# AN ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET CULTURAL COMPONENT INTRODUCED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL ELT TEXTBOOKS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TARGET CULTURE TEACHING: CASE OF THE SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS SERIES

Thesis submitted to the department of foreign languages in candidacy for the degree of Magister in Applied Linguistics and TEFL

Presented by :                    Supervised by :

**Mr Ali ZENAGUI        Dr Smail BENMOUSSAT**

## Members of the jury :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pr M. MELIANI | Prof | President ( University of Oran ) |
| Pr B. BENMOUSSAT | Prof | Examiner ( University of Tlemcen ) |
| Dr S. BENMOUSSAT | M.C | Supervisor ( University of Tlemcen ) |
| Dr I. SERIR | C.C (Doctorat) | Examiner ( University of Tlemcen ) |
| Dr H. HAMZAOUI | C.C (Doctorat) | Examiner ( University of Tlemcen ) |

Academic Year : 2006 - 2007

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA.
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

UNIVERSITY OF ABOU BAKR BELKAID, TLEMCEN.

FACULTY OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES.
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES.
SECTION OF ENGLISH

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET CULTURAL COMPONENT INTRODUCED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL ELT TEXTBOOKS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TARGET CULTURE TEACHING: CASE OF THE SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS SERIES

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF MAGISTER IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TEFL

**Presented by:**

Mr. Ali ZENAGUI

**Supervised by:**

Dr. Smail BENMOUSSAT

**Jury Members:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pr. Mohamed MILIANI | Prof. | President (University of Oran) |
| Pr. Boumediène BENMOUSSAT | Prof | Examiner ( University of Tlemcen) |
| Dr. Smail BENMOUSSAT | M.C. | Supervisor (University of Tlemcen ) |
| Dr. Ilhem SERIR | C.C. (Doctorat) | Examiner (University of Tlemcen) |
| Dr. Hafida HAMZAOUI | C.C. (Doctorat) | Examiner (University of Tlemcen) |

**Academic Year:**     2006 – 2007

# Acknowledgements

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

# List of Tables, Figures and Diagrams

# KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

# Key to Abbreviations

AF          Année Fondamentale ( Fundamental Year )

AM          Année Moyenne ( Middle Year )

CBA         Competency-Based Approach

CLT         Communicative Language learning

DVD         Digital Versatile Disc

EFL         English as a Foreign Language

ELT         English Language Teaching

UK          United Kingdom

UNESCO      United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization

UNICEF      United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA         United States of America

# ABSTRACT

# Abstract

The present research work attempts to analyse the target cultural content introduced in the culture sections of the newly-implemented ELT textbooks for the Middle School pupils. As a matter of fact, Algerian textbook designers, coping with the tide of change urged by global integration, have seen the necessity to replace the cultural component in its right place in ELT. Such assumptions of an impossible successful language teaching without its culture have been put in practice by the implementation of new textbooks, "Spotlight on English", which are supposed to carry the material needed for developing learners' linguistic skills and cultural knowledge alike, so as to enable them to communicate effectively in real life situations. Still, what has been noticed from the fact of having devoted a separate section for cultural knowledge on the one hand, and the lack of teachers' training, especially in culture teaching methodology, on the other hand, might both not be in favour of an eventual successful functioning of culture teaching / learning.

The present work has been divided into four chapters. The first deals with the major reasons that have urged educationalists to reconsider the introduction of culture as an integral part of foreign language learners' communicative abilities. Also, it offers an overview of the literature in relation with the concept of culture as being sensitively difficult to define, and with the issue of an unfruitful extraction of a language from its original cultural setting. In addition to this, special attention is drawn to the final objectives that a culture-based teaching methodology might aim at, as well as the nature of the cultural load that EFL materials are to include, textbooks notably.

The second chapter starts with a brief chronological account on former Algerian ELT textbooks, by showing the extent to which British culture has been neglected in ELT, considering it a threat to the national identity. The second part of the chapter browses the cultural data selected for the three ELT textbooks which have been implemented up to this date "Spotlight on English" (Book One for 1st AM pupils, Book Two for 2nd AM pupils and Book Three for 3rd AM learners), with special emphasis on the section devoted for this purpose entitled "Learn about Culture". The chapter ends with a checklist elaboration against whose points the cultural content of textbooks in question is evaluated and assessed.

Chapter three strives to analyse the cultural content carried in the *"Learn about Culture"* sections of the three textbooks. The analysis, in relation to the checklist evaluation, orbits round three major points: 1) Physical aspect, i.e. referring to the external appearance and presentation of the cultural data. 2) The cultural content in relation with the aims of the implemented methodology, in addition to the extent to which the local culture is portrayed, regarding its importance in the comparison process with the target culture. 3) The nature of the selected cultural aspects as far as learners' age, sex, needs, interests and linguistic backgrounds are concerned.

The fourth chapter aims at drawing some conclusions, and at proposing some possible suggestions that teachers of English might make use of in order to compensate for the deficiencies noticed in culture teaching. These recommendations consist in an utmost integration of the teaching of language and culture throughout the whole course, by performing some kind of adaptation of the suggested cultural component so as to make them join learners' ages, needs and linguistic background. It, also, underlines the significant role that learners' own culture has in enabling them reflect about it through comparison tasks primarily. Furthermore, the chapter focuses, on the one hand, on the use of some techniques that have proved to be successful in culture teaching, namely in enhancing pupils' motivation towards learning the target culture. On the other hand, it shows the importance of a continuous teacher development, especially in terms of updating their personal cultural knowledge, and in gaining sufficient data about recent findings in the field of ELT and culture teaching.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, foreign language education has been subject to a significant change that a great number of countries have felt necessary for the teaching of English. As a matter of fact, this unavoidable change has been urged by many a reason, the most important of them might certainly be the large-scale global expansion that nations encounter at more than a level, especially its cultural and cross-cultural ones. Furthermore, an impressive advance in communication technologies has, recently, characterised today's world, and has, thus, brought about an immense flux of interconnectedness between people and nations throughout the world. As a result, many people, nowadays, feel the urging necessity and the great importance of an acceptable knowledge of a language of wider communication which would serve them as a *lingua franca* to overcome their communicative shortcomings, English notably. In this regard, not only a workable linguistic command of the language becomes vital, but so does, and to an equal degree of importance, mutual cultural understanding. Such a crucial need to handle both the English language and its cultural patterns has presented foreign language teaching educationalists with new momentous challenges so as to identify and elaborate new methodologies to be implemented in order to achieve wider goals of communicative ability, and of cultural and cross-cultural understanding in foreign language learners.

Being among the nations that sustain the effect of all-level-global integration, Algeria has, in its turn, decided to bring an important change in its foreign language educational methodology, by focusing on injecting new ideas on teaching concepts that are to extract foreign language teaching from the 'marsh' of failure it has, so far, been in. Such changes take, actually, roots from a competency-based methodology which aims at getting learners develop their cognitive and social abilities in order to reach an acceptable level of autonomous behaviour that would serve them as a key to problem solving situations they might find themselves in. As regards English, the approach, still aiming at developing learners' linguistic skills and communicative abilities, offers them insights into the **"cultures that use English as a national or official language"** (Teacher's Handbook, 2003:8). Such knowledge, then, engages learners into a process

of reflection upon their own culture so as to spot similarities and cope with differences there are between their culture and the target one.

Naturally, the changes and modification introduced in teaching English in Algeria have started at middle school education by the implementation of new EFL textbooks for beginners and by the dispatch of guidelines handbooks aiming at introducing the new methodology, its finalities and objectives to language teachers so as to make them aware of such a shift towards more consideration of the learners' and the target cultures in the newly designed syllabus.

However, since the beginning of the 1980s when theoreticians have showed interest in the teaching of a foreign language and its culture, and despite their inability to provide a suitable definition to the concept of culture, they have all asserted that any methodology aiming at bringing to learners knowledge about the target culture should be based on a total integration between the teaching of the language skills and the cultural patterns.

Paradoxically, the newly designed ELT textbooks "Spot Light on English" for Algerian beginners in Middle School education does offer a wide range of British and American cultural knowledge, yet it occurs in separate section. In other words, "Spot Light on English" textbook designers have opted for a dissociation between oral skills, which appear in the first section of every file, written skills for which a second section has been devoted, and cultural data which are in a third last section of the files. Such a division of files into separate sections is believed to urge language teachers to focus on the linguistic competence of English, and might lead them not to give the appropriate degree of importance to culture teaching, either by going through the content of the 'Learn about Culture' sections skimmingly, or by neglecting it as a whole.

Teachers' misconsideration to culture teaching might be the result of an excessive care to convey knowledge about the language only, as it can be due to their lack of training in culture teaching. Should be noted in this context that many of our language teachers are reluctant to any idea of change in both content and methodology.

Our research aims at providing an attempt to a descriptive analysis of the cultural content of the "Spot Light on English" textbooks series, and questions the

relevance of an eventual teaching of the English language and its culture separately, regarding our teachers' lack of training as far as culture teaching is concerned.

# CHAPTER ONE
# LITERATURE REVIEW

# CHAPTER ONE

# LITERATURE REVIEW

**1.1.  Introduction**

**1.2.  Reasons for Change**

      **1.2.1. Classical Methods Failure**

      **1.2.2. New World Order: New Needs**

**1.3. Communicative Competence**

      **1.3.1. Native Speakership**

      **1.3.2. Communicative Competence**

**1.4. Culture in English Language Teaching**

      **1.4.1. Culture Defined**

      **1.4.2. Language and Culture**

      **1.4.3. Teaching the Target Culture**

            1.4.3.1. The Foreign-cultural Approach

            1.4.3.2. The Intercultural Approach

                  *1.4.3.2.1. Intercultural Competence*

            1.4.3.3. The Multi-cultural Approach

            1.4.3.4. The Transcultural Approach

      **1.4.4. Teaching the Foreign Culture: Reflections**

**1.5. Culture in ELT Materials**

**1.5.1. Textbooks**

**1.5.2. Culture in Textbooks**

1.5.2.1. Moran's Categorisation

1.5.2.2. Stern's Cultural Syllabus

*1.5.2.2.1 People and Places*

*1.5.2.2.2. History and Institutions*

*1.5.2.2.3. Arts and Achievements*

**1.5.3. Portrayal of the Foreign Culture**

**1.5.4. Textbook Cultural Evaluation**

**1.6. Conclusion**

# CHAPTER ONE

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1. Introduction

Over the last ten years or so, foreign language education has been experiencing a world-wide boom in the field of teaching English. This boom is essentially due to the effects of globalisation [1] that many countries are to undergo, especially at the cultural and cross-cultural level; in addition to the impressive advance of technologies of communication. Consequently, a lot of people, today, feel the urging necessity and importance for an acceptable knowledge of English. As such, not only does the mastery of the linguistic side of the language becomes vital, but so does its cultural aspect, seeing the great benefit it might bring to people to achieve mutual cultural understanding. As a result, language educationalists have had to reconsider such needs in the elaboration of new methodologies that would aim at providing learners with appropriate linguistic tools as well as giving them insights into the culture of the target community.

