing to be interviewed and filmed while answering the questions.

Another remarkable aspect as regards this criterion is that in some photographs it is not known whether the person shown is a man or a woman, for example, because they are wearing some special equipment, e.g. a firefighter, or a hood; because they are seen from behind; because the photograph has been taken at a distance or at dusk time.

Apart from this, unlike what other research studies have revealed, the photographs do not usually show stereotypical aspects related to age or gender, although sometimes they do.

For example, male teenagers playing videogames, more men than women when talking about sport, a young girl whose hair and eyebrows are dyed in purple and has a piercing, etc. However, just the opposite to what could be expected is shown in some photographs. For instance, an elderly woman wearing a bright red leather jacket while riding a motorbike; a man undergoing cosmetic surgery; a house husband taking care of his children because he has decided to work part time so as to take care of his offspring; a woman painting graffiti on a canvas. Rather than considering this something unusual, they might be regarded as a reflection of the changes that are taking place as regards gender roles and stereotypes in modern western societies.

As regards their age, even though all age groups are shown, there seems to be a preference for people in their twenties, thirties and forties in the different parts or sections of each unit, and even in the case of the BBC interviews. Once again, in this latter case, the reason for it might not be that it was the authors' intention to be like this, but the outcome of asking people who did not mind being filmed while responding to the questions of the interviews.

As for their race, white people seem to be predominant, but sometimes black people and Asian people are shown in the photographs, but they tend to be in a minority. Therefore, this seems to be in accordance with what Cunningsworth (1995), Guijarro (2005) as well as Kim and Paek (2015) say about the supposed supremacy of western cultures. This is particularly curious in the case of the BBC interviews, which are held in such a cosmopolitan city as London. About 80% of the people interviewed are white, and only a few of them are black or of an Asian or Arabic origin. Once again, the reason for this might be that some of the people asked to be interviewed were reluctant to do so, and the majority of the ones that agreed to it were white. It is worth mentioning that some of the black or Asian people depicted are shown in their natural environment.

Most of the people shown in the photographs are ordinary people, but in some cases celebrities are shown, for example, in the text about famous people who succeeded early or late in life, or about specific TV programmes, or a famous person like Maya Angelou. In other photographs, models pretending to be celebrities are shown, which might be considered a strategy aimed at giving the textbook an international dimension as regards the characters shown.

Finally, the characters in the textbook are shown in different moods, which seems to support the idea that the authors intend to present the real world where people are happy or sad, depending on many factors. They do not want to present an idealised or clichéd world where everything is always either good or bad. Nice photographs of holiday resorts are found, but also of the 2005 London's terrorist attack, people being rescued from accidents or disasters, etc.

3.3.   Third criterion. Language

As far as the language used in the coursebook is concerned, there is no evident connotation, neither positive nor negative. Generally speaking, the language in the textbook should be regarded as neutral or objective. Once more, this may be due to the intention of

presenting the book as suitable to be used in order to teach English as a *lingua franca*. It is worth mentioning that when referring to the writer and artist Maya Angelou, the term African-American rather than black is used. This is a clear reflection of what is becoming more and more common nowadays when referring to people who are not from a Caucasian origin, i.e., to make reference to their historical origin rather than focusing on their complexion.

Having said that, it must be mentioned that there are some texts or exercises that mainly focus on nouns and adjectives which convey an obvious positive or negative connotation. However, they are not associated with a specific race, gender, age group, etc., but are presented in the context of introducing common or useful vocabulary to be used in different situations or contexts, rather than being connotationally marked.

3.4.   Fourth criterion. Pupil

As already mentioned above, the textbook includes quite a good deal of intercultural content, but does not make it obvious to anyone. It seems that, as the authors state in the promotional booklet of the method, their desire is to include authentic material from different sources, which is quite often accompanied by cultural elements which tend to be ignored or neglected in the method.

The cultural elements are presented in such a covert way that they do not even seem to be cultural content. Throughout the coursebook, there are no questions of the type "What do you know about...?", which typically refer to cultural content. The only case that can be considered somehow belonging to this type of questions can be found in the text about body language in Britain. After reading the text, students are asked to write some advice to give foreigners coming to their countries so as to avoid a cultural shock in everyday situations such as paying when going out, greeting, saying goodbye, tipping, using names, etc.

There are several questions of the type "What do you think that ...?", but they are the typical question of warm-up activities before listening and reading comprehension exercises, so as to activate vocabulary related to the topic, or to put students in the right mood for the activity. However, they do not refer to any of the many cultural elements that have been pointed out when referring to the other three criteria. Once again, the reason for this might be that cultural elements are not deemed important when trying to teach English as a *lingua franca*.