Algeria, being one of the countries that is undergoing the effects of these world-wide changes and of global expansion, has in its turn implemented some of its radical changes ever on the whole educational system as well as foreign language teaching methodology. These changes, actually, aim at developing learners linguistic competence and, at fostering their social abilities so as to cope with all sorts of possible problem-solving situations they might encounter. More than that, consideration has, in fact, been restored to the cultural dimension of language, and learners are now to gain pictures of real life among British, American and other societies that use English as a first or a national language.

This shift in methodology has been reflected in the newly-designed ELT textbooks "Spot Light on English" which are intended for 1st, 2nd and 3rd AM pupils. As a matter of fact, the three textbooks, hereafter named respectively Book One, Book Two and Book Three, do show the new orientation toward enabling learners to develop their

communicative proficiency and toward helping them get enough knowledge about foreign cultures. Such knowledge aims at developing in learners a spirit of tolerance vis-à-vis other people's differences.

## 1.2. Reasons for Change

As it has been mentioned in the introduction, foreign language teaching has been undergoing some of the most important changes all over the world since the 1990's. This change has been urged by one major reason consisting in the great need for achieving high communicative abilities among foreign language learners. Such an aim, it is thought, could, actually, hardly be achieved by classical methodologies for many a reason as it has been showed by numerous preceding research works which have dealt with the failure of the classical methods and approaches. This is, actually, a false assumption since classical methods, namely the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) produced excellent results and high academic proficiency for over a century.

### 1.2.1. Classical Methods Failure

As a matter of fact, what some educationalists [2] think about classical methodologies is that they have, on more than one level, proved not to be able to reach the objectives for which they have been implemented. Such a failure, one might notice, is either due to the non-relevance of their aims and objectives to the environment for which they have been adopted, or to a total inability of language teachers to put the theoretical assumptions into practice in the most correctly expected way. In other words, the aims of classical language teaching methodologies could not, satisfyingly, be realised because they have become outdated or incongruous to what learners need to be effectively communicatively competent.

Other factors are, as well, believed to have prevented teachers from translating these theories into reality. What should be mentioned, in this context, is that the aim of our research is not to go in deep detail in analysing causes of the lack of success of the classical methods and approaches. Still, it becomes worth mentioning in this context, seeing the diachronic relationship they have with the implementation of the present foreign language teaching methodology.

In this regard, the structural approach, whose objectives have been to "produce" learners with high proficiency in the reading and writing skills of the language and with a mastery of the target language rules, has proved ineffective in enabling learners to communicate appropriately in real life situations. This is largely due to the fact that communicative competence includes far more other dimensions to be contained in mere language rules mastery (see 1.3.2. page 11).

Consequently, and considering learners' needs, the implementation of the communicative approach has become of key importance to remedy the lack of learners ability to use the language in real life situations. Therefore, this approach aims at providing learners with the necessary tools that would help them use the target language without emphasising on an eventual explicit learning of the structural aspect of the language. Mastery of the grammatical rules that govern the language has, thus, lost of its priority in teaching, at the expense of the development of the oral skill.

Theoretically, the communicative approach seems to be a life-buoy to teachers who have long complained about their learners' inability to use the target language to genuinely communicate. Still, they could not be totally satisfied, seeing that the expected results could, in fact, not be attained. Many a parameter have, actually, interfered in the practical implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).To name but a few, one can undoubtedly not neglect the fact that such assumptions cannot bring about satisfactory outcomes if learners are deprived of a suitable external supportive environment where they can cope with all sorts of real life communicative situations. In addition to this, many teachers, around the world, have noticed the impossibility of teaching English "communicatively" while they were either lacking audio visual materials, which are, one should admit, vital in such a context, or while having overcrowded classrooms. Such a situation does have a negative impact on the foreign language teaching/learning process, especially in restricting the time of oral practice to only a few lucky students.

In sum, and to specify the Algerian context, both of the structural and communicative approaches could not come up to the Algerian learners' expectations as far as a genuine use of the English language. More than that, during the implementation of both methodologies, English has been taught within an Algerian cultural frame, i.e. deprived from the least reference to its original cultural patterns.

### 1.2.2. New World Order: New Needs

The failure of foreign language teaching / learning in scoring satisfactory results is equally due a substantial divergence between what classical methods aimed at, and what students are expected to have from learning the target language as far as their communicative ability is concerned. As a matter of fact, today's learners' needs are determined by a new world order which is marked by an all-level global expansion, and a massive development of the means of communication, in addition to an impressive desire among people to move to other countries either for definite settlement , or for work or pleasure purposes, as described by Block(2004:76): **"... greater upheaval and change with unprecedented levels of interconnectedness among nations, states and local economies and cultures."**

It is therefore a fact that with the advent of the Internet, DVDs, pop music and satellite TV channels, people frequently experience English in their daily life, and have new acquaintances from other parts of the world and from different cultures. Furthermore, today's new world order is noticing a large scale migration of people towards countries which might provide them with suitable job opportunities. It should, also, be mentioned in this context that tourism, business and other international dimensions conducive to great mobility among people have noticed a considerable increase during the last decade. These factors, which are believed to favour a direct contact between various nations and cultures, have all brought about the crucial need for an acceptable command of foreign linguistic patterns in addition to considerable cultural knowledge of the self and of the others. This has, consequently, led foreign language educationalists to reconsider the teaching of the cultural component in foreign language courses.

## 1.3. Communicative Competence

### 1.3.1. Native Speakership

For long, the main concern of language teachers, language theoreticians and language teaching materials producers has been to target a certain norm of linguistic proficiency and develop learners' abilities by making them approach, as much closely as possible, those of the native speaker. This has been so because the notion of '*native speakership*' (Kramsch, 1998) has primarily been related to those who are **"born into a language"** (Kramsch, cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:20), and thus having grammatical intuition that non-native speakers actually lack. Being 'born into a language' does refer, then, to an ability of judgement of both what is grammatically and socially accepted among the speech community [3] that uses the language. More than that, native speakers have traditionally been considered as *'the norm'* against which foreign language learners performances are measured as **"they are seen as not only embodying the 'authentic' use of the language, but as representing its original cultural context as well"** (Kramsch 1998:79).

However, during the last ten years, such a norm has proved not to be valid, namely after the rise of English as an international language which makes of it a *lingua-franca* [4] used by people who have different mother tongues. In other words, English has now become reflective of other values and traditions than those it has once been associated to, the British ones notably. In this respect, many a theoretician view that foreign language learners should get insights into foreign cultures for whose users English is not necessarily the native language. Put differently, an EFL language course, in addition to aiming at developing learners linguistic abilities, should provide them with sufficient knowledge about the British culture as well as other cultures and subcultures where English is considered as a representative of their people's customs, habits, beliefs and ways of life.

It becomes clear, then, that language learners need not consider native speakers as the only norm and goal to be attained, but should take into account other instances of linguistic and cultural performances from outside the British Isles.

## 1.3.2. Communicative Competence

Considering the fact that a foreign language learner should, on the one hand, gain proficiency in using the target language genuinely, and should, on the other hand, be provided with knowledge about customs and habits of the target community, foreign language educationalists have reoriented their interests towards a more comprehensive definition of communicative competence that would be more expressive to today's learners' needs.

In this regard, a first step in expanding the notion of competence has been accomplished by Hymes (1967) believing that it lacks the mentioning and the consideration of the social factor, and not only being determined by grammatical accuracy. Hymes, thus, introducing the notion of communicative competence, distinguishes between linguistic and communicative competence as a way to restore value to the social nature of language.

Working towards the same objective, other socio-linguists have developed Hymes's communicative competence, notably Canale and Swain (1980), developing it from the mere mastery of language rules and structures to four sub-categories of competence: grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic.

Clearly, the first category of competence relates to the degree of mastery of the linguistic code which includes " **knowledge of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation and spelling, word formation and sentence structure**" (Canale and Swain, cited in Tseng 2002:12). Still, a considerable mastery of governing rules of pronunciation, semantics and of the grammatical structure of language does not, actually, make of a speaker communicative. In other words, knowledge of the adopted grammar and pronunciation rules in a sentence, for instance, does not make of it possibly correct and appropriate to any situation. Furthermore, the same situation, may require more than a sentence to fulfil the need of being communicative; and still, no one can make sure that communication would occur after formulating the correctly structured sentence or sentences in the appropriate situation. Put differently, it is obvious that some other sort of knowledge is strongly required for learners to be effectively communicative. It is the second sub-category which is needed, and which relates to the ability of combining ideas, bearing in mind language cohesive norms. It is not, then the combination of

grammatically correct sentences, but rather the **"combination of utterances and communicative functions"** (Canale and Swain, cited in Cook 2003:104). Strategic competence includes the capacity to overcome gaps of communication through the use of some verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. Breakdowns in communication are generally due to some sort of deficiency or lack in grammatical competence as when one cannot recall a grammatical rule, or when she / he tries to reconstruct an utterance using a given known grammatical structure to compensate for an unknown one. In addition to this, communication failure might occur when a speaker ignores the appropriate use of utterances in their corresponding social context. This leads to the unavoidable understanding of the socio-linguistic rules of the language, i.e. socio-linguistic competence under which lies knowledge of the cultural norms which constitute the agreed on cultural texture of language use within the society. As a matter of fact, the socio-cultural appropriateness of an utterance lies heavily on some factors as the roles of the participants, the situation or setting in which they are, the topic they share and the norm of interaction between them. Undergoing further development, educationalists like Bachman (1990, cited in Brown 1994) expand the components of communicative competence to knowledge of what a speaker means through the use of a given utterance, i.e. pragmatic competence, which lies on knowing meaning that is **"not derived solely from the words used in phrases and sentences...**[but from] **the intended speaker's meaning"** Bachman (1990, cited in Brown 1994:229).

Therefore, real communication cannot be achieved without gathering the aforementioned dimensions of competence. Still, the last decade has noticed some sort of elaboration as far as the notion of communicative competence is concerned, especially in its socio-cultural aspect. As such, in the time of large-scale tourism, business and migration, educationalists like Kramsh (1993) and Byram and Fleming (1998) view that socio-cultural competence needs to be expanded to cover knowledge about both the native and the target culture, i.e. intercultural competence.

## 1.4. Culture in English Language Teaching

Being so important an element in the achievement of a more or less successful degree in communication, culture in language teaching has recently become a subject of concern for many educationalists and language teachers alike. In this context, Trudgill (2000) posits that " **differences…between cultures can often lead, in cross-cultural communication, to misunderstanding and even hostility. Even when the cultures concerned are not very different, difficulties can arise**"(Trudgill 2000:114). What should be noted, however, is that interest in the concept itself, and in its relationship with foreign language proficiency has started as early as the 1960's. Rivers (1981) in her <u>Teaching Foreign Language Skills</u> devotes a whole chapter [5] to draw attention to the great impact that knowledge of foreign culture can have on language learning. However, before dealing with the interwoven aspect of relationship that binds language and culture, it would be wiser to explore, in a first step, what the concept of culture denotes for educationalists. It is believed that only a thorough understanding of such a complex concept would serve as a strong basis to the establishment of a complete methodology aiming at equipping learners with both linguistic and cultural patterns of the target language.

### 1.4.1. Culture Defined

Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1974) defines culture as:

> **"all the arts, beliefs, social institutions, etc, characteristic of a community, race, etc…"**.

<u>Encarta Encyclopaedia</u> (1996) provides the following definition :

> " **Culture, the beliefs, behaviour, language, and entire way of life of a particular group of people at a particular time. Culture includes customs, ceremonies, works of art, inventions, technology, and traditions. The term also may have a more specific aesthetic interpretation, and can describe the intellectual and artistic achievements of a society**".

Such descriptions do not, actually, but confirm the complexity of delimiting the meaning of culture, as many educationalists posit. Instances of these are Seelye (1984) and Brown (1994) who suggest some definitions which, one might think, are more or

less generalising ones. In other words, the concept of culture seems very difficult to be contained in a simple definition seeing the impossibility to circle its multidimensional nature. In this context, Seelye (1984 : 26) describes culture as being " **a broad concept that embraces all aspects of the life of man**". Brown (1994 : 163), on his part, tires not to delimit the concept by positing that it is "**the glue that binds a group of people together**".

Other educationalists, however, do insist on some aspects of culture and bring some more precise definitions, and regard culture as:

> "**a way of life, a set of social practices, a system of beliefs, a shared history or set of experiences. A culture may be synonymous with a country, or a region or a nationality…A culture may be synonymous with a religion…**"
> (Rose, 2004:01).

In this regard, providing a complete definition of culture would certainly not bring a faithful and precise coverage to the wide range of dimensions – anthropological, sociological and psychological – that it presupposes (Benmoussat , 2003)

## 1.4.2.  Language and Culture

Being a way of life and a set of practices, or a common history and experiences shared by a given community; either referring to a region or a religion, culture remains representative of individuals' interactions within the social group they belong to, or of which they identify themselves as being integral part. As for language, no one can deny the close relationship that exists between culture and language. This relationship is so tight that one might see that language carries culture, and culture carries language. In other words, language itself is defined by a culture, since it is essentially rooted in the reality of this culture, the life, habits customs and beliefs of its people. Malinowski (1923) in his <u>The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages</u> states :

> " it (culture) **cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterances… An utterance becomes intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation**".

In addition to this, it is the language that gives insights into its people's thoughts and beliefs. In this context, Rivers(1981:135) posits that language "**is the key to the**

14

**cultural heritage of another people"**. It is, therefore, this social nature of language that militates against its extraction from its original cultural points of reference.

Furthermore, learning a foreign language needs to encompass aspects of culture carried by this language, and should, then, give learners insights into the thoughts, customs and way of life of its native speakers. In the same vein, many educationalist, now, share the opinion that culture need not be considered as a supplementary diversion to language instruction, but should rather be highlighted as an important element in language classrooms, since an efficient language course is viewed as that which gives equal importance to the language skills as to cultural knowledge. Kramsch (1993: 8) supports this idea by stating that " **If language is seen as a social practice, then culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency**".

This, naturally, goes in parallel with the aims of many preceding language teaching methodologies, which have, all actually, insisted on including aspects of the target community's life and beliefs in the foreign language course. Still, the actual implementation of practical ways to achieve such goals of cultural understanding have, to a certain extent, remained unrealised. This is partly due, on the one hand, to over-insistence of language teachers and material designers on linguistic proficiency, and on the other hand to the sensitive interpretations that teaching a foreign culture might have, especially when the question is tackled from a political stand point.

However, with all the changes that global integration is imposing on most world's nations, and with the increasing necessity for effective cultural and cross-cultural intelligibility among people, reconsideration has, recently, been restored to the cultural component in foreign language pedagogy. Therefore, many researches have, actually, been broached in this direction, aiming at identifying appropriate methodologies to incorporate the target culture within the foreign language skills. This strives essentially to enable the learner "**to know the fundamental cultural patterns of those who speak the language he is learning**". (Benmoussat, 2003:2)

It is, thus, suggested that teachers develop their learners' communicative abilities by integrating the teaching of the foreign language and its culture. By doing so, learners experience another language and a different way of coping with reality.

15

### 1.4.3. Teaching the Target Culture

It has been mentioned above that interest in teaching culture alongside with the foreign language skills has been showed by may researches. As a matter of fact, educationalists like Rivers (1981) support the idea that learning another language enables students to realise there are different ways of looking at things, different ways of doing and experiencing things, " **and that differences do not necessarily represent moral issues of right and wrong**" (Rivers, 1981: 318). This clearly establishes the basis of what interculturality refers to among educationalists; since the final aim of such a theory is to understand there are differences, and that these differences do not constitute obstacles towards mutual understanding, but rather help learners identify their own cultural patterns, and lead them to be aware to accept others' differences.

What is worth noting, however, is that theory to teaching foreign culture has not become currently effectively used only in the early 1990's because the terminology related to its practical implementation was not ready yet (Benmoussat, 2003). The most prominent works, in this regard, are Byram and Morgan's (1994), Byram and Fleming's (1998) and Kramsch's (1993, 1998); all of whom have presented a culture-based methodology as having the following ends:

- *Linguistic*: i.e. emphasising on learning the target language skills.
- *Cultural*: giving learners insights into the target culture.
- *Conceptual*: developing positive attitudes towards the target culture's community.

In the same line of thought, literature related to foreign culture teaching orbits round four main concepts, and theoreticians interested in the question present these methodologies in a rather chronological order. This is, as it is showed below, mainly due to the ethnographic-based aspect of such theories on the one hand, and to the variation of the status that the target language might notice on the other hand. In other words, regarding English as a foreign language will certainly result in a different conception of a teaching methodology than when it is believed to be an international language. This, of course, presupposes different cultural norms represented by a foreign language from those that an international language might carry.

### 1.4.3.1. The Foreign-cultural Approach

This theory has been used in foreign language education sometime up to the end of the last century. It is based on the principle of the single culture, hence being also called *mono-cultural approach* (Murphy, cited in Byram and Fleming 1998). As such, it is only the foreign culture which is targeted, while learners' native cultural patterns are not dealt with. Under such principles, the teaching aims at enhancing positive stereotypes [6] and at approaching native speakers' communicative and cultural competence as much closely as possible, since the foreign- cultural approach entails **"attitudes [ which ] may be characterized by admiration for the foreign culture"** (Byram and Fleming 1998: 244). This theory has, however, been losing ground since the 1980's as it has not given importance to the learners' culture, nor has it insisted on relations between cultures (learners' culture and target culture). This has led to the emergence of the intercultural approach.

### 1.4.3.2. The Intercultural Approach

Starting from opposite concepts of those of the foreign-culture theory, the intercultural approach is based on the principle that different cultures are structurally related to each others. It has also the foreign language and its culture as a main concern, but does insist on the learners' native culture, which is, actually, considered as a point of departure. As a matter of fact, the intercultural approach aims at developing some sort of 'reflective attitude' in students by engaging them in a process of comparison trying to identify similarities and differences there are between their culture and the target one. This attitudes which stimulates learners' thinking about their own practices and beliefs, aims first at bringing students to modify their negative perceptions towards the target community and its culture, to ultimately have learners who " **function as mediators between the two cultures"** (Byram and Fleming 1998:244). In this respect, the teaching following the principles underlying the intercultural theory emphasises on comparisons between the target and the native cultures, and aims at presenting the target language as if it were the first language of learners so as to develop in them some sort of communicative and intercultural competence.

*1.4.3.2.1. Intercultural Competence*

Resting upon the idea that communicative competence should go beyond the categories presented by Canale and Swain (cited in Tseng 2002:11-12) (see 1.3.2 page 11), Cortazzi and Jin (cited in Hinkel 1999)suggest the addition of a fifth category: intercultural competence which denotes **"the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures"** (Meyer in Benmoussat 2003: 179). In a more practical way, intercultural competence is the learner's ability to understand his/her own cultural patterns so as to serve him/her as a springboard to interpret and understand other cultures.

Ellis (2004), however, sees this subcategory of communicative competence as being not only a body of knowledge, but rather a set of practices requiring:

a) Knowledge: e.g. learners who have knowledge about different eating habits, differences in school systems, or games children play.

b) Attitudes: e.g. curious learners who notice things, ask questions and are interested in other people's behaviours and beliefs.

c) Skills: e.g. – observing, identifying, and recognising difference.

– comparing and contrasting.

– asking for, discussing meaning.

– dealing with, or tolerating ambiguity.

– effectively interpreting messages.

–defending one's own point of view while acknowledging the legitimacy of others.

– accepting difference.

(Ellis, 2004:15)

In the light of the aforementioned components of intercultural competence, one can notice that foreign language learners become "interculturally" competent when they gain some knowledge about their native culture, and when they use that knowledge to help them identify, compare and finally accept differences of the target culture.

What should be noted, however, is that in spite of the fact that the intercultural approach draws upon relations there are between cultures, and although it uses the learners' native culture as a point of departure, its principles have recently been recalled into question regarding the multicultural constitution reflecting the diversity of ethnicity amongst today's societies. This has, actually, brought about the rise of the approach that emphasises on the possible coexistence of more than one culture within one society.

### 1.4.3.3. The Multi-cultural Approach

As stated before, the multi-cultural approach lies on the concept that several cultures might coexist in one single society. This "melting pot" constitution characterises many advanced nations especially American and European ones. Such a phenomenon is one of the results of global expansion at all levels which these countries undergo. This can, easily, be seen in the European expansion, which for instance, has facilitated all forms of contact between people from different cultural origins. Schools in Europe and America have, thus, noticed an unprecedented diversity of ethnic origins amongst their learners. This has led theoreticians supporting multicultural principles in language teaching to reorient their objectives towards more emphasis **"on the ethnic and linguistic diversity on the target country or countries…and** [on] **relations between the target countries and the learners' own and other countries"** (Byram and Fleming 1998:246). As such, multicultural language teaching includes comparisons between the target countries and the learner' ones, aiming at developing his/her reflective attitudes on the basis of a **"balanced and anti-racist view of the cultures involved"** (ibid.). What is different here is that the target language is presented as a first language to some learners and as a second language to others. Similar to the intercultural approach, however, multi-cultural foreign language teaching targets a learner's profile as having a mediator competence: communicative and intercultural, but to a slightly different extent since the target language being learned would serve him/her as a *lingua-franca,* in his own society, to communicate with people of different linguistic backgrounds.