4. Examples of tasks that could be used to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence when using the selected textbook

As the textbook incorporates many cultural components, mostly focusing on target culture, and especially on the UK and to a lesser extent on the USA, this section will outline some activities that may be used by teachers as an aid. Firstly, they can be employed as a way to raise awareness of the cultural elements present in the text, and then as the framework or template for the kind of activities they can do with their students so as to promote and develop ICC. It is worth mentioning that these activities, as well as developing their intercultural competence, will also develop their digital competence, as they require students to look for information online.

a) Activity based on the Longitude Prize (Unit 2)

Students will be provided with these reference websites and a video clip from YouTube so as to learn about the prize once they have done the speaking activity in the book. They are supposed to go through them on their own:

https://longitudeprize.org/

https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/longitude-prize/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrSHCwLfpdo

When they are familiar with the project and its aim, they are expected to find out whether there are any other projects or prizes in the UK that have a similar goal, namely, to prevent a problem in the future that can be already be foreseen at present. As well as this, they should do the same about their own country so as to compare the attitude in both countries as regards these kinds of problems that have to be tackled, as well as reflecting on the views of the investment in research as a way of prevention in different countries.

b) Activity based on the quiet revolution – a change of traditional gender roles (Unit 2)

Once they have seen the documentary and done the activities related to it, they should check out the following links:

https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/jan/22/fatherhood-penalty-balance-work-family-life-millennial-men

https://dadbloguk.com/

Once they have done so, they are expected to search for information so as to establish whether a similar situation is taking place in their countries and find both differences and similarities as regards this issue between the UK and their country.

c) Activity based on the text *It pays to be honest* (Unit 3)

After reading the text in the book, students are provided with this link about a similar story, but set in a different context:

https://www.dawn.com/news/1365091

Students would be expected to find other stories in their own countries or any others so as to establish whether honesty might be considered a universal value, or it is just restricted to specific cultures and/or countries.

d) Activity based on the text about Maya Angelou (Unit 3)

After reading the text, students will be provided with the following link so as to learn a little bit more about this woman:

http://time.com/5226045/dr-maya-angelous-90th-birthday/

Once they have done so, they are supposed to search for people in their countries who might be considered similar to this woman, and to establish whether they have been valued in their lifetimes or not, and if they have, in what way.

e) Activity based on *Fawlty Towers* (Unit 3)

After doing the listening activity in the coursebook, students are shown these video clips from YouTube where they meet the two main male characters in the TV series and the female character that is mentioned in the listening exercise:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-oH-TELcLE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcliR8kAbzc

After doing the listening activity, they are provided with this link from the BBC so that they can learn more about the TV series:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006xxvg

Then, students are expected to research the influence that this TV series has had on British culture and society, and whether any idioms or expressions in English come from it. Similarly, they are supposed to find a series or programme in their countries that has had a similar role in their culture and/or language.

f) Activity based on *Total Wipeout* (Unit 4)

Students are provided with the link to two video clips from YouTube so as to learn what the programme is about:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUFEEEtiDRw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNga1WYJe18

Then, they are supposed to find a similar kind of programme in their countries that has had a similar impact.

g) Activity based on the *Happiness Formula* (Unit 4)

Students are provided with these two links from the BBC and a playlist from YouTube so that they know what the programme is like:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/happiness_formula/default.stm

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvdZ9GzN8uoONOf6dPW2WoNhPvvRn2y3b

Then, they are supposed to find out whether there is a similar programme in their country, or in any other country, and if so, in what way they are similar or different.

h) Activity based on the Key ingredient to happiness (Unit 4)

Students are provided with these two links about what ingredients are considered to be the most important ones so as to achieve happiness:

https://addicted2success.com/life/the-10-key-ingredients-to-happiness/

https://exploringyourmind.com/7-ingredients-of-happiness/

Then, students are asked to find out the key ingredients to happiness in their countries and compare them with the ones shown on the previous links.

i) Activity based on the radio programme *You and yours* (Unit 5)

Students are provided with this link from the BBC so as to learn what the programme is about:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qps9

Then, they have to find out whether there is a similar kind of programme in their country, as well as state how consumers may defend their rights in their countries.

j) Activity based on the listening exercise about Yummy utensils (Unit 5)

Students watch this video clip from YouTube so as to understand what the idea of these utensils is about:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOis7WbWOyE

Then, they have to find out how important recycling is in their countries and what measures have been taken so as to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in their countries as regards everyday items such as disposable utensils, which is what the activity in the textbook is about.

k) Activity based on traditional Irish music and *Céili* dancing (Unit 6)

Students are provided with these links and videos clips from YouTube so as to learn the most important facts about them, typical Irish instruments, etc.:

https://www.thoughtco.com/irish-music-basics-3552968

https://www.claddaghdesign.com/ireland/traditional-irish-music-whats-it-all-about/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aw2JDrfbwgI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKCHgwzMjhw

Then, they are expected to find out about the typical music and dances in their countries, gathering as much information as possible about these issues. For example, typical musical instruments, popularity with different age groups, occasions when they are performed, etc.

l) Activity based on the TV programme *Horizon: How to Live to 101* (Unit 6)

After watching the documentary, students are provided with the link to this file where the Australian authorities try to take advantage of the knowledge and experience of older workers so that younger ones could benefit from their knowledge and experience:

http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/2985/1/Valuing%20and%20Keeping%20Older%20Workers_%202010.pdf

Then, students should research into how older workers and retired workers are seen in their countries and if they contribute somehow to the growth of their country's economy.

m) Activity based on the text *Unlikely global success* (Unit 7)

Students watch the video clip and playlists from YouTube about the following TV programmes:

The Office: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMGuTy7jNMY

Strictly come dancing: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0-p7mK8hRVvV86yREq342A

Top gear: https://www.youtube.com/topgear

Then, they are asked to find out whether these programmes are or have been broadcast in their countries. If so, they have to establish whether they are similar or have been adapted somehow. If the TV programmes have not been shown in their countries, they should research into whether there are any similar ones, and if so, to what extent they are similar to their British counterparts.

n) Activity based on the listening activity A Man swaps a paper clip for a house (Unit 7)

After doing the listening exercise, students watch these video clips from YouTube and read the following articles about this story:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s3bdVxuFBs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1_OoICS2b8

http://www.readersdigest.com.au/true-stories-lifestyle/inspirational/paperclip-for-house

https://www.supermoney.com/2015/08/red-paperclip-for-a-house/

Then, they are asked to find out whether any similar stories have taken place in their countries, and what the most common items that could have been swapped are.

o) Activity based on scams (Unit 9)

Once they have read the texts about scams, students check out these links:

https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/types-of-scams

https://www.fraud.org/scams

After that, they are asked to compare these scams, as well as the ones mentioned in the coursebook, with the most common ones in their country and in what way the authorities in their country try to inform citizens so as to be aware of these crimes and prevent them.

p) Activity based on the Kelpies (Unit 10)

Students check out this link to find out information about the sculpture:

https://mymodernmet.com/andy-scott-the-kelpies/

Then, students are asked to find out if there are any similar sculptures or structures in their country and how popular they are or have been.

q) Activity based on the library of Birmingham (Unit 10)

After watching the documentary, students watch these video clips about it:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1Ed4LL7AR4

https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2ng526

https://randomarchitecturememories.com/home/the-culture-show-the-peoples-palace-bbc-2013

Then, they are asked to research into whether there is also a public building in their country that has had such an important influence on people and on the place where it is based.

Apart from this, they are supposed to find the similarities and differences between the influence exerted by the new library in the city of Birmingham, and the building(s) in their country that they have selected.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In order to understand the findings of the analysis carried out for this paper, it seems to be a good idea to start this section by revising some of the results of other research studies also focusing on the cultural content of ELT textbooks. For example, in Teo and Kaewsakul's (2016) analysis of six methods, there was quite a large amount of cultural content from several cultures in the student's books, which was developed in the activities and exercises included in the different units. However, the teacher's books do not provide enough support or background information for this international culture, which resulted in a focus on target culture. On the other hand, Nuñez-Pardo (2018) considers that in most English coursebooks, "the cultural content is presented out of context, based on models from western and North American cultures, with characters that belong to the neutral cultures in countries free of social problems for discussion" (p. 241).

According to Liu (2016, p. 849), a good way to develop students' ICC is through comparison and analysis, which is supported by Nuñez-Pardo (2018). Nuñez-Pardo suggests connecting the cultural content presented to students' cultures, as this will eventually allow them to associate this content with real-life experiences. All this requires time and the possibility of reflection in order to foster critical awareness and understanding. In order to achieve this goal, Liu (2016) suggests using complementary material like films and documentaries. Related to this, Gómez's (2015) findings seem to prove that in order to develop ICC and critical awareness, materials should be searched, adapted or even developed in order to motivate students to engage in this examination into cultural elements.

Similarly, Kim and Paek (2015) consider that English textbooks should "include more cultural materials that provide opportunities to compare the differences and similarities among various cultures and countries" (p. 102). In relation to this, Weninger and Kiss (2013) state that images may be a good way to initiate this comparison, but unfortunately they are not normally intended to do so, as they tend to be mainly used as a way to fill space. These authors maintain that the same applies to texts regarding cultural practices, which are normally used as reading comprehension exercises. Unless they are accompanied by activities that encourage students to engage in cultural development, they will be to no avail in terms of fostering critical cultural awareness and eventually ICC.