19

The multi-cultural approach is steadily gaining ground throughout the world, and namely in western countries. This, as it has been mentioned earlier, is particularly due to the increase of the number of multicultural classes, where more than two ethnic belongings can coexist.

### 1.4.3.4. The Transcultural Approach

The basic principle of the transcultural approach is the interwoven character of cultures, drawing from a society where individuals from different ethnic origins coexist, yet bearing in mind the native and the target cultures, in addition to other cultures which are not necessarily the first concern of teaching. Therefore, language teaching following this methodology puts focus " **on the life of individuals and groups in contexts characterised by more or less cultural and linguistic complexity**". (Byram and Fleming 1998: 248), and thus, deals with both traditional target countries and their cultures, in addition to other countries having different cultural contexts. This can be achieved by considering the target language as a first, second, and an international language. The current situation of this methodology predicts for its flourishing future due to the increasing rate of interpersonal individual contacts and mobility of people from different origins, dwelling in a community where the target language is used as a *lingua-franca*. Such a status, in fact, characterises the English language now more than ever, seeing the international status it has gained.

### 1.4.4. Teaching the Foreign Culture: Reflections

Theories in relation to foreign language teaching along with its cultural component appear to have one common aim, consisting in developing learners' linguistic communicative and cultural competence alike. In addition to this, it seems that the status of the target language being used among the community is the basic determining element for the orientations of the objectives of teaching under any of the theories in question.

Regarding the Algerian context, it should be mentioned that the ethnic constituency of our classes is far from being of the same high degree of diversity in its origins as those noticed in Europe or in America. As such, this constitutes a more or

less homogenous cultural context for the great majority of classes. On the other hand, the English language, being a second foreign language in Algeria, does directs the language teaching towards an *i* intercultural- based methodology, where learners are to get insights into the target culture or other sub-cultures, whose people use the language as a national or official language. Such objectives, clearly stated in the Teacher's Handbook (2003: 8) undoubtedly draw the basic framework for EFL teachers who strive to develop their learners' communicative and intercultural competence in order to help them function adequately outside the formal setting of learning, by adopting a suitable behaviour according to different communicative contexts they might encounter.

Furthermore, the increasing speed that the English language seems to be gaining in consolidating its status as an international language leaves no way to teachers but be eclectic in selecting appropriate teaching methods as far as culture teaching theories are concerned. Put differently, the homogenous cultural constituency of our classes imposes on teachers to adopt an intercultural leaning in their teaching. Still, regarding the target language as an international language, i.e. reflecting cultural values that are not the sole belonging of the British or the Americans, would lead them to adopt some varied selections as far as other cultural aspects being used by communities whose first language is not English. To reach the wider goals of achieving communicative and intercultural ability, our language teachers need to be provided with teaching materials that present the foreign culture in all its aspects.

## 1.5. Culture in ELT Materials

As language and culture are believed to be inseparable, it is also an agreed principle that language should be taught along with its cultural patterns. To achieve such an objective of integrating both the teaching of the foreign language and the culture it reflects, it is of key importance to equip foreign language teachers with ELT materials which aim at raising learners' intercultural awareness. In this regard, theorists focus on certain cultural aspects that should be incorporated in foreign language teaching materials, textbooks notably.

### 1.5.1. Textbooks

Textbooks in foreign language instruction are first meant to facilitate learning, being an essential material in the teaching/learning process. Harmer (2001:304) emphasises on benefits textbooks have on both learners and teachers alike. As a matter of fact, textbooks provide teachers with procedures for lessons and ready-made activities, which generally lessen preparation time and regulate the programmes. On the other hand, new textbooks, just denote a certain degree of methodological development (Harmer 2001) as they generally reflect new concepts in relation to the teaching/learning process. In addition to this, textbooks provide novice teachers with some sort of security as being a permanent source of guidance in their task.

On the part of learners, the presence of a textbooks, in the learning operation gives learning a serious character namely when its content translates their actual needs. More than that, learners consider textbooks as a reference and a source of revision as well.

### 1.5.2. Culture in Textbooks

Theoreticians, actually, put special emphasis on the content a textbook is to include, seeing the great impact it might have in involving learners primarily in the learning process. Yet, because learning a foreign language does not imply the mastery of its linguistic system only, but has to go beyond to its cultural dimension, textbooks should reflect that social aspect of the language as well. To achieve such a purpose, educationalists believe that textbooks should be designed so as to aim at three goals and insist on their integration:

- Developing learners' communicative competence to help them face real-world situations.
- Developing their awareness of the target language.
- Giving learners insights into the target culture and developing in them positive attitudes towards the target community.

(Byram, cited in Hinkel 1999:197)

### 1.5.2.1. Moran's Categorisation

The multidimensional aspect characterising the cultural concept makes it difficult, one must admit, for textbook designers to decide on what cultural content to include in textbooks. To overcome such an obstacle, Moran (2001) suggests four categories to reflect culture in ELT materials:

a) *Knowing about:* where cultural information is portrayed such as facts about products, practices and perspectives of the target and learner's culture.

b) *Knowing how:* in relation to cultural practices in the everyday life of the target people community.

c) *Knowing why:* learners must come to an understanding of fundamental cultural perspectives, beliefs, values and attitudes.

d) *Knowing oneself:* referring to students' understanding of themselves and their own culture to help them comprehend the target culture.

(Moran 2001:15-18)

Considering the aforementioned goals and categorisation of cultural content in ELT materials, one might be led to notice that students need not be provided by some sort of descriptive target cultural practices only, but they should, also, adopt a rather analytical reflection based on a comparative method which draws on gaining knowledge about the target culture to reach the step of reflection on one's own culture and its relation to other cultures (Mackey 2002:83). i.e. foreign language learners should be encouraged to go beyond mere identification of similarities and differences and establish a relationship between their own and other systems.

### 1.5.2.2. Stern's Cultural Syllabus

In the same vein, and probably unavoidable is Stern's (1992) proposal for a cultural syllabus for which he distinguishes three major topic-areas. Stern (1992), then, sees that any syllabus meant for providing learners with insights into the target language culture should at least include the following cultural topic-areas: 1) People and Places, 2) History and Institutions, 3) Arts and Achievements.

### 1.5.2.2.1. People and Places

The first concern of cultural knowledge under this topic-area is to help learners understand **"how the geography is perceived by native speakers"** (Stern 1992:219). As a matter of fact, differences in culture induce differences in language usage, and as many a theoretician state, common and shared values create language representative of these values, which are the backbone that links language and culture; as such, use of expressions to refer to the geography of one's own country might not mean the same within the people's cultural context of another, even though the expressions are the same. To illustrate this idea, Stern (1992) suggests some expressions like 'going to the country' to be part of language learners' cultural knowledge, since such vocabulary might be used in London or Sydney to convey a totally different meaning from it in another English speaking country, for example Canada.

What is more, under this topic-area, Stern (1992) sees the necessity for learners to get enough knowledge about groups that constitute the target community by leading them **"to identify significant indicative of social, professional, economic and age differences as well as those which reflect regional characteristics"** (Stern 1992:219). It is a fact that in all cultures differences between people occur such as rich and poor, young and old, professional and non-professional, and all living in different regions and all having regional characteristics which mark them out of other people. Such a point cannot, actually, but be in favour of comparison tasks urging learners to identify similarities and differences between the target community's people and their own. Consequently, they will be able to adjust their behaviour according to such differences in regional belonging so as not to get themselves into communication breakdowns.

### 1.5.2.2.2. History and Institutions

Knowing historical events that are part of the target community's national identity, and which have direct influence on its people's daily life behaviour would certainly be of great benefit to foreign language learners' as far as understanding the importance and impact these events might have on the target community, and on eventual communicative efficiency with them. For this purpose, Stern (1992) sees it of key importance to include in a cultural syllabus historical events, dates that the country

has known as well as its main historical figures and symbols. As instance of this, is the Norman Conquest (1066) which explains the presence of the wide range of French words and expressions adopted by the English language (Benmoussat, 2003)

Another cultural aspect that learners need to get familiar with, and perhaps one of the most efficient in terms of comparison with aspects of the students' culture is the one related to the 'Institutions' of the target community. Arguably, Stern believes that **"learners should familiarize themselves ... to an extent that corresponds to the level of knowledge they have of similar institutions in their country, or that corresponds to the knowledge that native speakers usually possess"** (Stern 1992:221). As such, foreign language learners should be familiar with the dominant institutions of the target community by means of active comparison with those of their own.

A very important element should be accounted for in this context, which is learners' age, as this might be the first cause of having uninterested learners in the institutions of the target country. Yet, Stern classifies 'media' under this topic-area, and which, one has to admit, is likely to be more interesting to young learners to gain insights into the target community's practices as watching TV and reading newspapers.

### 1.5.2.2.3. *Arts and Achievements*

Aspects under this category denote the heritage of shared knowledge about the prominent figures and their achievements. Stern (1992), thus, sees the necessity to include such knowledge within a cultural syllabus as it would, undoubtedly, raise students' interest in culture learning. Such cultural knowledge provides learners with **"an appreciation of artists, musicians and writers and their works"**(Stern 1992:221) and might include scientists and their major discoveries, which can not but be part of the foreign language learner's cultural repertoire.

What should be mentioned, however, is that the suggested aspects to be included in a cultural syllabus do not, actually, cover the whole scope of culture, yet, such areas carry aspects which are part of a British person's general knowledge and can, thus, help learners fathom out the British approach to life (Benmoussat 2003).

Deciding on what patterns of the target culture a textbook has to include is rather a daunting task. This is due, as it has been shown, to the multidimensional nature of the concept of culture, in addition to the fact that learners' needs and interests should be the first and foremost element which textbook designers have to consider, since such a crucial parameter is directly related to the positive impact on target culture learning.

### 1.5.3. Portrayal of the Foreign Culture

Of the same degree of difficulty is the way the target culture has to be presented in textbooks. What should be mentioned in this context is that several classifications as far as the cultural nature of foreign language textbooks have been proposed by educationalists. Instances of these classifications include:

a) Dunnet *et al* (cited in Skopinskaja 2003: 41-42) who distinguish between two types of textbooks, the first of which is one-dimensional and focuses on the target culture only by giving learners little chance to establish comparison. The second type, however, is two-dimensional, where aspects of both native and target cultures are portrayed. Here learners are, then, guided through comparison activities so as to develop intercultural understanding.

b) A more recent classification is Crotazzi and Jin's (1999:36) who present foreign language textbooks as belonging to either of these tree categories:

- Source-culture materials that draw on the learner's own culture.
- Target-culture materials which refer to the culture of the country where a foreign language is used as a first language.
- Intercultural target-cultural materials which use a variety of cultures where the target language is used as an international language, *lingua franca* namely.

As for source-culture materials, they are generally designed either by or together with non-native speaking authors, and are of course approved by Educational Boards. Their aim is to present the local perspective by reflecting features and aspects of the native culture.

Target-culture materials should include, on their part, texts and activities which aim at fostering students' awareness of the target culture, while textbooks based

on international target culture reflect aspects of "**a wide variety of cultures set in English-speaking countries or in other countries where English is not a first or second language, but used as an international language**" (Cortazzi and Jin, cited in Hinkel 1999:209).

Such a range of ELT culture-based materials leaves no way to teachers but go through an evaluation of the textbook or textbooks they have at hand in order make informed decisions as far as promoting their learners' cultural understanding is concerned.

### 1.5.4. Textbook Cultural Evaluation

Evaluating foreign language teaching materials, notably textbooks, can be done through the realisation of checklists against whose points textbooks are analysed. However, and as Sheldon (1988:245) points out, such a task is "**a rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick**". Being, then, so difficult a task, evaluating a textbook 'culturally' should at least include the following:

- Assessing the cultural content of textbooks in relation to the professed aims and objectives, and whether the goal of the cultural teaching is primary or subordinate to other goals.
- The extent to which the cultural content is integrated in the textbook, i.e. whether culture is in context or presented as isolated knowledge.
- Evaluating the cultural load against learners' needs.

Theoretically, educationalists present a wide variety of checklists aiming at evaluating textbooks. Some of these, however, do not refer to cultural content at all. Instances of these comprise Dwyer's (1984, cited in Hinkel 1999:201) and Brown's (1995, cited in Hinkel 1999:201). Others merely mention points relating to some cultural issues as the ones in Breen and Candlin (1987, cited in Hinkel 1999:201) which include statements like: "In what ways do the materials involve your learners' values, attitudes and feelings?"; or straightly draw attention to issues as possible stereotypes of races and cultures (Harmer 1991:283). Cunningsworth (1984) on his part emphasises on cultural skills as well as cultural knowledge through points that check whether the

content is culture or non-culture specific, and whether such content is helpful to learners to perceive and understand social situations they may find themselves in. Other theoreticians, however, focus on the material's appropriateness, and authenticity (Sheldon 1988).

A more detailed, and perhaps considered as a major reference in evaluating cultural content in textbooks is Byram's (1993 cited in Hinkel 1999:203) checklist, shown below in figure 1.1 which emphasises both extent and manner in which each of the topic-areas mentioned earlier is presented in the textbooks, in addition to the introduction of questions to check for comparisons between cultures.

---

**Criteria for Textbook Evaluation**

*Focus on Cultural Content:*

- **Social identity and social groups**
  (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities)
- **Social interaction**
  (differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider)
- **Belief and behavior**
  (moral, religious beliefs; daily routines)
- **Social and political institutions**
  (state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government)
- **Socialization and the life cycle**
  (families, schools, employment, rites of passage)
- **National history**
  (historical and contemporary events seen as markers of national identity)
- **National geography**
  (geographic factors seen as being significant by members)
- **Stereotypes and national identity**
  (what is "typical", symbols of national stereotypes)

---

Figure 1.1 Criteria textbook cultural evaluation (Byram 1993, cited in Hinkel 1993:203

Regarding the wide range of literature in relation to textbook evaluation checklists, their aims and the extent and manner of evaluating the material's cultural content, the present research work provides an attempt of a personal checklist elaboration that strives to analyse the cultural content of the newly-designed EFL textbooks for beginners "Spotlight on English" series.

## 1.6. Conclusion

Foreign language education notices some sort of permanent changes as far as what appropriate methodology to implement in order to satisfy learners' needs in terms of genuine communication. This is, actually, the case of today's students who expect to learn English to enable them to cope with the tide of global expansion which most countries undergo, and which results in an urgent need for an acceptable use of the target language and for mutual cultural and cross-cultural understanding between people noticing different forms of contact thanks to the advent of communication technologies.

In our country, these changes have been brought into practical grounds in ELT by implementing a new methodology which aims at developing pupils linguistic and social abilities, and at equipping them with enough target cultural knowledge in order to foster their intercultural competence. As such new ELT textbooks have been designed so as to reflect, practically, the theoretical assumptions as far as target language and culture teaching are concerned.

The wide range of literature in relation to culture teaching alongside with aspects of the foreign language does provide teachers with practical ideas as far as what type of content needs to be dealt with at a given stage of language learning. Still, what has to be taken into consideration is the reliability of such aspects of the target culture, and the effectiveness of their teaching to middle school learners aged between 12 and 14. In addition to that, it is certainly the pupil's interests that are addressed through the suggested cultural topic areas introduced in the textbook. For this reasons a thorough analysis of this content needs to be undertaken so as to measure the impact of such additional knowledge on learners' language proficiency. This can be achieved by undertaking a cultural evaluation of the textbooks in question by means of a checklist, so as to enlighten teachers on the nature of themes selected for their pupils and on possible forms of adapting this content to make it at the reach of their learners.

# Notes to Chapter One

1. The phenomenon of Globalisation and its effects on Language teaching in general and ELT in particular has been dealt with in many articles. See Block (2004); Sifakis and Sougari (2003)

2. In his article entitled *The Communicative Approach: Addressing Frequent Failure*, Deckert (2004) focuses on some causes that actually prevent from an effective implementation of the communicative approach in EFL settings where learners have little exposure to English outside the classroom. Among these reasons he lists:
   - Inadequacies of teachers who generally show some sort of misunderstanding of the nature of CLT
   - Teachers tend, thus, to go back to traditional teacher-centred methods even when using CLT-based textbooks.
   - Relative failure in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and techniques needed to implement CLT.
   - Unavailability of authentic materials.
   - Absence of adequate forms of assessment that match CLT assumptions.
   - Large classes, teachers' heavy timetables as well as outmoded classroom equipment.

3. Literature in relation to the concept of '*Speech Community*' ( also known as '*Linguistic Community*') actually brings different understandings to what such a complex concept may refer. Hudson (1980) cites some educationalists' definitions :
   - **"Speech community: all the people who use a given language"** (Lyons, cited in Hudson 1980:24).
   - **"Each language defines a speech community: the whole set of people who communicate with each other, either directly or indirectly, via the common language"**(Hockett, cited in Hudson 1980:24).
   - **"A speech community is a group of people who interact by means of speech"** (Bloomfield, cited in Hudson 1980:25).
   - Other educationalists insist on the social aspect of language as being a determining factor in identifying a speech community:
   - **"We will define [linguistic community] as a social group…held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication"** (Gumperz, cited in Hudson 1980:25).
   - **"The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms…"**(Labov, cited in Hudson 1980:25).

4. *lingua- franca:* A language used for communication between people whose native languages are different one from the other. It also refers to any widely used language.

5. See River (1981: Chapter 11, 314-345).

6. Stereotype: "**A fixed general image, characteristic, etc. that a lot of people believe to represent a particular type of person or thing**." (Collins Cobuild Dictionary). Stereotyping is, then, adopting a simplistic image of a category of person, institution, or culture, by claiming that members of this culture share the same, often inferior or offensive, characteristics.

Types of stereotypes:
   - *racial* e.g. Red Indians in cowboy films are seen as bloodthirsty savages.
   - *gender* e.g. women are bad drivers.
   - *age* e.g. old people are said to be very forgetful.
   - *religion* e.g. Catholics families have a lot of children.
   - *profession* e.g. all lawyers are greedy.

# CHAPTER TWO
# CULTURAL CONTENT OF SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH TEXTBOOK SERIES

# CHAPTER TWO

# CULTURAL CONTENT OF <u>SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH</u> TEXTBOOK SERIES

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Account on Algerian Designed EFL Textbooks

    2.2.1 "Andy in Algeria" and "Spring"

2.3. Spotlight on English

    2.3.1. Cultural Content of Book One

    2.3.2. Cultural Content of Book Two

    2.3.3. Cultural Content of Book Three

2.4. Checklist for Evaluating the Cultural Content of <u>Spotlight on English</u> Series

    2.4.1. Physical Aspect

    2.4.2. Cultural Content

    2.4.3. Learners

2.5. Description of the Research

2.6. Conclusion

# CHAPTER TWO

# CULTURAL CONTENT OF <u>SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH</u>

# TEXTBOOK SERIES

## 2.1. Introduction

Principles in relation to teaching cultural patterns of the foreign language do insist on the unfruitfulness of a presentation of the language skills separated from the cultural component (see 1.4.2. pages 14-15). In addition to this, considering the theory related to textbook evaluation checklists, their aims and the extent and manner of dealing with the cultural content of EFL materials, the present research work seeks to provide an attempt of a personal checklist elaboration that strives to analyse the cultural content of the newly Algerian EFL textbooks: "<u>Spotlight on English</u>" series.

However, before going into deeper detail as far as the steps of the checklist elaboration are concerned, and before drawing up a list of the cultural aspects and themes suggested in the <u>Spotlight on English</u> series, it would be of great benefit to proceed by a skimming chronological overview of the adopted EFL textbooks in the Algerian Middle School. Still, this account focuses on the cultural dimension of the former textbooks, which is believed not to have been given its due right of importance. Also, our overview starts up from the 1970s when the "Middle School"[1] level was implemented in the Algerian educational system.

## 2.2. Account on Algerian Designed EFL Textbooks

By way of introduction, it would be wiser to state the aims and objectives that have governed EFL textbook implementation during the seventies and the eighties. As a matter of fact, English as described in the National Charter (1976) is considered as "**a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world, to have access to modern sciences, modern technologies and encourage creativity in its universal dimension**".

It is clear, then, that the first aim of ELT in Algeria has been to enable learners to develop their communicative abilities so as to interact with people from other nations. Communication would, therefore, give them easy access to " **materials written in English, knowing that one time or another, graduate or post-graduate students have to consult reference books which are available in no language but English"**(Benmoussat, 2003:120).

As such, starting from 1970s, EFL textbooks, have all been locally produced, and have all had linguistic competence in the foreign language as a first objective, not to say the only one. Culture, however, has, and until two years ago, been dissociated from language following a process of *'de-Anglicisation'* (Benmoussat 2003) [2] as it was considered as a threat to the national identity. English was, thus, taught in an Algerian context, and textbook-designers preferred to draw a clear line between the linguistic component of the target language and its original cultural setting. This preference is explained by the fact that Algerian textbook designers believed in the efficiency of meeting a foreign culture by means of the native language which would serve as an effective filter against all differences and ambiguities coming from the English culture (Hayane, 1989:286-287) [3]. Another explanation to dissociating language from culture is that, for Algerian textbook designers, initiating learners to a foreign culture had to be delayed to later levels so that focus would be made on linguistic proficiency only (Hayane, 1989:287) [4]. This could be done by bringing the English language to Algerian learners who were supposed to concentrate on the target language skills, being, then, deprived of its cultural patterns.