As regards commonalities between many ELT textbooks, Risager (1991) pointed out some of them. For example, she stated that many of the characters that appear in these coursebooks live in urban areas and are middle-class people. As regards their age, it seems to be similar to the age group that the target audience is. This author suggests focusing on characters of more heterogeneous group ages and social status. She also indicates that newer coursebooks tend to include more geographical information and socio-political issues, but they do not go into much detail, and therefore lack cultural background information. This

seems to be supported by Wu's (2010) analysis, as the coursebooks she analysed seemed to focus mostly on issues that concern modern societies such as unemployment, terrorism, relationships, etc.

After a detailed analysis from an intercultural point of view of the textbook selected for this paper, it may be concluded that the method contains a great deal of cultural content, but it is hardly exploited or developed. This seems to be in accordance with what Widdowson (2005) states about EFL textbooks providing limited cultural information. In the textbook analysed, it is just present in different activities because they are based on authentic content or real news stories which are pervaded by several cultural elements, as happens with any other foreign language textbook. This is in accordance what with the view presented by Gray (2000, p. 70) when saying that the teachers questioned for his article agreed that textbooks include cultural contents. It must not be ignored that both language and culture are closely interrelated, and that many everyday actions are all, to a greater or lesser extent, impregnated by cultural elements that are part of the language folklore. However, as Sercu (2006, p. 68) highlights, currently ICC still has a secondary role in comparison to the major role attached to linguistic goals. This is also supported by Níkleva (2012, p. 170). She goes even further by saying that even the latest textbooks do not include any more cultural content than the oldest ones. As regards types of culture, the analysis of this book reveals that target culture is the most prevalent, slightly higher than international culture, as is the case of most ELT coursebooks.

As already mentioned, quite possibly the reason for neglecting or not expanding on cultural content in this method, as happens in most of them, is that its main goal is to teach English as a *lingua franca*, which means being 'neutral' or 'objective' from an intercultural point of view. The authors may have considered that favouring one particular culture in the detriment of others might not make the method suitable for its main goal. However, as Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 51) points out, some authors believe that teaching language through cultural content is one of the most effective ways of developing communicative competence in a foreign language, which is usually the ultimate aim of most textbooks. By not drawing on this potentiality that is already present in the method analysed, its authors are not maximising it by attempting to be objective or neutral from a cultural point of view.

However, just as teachers need to reshape their opinion about what teaching a foreign language involves, and thus adapt their teaching methodology appropriately (Sercu, 2006, p. 55), textbooks authors also have to do the same as far as teaching culture and promoting ICC are concerned. Similarly to the teacher's job in this field, authors should include suitable content and design learning tasks and resources that aim at helping students become interculturally competent.

As this is not done in most coursebooks, this means that it is the teacher's responsibility to decide whether to develop and work on the cultural content, or ignore it. If they opt for the former, it will involve a good deal of work, as they would not have any reference or extra material that will help them work on this aspect. They will have to create some specific activities for this purpose, like the ones included in the previous section. However, this is very time-consuming. This means that unless the teachers are truly

committed and really attach importance to the teaching of cultural elements, they are quite likely to neglect it.

Having said that, it is easy to understand that if teachers already have cultural content integrated into the method they use, as is the case with this textbook, there will be more chances for teachers to decide to accept the challenge and design suitable activities that may help their students acquire intercultural competence. As in the case of the teachers in Young and Sachdev's (2011) article, in the method analysed most of its cultural content is found in extracts from TV programmes and newspaper articles that are used as the basis for many of the activities in the coursebook, but as already said, it is not exploited.

The activities suggested in previous section attempt to make students search for culture-related information in different sources, mainly online, in order to develop their analytical competence by discussing their findings with their partners, as suggested by Sercu (2006). Níkleva (2012, p. 162) agrees with this idea and adds that, apart from analysing this content critically, students should compare it with their own culture. Similarly, Young and Sachdev (2011) also agree with Níkleva as regards the importance of this comparison so as to acquire intercultural competence. This is also supported by Liu (2016) and Nuñez-Pardo (2018), who, as mentioned above, consider that connecting the cultural content presented in textbooks to students' culture, will lead to reflection on it, and will eventually make it possible for them to associate it with real-life experiences.

To help students achieve this goal, Paricio Tato (2005, p. 134) states that some authors such as Areizaga (2002) believe that rather than to facts about the culture of a country, more attention should be given to more informal contexts – everyday life, beliefs, values, etc. This is why the activities proposed in this paper aim at this, as they try to delve into common issues in people's everyday lives such as popular TV programmes, common activities, current beliefs on common issues, etc., and the influence that they may have on people's beliefs and lives, and how similar they are to their own culture in similarly informal contexts.

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