### 2.2.1. "Andy in Algeria" and "Spring"

By way of illustration, the two ELT textbooks "Andy in Algeria" (1970) intended to beginners in their 3rd grade of Middle education, and "Spring" (1984) which was designated to pupils of the 8th year of Foundation education, both reflect the view of linguistic dominance in EFL courses.

As matter of fact, the first textbook, Andy in Algeria, presents an English boy (Andy) visiting Algeria. Learners were, then to discover the target language which was taught in the native cultural context. In other words, apart from very few references to

the British culture, it was the Algerian social life with its cultural issues and perspectives which was being rediscovered by learners by means of another language. Instances of local cultural patterns are met throughout the whole units of the book, where there is an exhaustive use of Algerian characters who are to introduce Andy to the native culture. Table 2.1 shows examples of such issues.

| Local Cultural Aspects | Unit | Page |
|---|---|---|
| • Family ties | 06 | 29 |
| • Large family | 08 | 37 |
| • Algerian Clothing | 10 | 45 |
| • Sport in Algeria | 18 | 87 |
| • School life (Algerian timetable) | 19 | 92 |
| • Local geography | 25 | 119 |
| • Algerian food – meals' time | 29 | 145 |

Table 2.1 Dominance of Algerian cultural patterns in Andy in Algeria

The implementation of the Foundation school in 1984 was to remedy the failure of the adopted 'French school system' and then, a change in policy and methodology had to be undertaken. This has, actually, resulted in the implementation of a new textbook series "Spring" Book One and Book Two which was to replace Andy in Algeria and Madjid in England. What should be mentioned in this context is that the teaching following the foundation school principles was characterised by an over emphasis on learners' acquisition of factual knowledge by means of memorisation on the expense of the development of their critical and analytical thinking (Benmoussat 2003: 113). This reflected the great importance that was given to science and technology topics, while little emphasis was directed towards literary topics, and thus towards culture learning.

In this respect, the implemented ELT textbooks Spring one and Spring Two show the Algerian policy which was based on a clear avoidance of the presentation of foreign cultural issues. As such, almost all characters used were Algerian, apart from a mere introduction of an English penfriend. This shows the extent to which the local

perspective was omnipresent in the textbooks in question. In the <u>Spring</u> series " **the textbooks provide the learners with insights into their culture, they have been designed to meet their local needs, profiles and socio-linguistic environment**" Benmoussat (2003:153).

This leads us to say that acquiring and developing linguistic skills has been the unique aim of ELT in Algeria during the foundation school period, while foreign cultural patterns, if they happened to be referred to, have generally been used by language teachers as a means to focus on, and practise linguistic aspects. In other words, the cultural component of the target language has, in no way, been considered as an objective that language learners had to reach and understand. And when the target culture becomes a means – not an objective – it can easily be substituted by the learners' native culture; what the majority of Algerian teachers have, actually, done until the recent implementation of the <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbooks series.

## 2.3. Spotlight on English

The need for a radical change in foreign language pedagogy has recently been felt necessary to overcome the status of failure in language teaching in Algeria. Such a change, being urged by the necessity to cope with the tide of global integration, consists in bringing modifications on the whole Algerian educational system, including the teaching of foreign languages. As a matter of fact, a coming-back to the four-year middle school system has been chosen to reflect a new orientation towards a more open-minded policy as far as the teaching of English is concerned. As such, among new ideas that have been adopted by the Ministry of Education is the reconsideration of the teaching of cultural patterns of the target language along with its linguistic aspects. This is, actually, clearly noticeable in the newly-designed EFL textbooks "<u>Spotlight on English</u>" Book One(2003), Book Two(2004) and Book Three (2005), which are intended for beginners aged from 12 in their first year of middle school education.

What needs to be pointed out, in this context, is that up to now, three books have been designed respectively for 1st, 2nd and 3rd AM, and the descriptive analysis that follows concerns the three textbooks in question.

The <u>Spotlight on English</u> series carries the classical sections [5] aiming at developing learners' language skills, and notices the addition of a separate section entitled *"Learn about Culture"* in Book One and Two, and *"Snapshots of Culture"* in Book Three, where pupils are supposed to be introduced to some aspects of the target culture. As it is mentioned in the preface of Book One(page5), this section enables pupils to gain knowledge about other cultures so as to let them realise they (cultures) are different one from another; without feeling that a given culture is better than another; and through comparison, learners find similarities and differences as far as their native culture is concerned. This, finally, leads learners to acquire knowledge about others and about themselves.

Such objectives show clearly that, on the basis of intercultural methodological assumptions (see 1.4.3.2 pages 17-18) aiming at developing reflective attitudes in learners about their native culture, ELT in Algeria has shifted from the dominance of the development of language skills as an objective to the reconsideration of its original cultural patterns, now seen of equal importance as language mastery.

The following is a sketching overview of the cultural content introduced in the three textbooks. Emphasis is put on the sections *"Learn about Culture"* and *"Snapshots of Culture"* which are supposed to carry foreign cultural knowledge pupils have to get acquainted with.

### 2.3.1. Cultural Content of Book One

<u>Spotlight on English</u> Book One consists of seven files; each file is divided into three sequences. Every sequence is made up of two sections: *"Listen and Speak"* aiming at fostering pupils' oral and aural skills, *"Discover the Language"* where language structures are presented and practised. The section *"Learn about Culture"* occurs at the end of each file and provides learners with the following cultural data:

## File 01:

- Monuments and Places: Big Ben, Maqam Echahid.
- The British Royal Family.
- Countries, Currencies, Flags.

## File 02:

- Greetings: formal / informal.
- Celebrations.

## File 03:

- Sports and Countries.
- World Football Cups.
- National Games.

## File 04:

- Time zone Map.
- The English School.
- Animals.
- The Chinese Horoscope.

## File 05:

- Breakfast around the World.
- Countries and their Dishes.
- Celebrations and their Dishes.

## File 06:

- Cultural Quiz.
- Old Sayings.
- Origins of Sports.

## File 07:

- Environment.
- International Organisations.
- Sites in Algeria and around the World.
- The International Days.

(Spot Light on English, Book One: 2003: 09-12)

### 2.3.2. Cultural Content of Book Two

The second book of the <u>Spotlight on English Series</u> carries five files; each file consists of three sequences which aim at developing pupils' language skills. Following the same pattern of Book One, the target cultural aspects are presented in a separate section carrying the data following:

## File 01:

- Music around the world.

   Learners are introduced to the origins of the following musical genres: Chaabi – Rap – Classical Music – Rhythm & Blues – Hop Hop.

## File 02:

- Time line on Games.

   Descriptions of different games are provided to pupils: Crosswords – Palindromes – Chess – Puzzle – Monopoly – Criss-cross – Scrabble.

## File 03:

- Grandmothers' remedies / Colours and health.

   The section carries examples of home-made remedies and infusions used to cure: headaches, bee stings, colds, hiccups and burns.

   Also, pupils are introduced to notions of colour therapy, and are therefore provided with the benefits of the orange, indigo, purple, green, blue and yellow colours.

## File 04:

- C for Cartoons / Comic

   This sections defines what a cartoon/ comic is, and brings to pupils data about the origins of some famous cartoons : Yellow Kid – Zig Et Puce – Tintin – Superman – Lucky Luke – Bouzid – Asterix.

## File 05:

- Theatrical genres.

    This section aims at presenting to pupils short descriptions of some theatre genres: Comedy And Farce – Tragedy – Drama – Light Comedy – Kabuki – No .

    (Spot Light on English, Book Two: 2004: 124-125)

### 2.3.3. Cultural Content of Book Three

Slightly different in lay-out, Book Three is made up of four files; each file is composed of three sequences. What is different, however, is the shift from emphasis on oral/aural skills to the reading and the writing skills. Also, the section which is related to culture teaching, being, now entitled *"Snapshots of Culture"*, occurs after the language sections. Book Three provides pupils with the following target cultural items:

## File 01:

- Guards of Bear Killers
    - British Royal Life Guards. (Their clothing / people's attitudes towards them)

## File 02:

- Nessie
    - The Lock Ness.
    - Celebration in Scotland: Hogmanay.
    - Song: Auld Lang Syne.

## File 03:

- Schools in Britain.
    - System - Clothing - Timetable.

**File 04:**

- Love your Neighbour's Language.

     - English in the world. ( British   Vs  American )

(<u>Spot Light on English,</u> Book Three: 2005: 184-187).

The aforementioned foreign cultural patterns need to be evaluated by means of a checklist which measures the extent of relevance such knowledge in accordance with to foreign language educationalists suggest as far as EFL textbook cultural content is concerned.

## 2.4. Checklist for Evaluating the Cultural Content of <u>Spotlight on English</u> series

The following is a an attempt for a personal checklist elaboration against whose points the introduced foreign cultural knowledge of the three textbooks is analysed. Our checklist, therefore, evolves round three major areas, which most educationalists (see 1.5.4. page 27) insist on in order to reach a more or less objective analysis of the EFL materials' cultural load.

### 2.4.1. Physical Aspect

This section aims at describing the external appearance of the introduced cultural aspects as whether they are integrated or subordinate to language skills; or whether or not  they are authentic and appropriate to learners' own culture.

### 2.4.2. Cultural Content

Considered as the nucleus of the evaluation checklist, the objective of this section is to scrutinise the whole content of the *"Learn about Culture"* sections in terms of its congruency with the language teaching objectives, on the one hand, and its concordance to what educationalists propound as cultural content to be included in EFL textbooks on the other hand. (see 1.5.2 pages 22-23-24-25)

Also, under this section, local and other sub-cultural data are analysed as whether they induce learners to comparing/contrasting tasks, or to encourage them to adopt some neutral attitudes in what concerns differences and ambiguities they discover while going through the target cultural data.

### 2.4.3. Learners

The aim of this third part of our checklist is to measure the acceptability of the suggested cultural knowledge to learners' age , sex, needs, as well as to see whether such themes can be handled by our pupils regarding their linguistic background.

## The Checklist:

### Physical Aspect:

- Is culture omnipresent in the textbook or is it referred to naively?
- Is the cultural content integrated along with language skills?
- Is it subordinated to language skills?
- Is it authentic, i.e. reflecting aspects of British daily life?
- Does it include illustrations? If yes, are they appropriate to the learners' native culture?

### Cultural Content:

- Does the cultural content go along with the goals of the teaching method?
- Does it reflect other sub-cultures (British/American ...)?
- Is the local culture referred to in the textbook?
- Does it encourage comparison between cultures?
- Does it show any variety of cultural aspects?
- Does is show any aspects relating to moral or religious beliefs?
- Does it reflect social interactions between members of the English speaking community (e.g. levels of formality)?
- Does it include aspects related to people's behaviours (e.g. daily routines)?
- Does it provide knowledge about people's social life (e.g. families, schools, employment)?

- Does it show historical dates and events which are parts of the target community's national identity?
- Does it provide learners with knowledge about the geography where the target language is used as a native or a first language?
- Does it refer to social and political institutions?
- Does it present information about the arts and achievements of the target community?
- Does it include taboo topics that may hurt both the teachers and learners?
  **Learners:**
- Is the cultural knowledge acceptable to learners in terms of their :
    - Age.
    - Sex.
    - Interests.
    - Linguistic background.

Moreover, the practical implementation of culture teaching by English language teachers has to be referred to, as it is a crucial parameter which might mostly affect the whole process of foreign language and culture teaching and learning.

## 2.5. Description of the Research

Our research has been conducted following two steps, which, we believe would lead to the final conclusion as far as the relevance of teaching the target language separately from its culture without prior training for our language teachers. Therefore, the first part consists in examining the cultural content of the "Spotlight on English" textbooks by means of a personal checklist as described earlier. The second part of our research aims at measuring the extent to which our language teachers can be effective in purveying learners with foreign cultural information, and the impact of this cultural load on their linguistic and communicative ability. For this purpose, two questionnaires have been dispatched to English language teachers and textbook designers.

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 15 question-items (see Appendix III) related to three major aspects of target culture teaching:

- How teachers undertake the task of culture lessons presentation.
- The effects of the target cultural knowledge of pupils' language learning.
- Teachers' self-evaluation of their personal achievement in culture lessons.

The analysis of the our teachers' answers is done on the basis of their experience in teaching. For this purpose, answers are grouped into three categories: 1) teachers having less than ten years of experience, 2) those who have more than ten years, 3) teachers who have been in the field of teaching for more than 20 years. Such a classification would, certainly, have its influence on our colleagues' answers. It should be mentioned in this context that, on the one hand, all the informants (60 Middle School Teachers) have been teaching for at least three years, and on the other hand, they are all in charge of, at least, two levels of classes. This, actually, shows that they have all had the opportunity to use two of the three Spotlight on English textbooks, and are, thus, well informed of the nature of the target cultural content of the coursebooks.

The questionnaire intended for the Spotlight on English textbooks designers includes six questions (see Appendix III) which try to cover the following areas:

- Aims of including target cultural knowledge at so early a stage as Middle School Education in ELT in Algeria.
- Reasons for having placed the cultural component at a subordinate level to the linguistic one.
- Criteria accounted for in the selection of such content.

Pupils who are the backbone in the teaching/learning process were, also, a valuable source of information in relation to :

- The nature on the topics of the culture lessons as far as their needs and interests.
- The impact of such knowledge on their linguistic proficiency.
- The cultural topics they wish not to have in lessons.

For this purpose, classroom discussion sessions (three sessions of 55 minutes each) have been carried out with 1st, 2nd and 3rd AM pupils to talk about the aforementioned points. What needs to be underlined, in this context, is that it was the mother tongue which was used mostly considering pupils' elementary linguistic level.

The choice for this procedure of collecting data is certainly driven by a will of having a considerable number of answers and opinions, which, we believe have undoubtedly served the objectivity of the results attained. In addition to this, many teachers might prefer answering anonymously to questions in relation to their practice, especially to those which directly inquire for the teaching of culture, a field of language teaching in which very few are experienced. Parallel to this, some of our data have been taken from informal interviews with teachers, learners and language inspectors.

## 2.6. Conclusion

The implementation of new textbooks in ELT in Algeria has been the first step of a process of change aiming at equipping learners with the necessary tools which might enable them to use the English language in the most optimal conditions possible. This change, in addition to be primarily characterised by the adoption of a new teaching methodology, is reflected by the introduction of the cultural component of the foreign language as part of the EFL course.

Still, having opted for devoting a separate section for the target cultural aspects in the textbooks might raise more than a question especially in relation to the degree of importance language teachers would show to this new task in comparison with sections that deal with developing learners' linguistic abilities. Furthermore, the choice of this specific target cultural knowledge and its impact on learners' communicative abilities need to be measured and analysed by means of a checklist whose aim is to determine the convenience of these themes in relation to what educationalists suggest.

# Notes to Chapter Two

1.  Starting from the independence up to the late 1960's, the Algerian school system was a continuation of the French one that was followed during the colonisation. Among the prominent changes noticed was the one of the adoption of the Foundation school during which pupils had to spend six years in Primary education and three years in three years in Middle education. As for English, learners were initiated to the language in their $8^{th}$ and $9^{th}$ grades. The number of hours allocated to ELT was 4 hours for pupils of the 8AF, and 5 hours for those of the 9AF. However, the recent changes implemented in 2003 noticed a coming back to the four-year Middle School system. English is, now, introduced to pupils at their first year of Middle education (1AM). The number of hours allotted to learning English is unchanged for the four years, i.e. three hours a week.

2.  See Benmoussat (2003, Chapter Four:227).

3.  " En décidant d'apprendre à nos élèves la langue anglaise dans le cadre de vie algérien, les auteurs du manuels ont choisi de séparer cette langue de sa culture. Deux explications de ce choix sont possibles. La première serait l'application de la conception officieuse sinon officielle, selon laquelle il est préférable de rencontrer une culture étrangère au moyen de la langue maternelle ou nationale, c'est-à-dire de traduire cette culture, de la passer au filtre de la langue nationale…" (Hayane, 1989:286-287).

4.  " La deuxième explication pourrait être la suivante : la rencontre avec la civilisation anglaise et se culture est remise à plus tard, pour permettre une plus grande concentration d'action et d'intérêt sur la langue uniquement " (Hayne, 1989:287)

5.  Spotlight on English Book One and Book Two have been designed following the same layout:
    There are three sequences in each file. Each sequence carries two sections: '*Listen and Speak*' and '*Discover the Language*' or '*Practise*' , followed by the '*Learn about Culture*' section. The file closes with a ' *reminder*' which is supposed to pave the way to  the learner for the ' *Check*' section whose aim is the pupil's self-evaluation. (Book  One does not open with a layout-section).
    Book Three has got almost the same pattern:
    Each file is made of three sequences. Each sequence is constituted of three sections: '*Listen and Speak*', '*Read and Write I*' and ' *Read and Write II*'. Then occurs the culture section entitled '*Snapshots of Culture*', followed by an '*Overview*' section which aims at more practice and self-assessment (see Appendix V)
    It should, also, be noted that the title chosen for the textbooks appears in two different written forms: Spot Light on English , in Book One, and Spotlight on English in Book three. It is, however, absent from the cover paper of Book Two, and appears only on the first page as Spotlight on English.

# CHAPTER THREE
# ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF <u>SPOTLIGHT</u> <u>ON ENGLISH</u> TEXTBOOK SERIES

# CHAPTER THREE

# ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF <u>SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH</u> TEXTBOOK SERIES

**3.1. Introduction**

**3.2. Analysis of the Cultural Content of <u>Spotlight on English</u> Textbook Series**

**3.2.1. Book One**

3.2.1.1. Physical Aspect

*3.2.1.1.1 ."Learn about Culture" Section*

*3.2.1.1.2. Authenticity*

3.2.1.2. Cultural Content

*3.2.1.2.1. Aims*

*3.2.1.2.2. Local Culture Vs Foreign Culture*

*3.2.1.2.3. Cultural Aspects Vs Theory*

3.2.1.3. Cultural Content in Relation with Learners

*3.2.1.3.1. Age*

*3.2.1.3.2. Sex*

*3.2.1.3.3. Interests*

*3.2.1.3.4. Linguistic Background*

**3.2.2. Book Two**

3.2.2.1. Physical Aspect

*3.2.2.1.1. "Learn about Culture" Sections*

*3.2.2.1.2. Authenticity*

3.2.2.2. Cultural Content

*3.2.2.2.1. Aims*

*3.2.2.2.2. Local Culture Vs Target Culture*

*3.2.2.2.3. Cultural Aspects Vs Theory*

# CHAPTER THREE

# ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF <u>SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH</u> TEXTBOOK SERIES

## 3.1. Introduction

As it has been mentioned in the first chapter, the advent of CLT in Algeria has restored value to the cultural aspect of the foreign language in ELT, and has thus contributed to the understanding of the necessary shift from an approach based largely on form and structure to a theory founded on a seamless relationship between the teaching of the target language and that of its culture. For this purpose, the writings of scholars like Stern(1992), Byram(1999) , Kramsch (1993,1998), Hinkel (1998) discuss the possibility of including target cultural components in foreign language curricula.

Algerian textbook-designers, following the tide of change in ELT, have opted for certain cultural data that Middle School learners are supposed to handle, and have, thus, preferred to mark this shift by devoting separate sections for cultural knowledge in the newly-implemented ELT textbooks. Still, what remains to be referred to in this context, is our language teachers' ability to cope with their new task in teaching language skills as well as foreign cultural knowledge.

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a thorough analysis of the target cultural aspects included in the three <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbooks following the previously described points of our cultural evaluation checklist. In addition to this, the convenience of the cultural knowledge to both learners and teachers is discussed on the basis of the results and answers obtained in our data collection for this purpose.

## 3.2. Analysis of the Cultural Content of <u>Spotlight on English</u> Textbook Series

The procedure followed in analysing the cultural aspects introduced in the three ELT <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbooks is done according to the suggested points of our checklist (see 2.4. page 41-42-43). In this respect, despite the fact that the three textbooks share some common points especially those in relation to the physical aspect

in which cultural knowledge is portrayed, we have preferred to deal with each book in isolation, seeing that such a way of proceeding would be much more objective, namely when attention is drawn to so important points as the gradation of the cultural content throughout the three textbooks.

### 3.2.1. Book One

As it has been mentioned before, the Algerian educational system has recently noticed changes aiming at a betterment of the teaching/learning process outputs. Among the changes that ELT methodology has particularly seen is the implementation of textbooks reflecting the orientations of the newly adopted approach which, among its objectives [1], aims at giving foreign language learners insights into **"foreign cultures which use English as a national or official language** (Teacher's Handbook, 2003:8).

#### 3.2.1.1.Physical Aspect

##### 3.2.1.1.1.*"Learn about Culture" Section*

What one would notice at a first glance at the content of the newly-designed textbook is the fact that it carries a separate section entitled *"Learn about Culture"* at the end of each of the seven files of the book. The use of the term 'culture' itself may reflect the shift to an open-minded policy of the designers who, once, considered initiating learners to a foreign culture as a potential threat to the national identity [2]. Still, having devoted a separate section to such a purpose may induce one to think that according to "Spotlight on English" textbook designers teaching culture has to be dealt with in isolation, and developing learners' cultural competence should occur at a subordinate stage to linguistic patterns. As a matter of fact, educationalists, namely Kramsch (1993), view that culture should, in no way, be considered as a fifth skill to be dealt with separately from other skills. In addition to that, such a dissociation might either lead teachers to emphasise linguistic competence over cultural competence, or to neglect the section about culture as a whole especially when time constraints are evoked. This has, actually, largely been expressed by our language teachers while answering a question (see Appendix III, question 5)related to the importance of culture lessons as compared to language skills ones. More than half of our informants do, in

fact, move to presenting lessons dealing with target language skills without going through culture lessons. Some clearly note that they deal with foreign culture lessons when their is enough time for that, while one teacher points that he just deals with target cultural patterns if such data is important.

Attention should be drawn to a very important point in this context, which is that foreign cultural aspects are also present in the sections dealing with language patterns. Paradoxically, this might end with language teachers either in emphasising language skills over cultural knowledge or vice-versa.

### 3.2.1.1.2. Authenticity

In foreign language teaching, the selection and use of materials as texts, pictures and other supports needs to conform to certain norms, the most important of which might be the authentic characteristic of such items.

Educationalists like Little and Singleton describe an authentic text as **"a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced"** Little and Singleton (1988, in Kramsch 1993:177).

Kramsch (1993), on her part, sees that the written form of authentic texts would undoubtedly induce learners to adopt the communicative reading strategies of native speakers, namely skimming and scanning for particular data, identifying clues from the context or eventually determining the intention of the writer. Similarly, spoken forms of authentic texts **"require from participants to respond with behaviours that are socially appropriate to the setting and situation of the interlocutors, their relationship and the type of interaction which occurs between them"**. (Kramsch 1993:178)

No one would, in this context, disavow the virtue of the use authentic texts and visual aids in a language class. Emphasis is, especially, put on the great benefit that learners would take from facing real instances from the target language as being effectively used amongst its speakers.

However, certain areas of language teaching might make it imperative for teachers to adopt some sort of artificial materials, namely when they aim at presenting

51

language structures. Still, the possibility of adapting an authentic text so as to make it serve the objective of a grammar lesson is still preferred.

Culture teaching, on its part, can undoubtedly not be achieved on the basis of a use of non-authentic materials, seeing that its primary objective is to enable learners to get familiar with real instances of the target community's life. In this respect, educationalists, namely Kramsch (1993), insist on language teachers to make use of authentic texts while conveying aspects of the target culture to their learners.

As far as the selected cultural aspects presented in Book One are concerned, it is noticeable that the seven 'culture sections' give genuine cultural data despite some artificial texts (Sport in Scotland, page 75 / Schools in Britain, page 96 ) which have a descriptive aim of some aspects of life in Britain. This could be explained by the linguistic background of learners which is, at such a stage, one might admit, still elementary, and therefore requires adaptation so as to bring such content to their reach.

In the same line of thought, some sections of "Spotlight on English" include illustrations namely pictures and drawings, and the first impression that we might have is that some of these are not that clear to enable learners to identify their content without difficulty; those of page 32 showing monuments and of page 116 dealing with food particularly. Such a remark does not apply to all of the illustrations included in the book, since the majority of them are drawings as the ones on page 56 showing celebrations.

In the same context, a picture being worth a million words, can undoubtedly help teachers illustrate the cultural content they want to convey, provided that it is free from any sort of ambiguity or clumsiness capable of misleading learners' understanding.

### 3.2.1.2. Cultural Content

#### 3.2.1.2.1. Aims

To begin analysing what aspects of foreign culture "Spotlight on English" carries, it would be wiser to mention again the wider objectives of the implemented method in teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria, and measure the extent to which the cultural content of the book corresponds and works for reaching such objectives. As a matter of fact, the new adopted approach in foreign language education takes roots from

a competency-based methodology aiming at developing learners' personal competencies which would enable them to face social and intellectual problem-solving situations they might encounter. As such, it is learners' autonomous behaviour which is targeted. As regards culture learning, it is clearly stated in the preface of the textbook (page 5) that gaining insights into foreign cultures would help learners, through comparison, deduce that all cultures are different and, by no means, should one be preferred to another.

However, while going through the seven sections of "Spotlight on English", one would notice clearly that all content included deals with descriptive data of British, American and local cultures, and not a single task does urge pupils towards drawing conclusions as for not to favour foreign cultural aspects or behaviours over native ones. Such an absence of critical-thinking tasks from "Spotlight on English" can be explained by the fact that 1st AM learners' age would not allow them to reach so high a level of thinking; although some educationalists, Ellis (2004) notably, see that learners' young age can, actually, be taken as a favourable point as far as developing their critical thinking is concerned, seeing that young **"children are usually curious, interested and prejudice-free …they generally have positive attitudes and rarely make judgements about other cultures"**. (Ellis, 2004:14)

### 3.2.1.2.2. Local Culture Vs Foreign Culture

Introducing foreign culture in ELT in Algeria is based on an intercultural methodology aiming, on the one hand at providing learners with aspects of the British culture and other sub-cultures, and on the other hand at letting pupils, through active or passive comparative behaviour, depict what is similar and what is different between other cultures and the local one (see 1.4.3.2. pages 17-18-19).

In this regard, Book One does make use of the learners' native culture throughout the seven sections, and to a larger extent, incites them to adopt some sort of comparative behaviour in the majority of the themes treated in the book. Instances of this are met in Section Two (page 56) which deals with celebrating Christmas or Halloween in Great Britain, and which mentions Eid El Fitr as a local religious feast.

However, what should be mentioned in this context is that in some sections, the local culture is not considered as an already acquired piece of knowledge, but it is

presented to learners in the same way as foreign culture is. An instance of this is seen in Section 05 (page 116) where learners are to discover aspects of eating habits among British culture users, and equally gain insights into eating habits in Algeria. This is certainly due to the fact that not all local cultural knowledge is supposed to be already acquired since culture acquisition, just like language acquisition, is a life-time process.

### 3.2.1.2.3. *Cultural Aspects Vs Theory*

It is, actually, not the variety of aspects reflecting foreign cultures that lacks throughout the sections of Book One, since each of them provides learners with one area or more from American, British and native cultures. As such, the cultural topics generally go in parallel with the overall themes of the whole file. This has, therefore, a positive impact on learners as it ensures a certain continuity on the same theme going from language to culture sections of the book. This is clearly reflected in our colleagues' answers as a considerable number of teachers see that the impact of the suggested cultural items is clearly seen on learners' linguistic abilities, at the lexical level notably (see Appendix III, question 10). The following table illustrates clearly this correspondence between the theme/function in each file and the cultural data presented:

| File | Theme / Function | Cultural Topic |
|------|------------------|----------------|
| 01 | • Greeting / Countries / Nationalities | • Monuments and Sites |
| 02 | • Introducing People | • Formal / Informal greeting forms / Celebrations and Greetings. |
| 03 | • Describing Sports | • Sports and Games in Britain and Scotland. |
| | | • British School / Time-zone map. |
| 04 | • Routine and Time | • Breakfast in Foreign Cultures/ |
| 05 | • Talking about food | Celebrations and their different dishes. |
| 06 | • Narrating | • Inventions / Dates / Origins of Sports. |
| 07 | • Weather / Environment | • International Organisations / Sites around the world. |

Table 3.1 Relationship between the theme / function and the cultural content of the textbook.

Table 3.1 shows clearly the diversity in cultural data that Spotlight on English textbook-designers have opted for. As for correspondence of such content with the cultural topic-areas that educationalists suggest, it is clear that Book One includes themes dealing with people's behaviours as daily life activities (Section 3, page 75), and samples of their social interactions as degrees of formality in language (Section 2, page 56), or the use of the Britons and Americans of idioms and other expressions which are part of their daily spoken language. Such knowledge is introduced in Section 06 (page 137) which suggests to learners some expressions like *"as brave as a lion"* or *"as sly as a fox"* .What is more, the textbook provides learners with knowledge related to the British social life when making a description of the British school system (Section 4, page 96), or examples of celebrations among British and American societies (Section 2, page 56).

Concerning history and important events that have marked the target community's life, the textbook gives learners sketching views into some facts of the British history like the Roman colonisation (Section 6, page 137), and also brings to them some important dates as those relating to the emergence of some musical genres, or the dates and origins of some popular sports (Section 6, page 138).

Furthermore, pictures of the daily life of people belonging to the British culture or other subcultures are brought to pupils in a very simplified manner so as to help them gain knowledge about how the British or Americans view life, and about what constitutes their general knowledge and understanding of the social patterns. Simplified data about such knowledge are met throughout some sections of the textbook as in Section 03 (page 75) where learners discover the importance that Scottish people give to sport, or the high status that a pet might have in an American family (Section 4, page 97).

As far as the arts and achievements that are part of the general repertoire of a Briton or an American and into which learners are supposed to gain insights, it is clearly noticeable that the "Spotlight on English" textbook designers have referred to such a cultural area in a very naive way since great emphasis is put on music only (Section 6, page 138). Having discarded other forms of English artistic cultural patterns, and having opted for the introduction of knowledge about musical genres only could be explained

by the interest that young learners give to such a domain. Yet, other forms of arts (see 1.5.2.2.3, page 25) could be introduced and might certainly have an equally interested audience among pupils.

Also, very little reference has been made to some political institutions of the British society, and only some international organisations are provided in Section 7 (page 160) as the UNESCO or UNICEF with which learners are to get familiar.

What is surprising, and does make great lack in Book One as a whole is the absence of a geographical representation of the British Isles or The USA. Neither the age nor the needs or interests of learners can explain the fact of preventing them from discovering and getting familiar with the geography of the British or American countries.

Among other points that lack in the textbook is the religious aspect, and apart from mentioning some celebrations as Christmas (Section 2, page 56), no clear reference is made as far as what sort of religious practices constitute the spiritual side of the British society.

What is worth mentioning at the end of the analysis of the cultural load of "Spotlight on English" Book One is that the whole textbook provides descriptive pictures of the British, American or other English-speaking communities. Yet, some elements in selecting the cultural content might have been taken into consideration by textbook designers as the fact that some of the cultural knowledge has to be delayed to later stages as it requires a certain degree of linguistic proficiency on the part of $1^{st}$ AM learners.

### 3.2.1.3. Cultural Content in Relation with Learners

Opting for a given aspect of the target culture to be included in an EFL course, and discarding another is believed to be a daunting task. Consideration should, therefore, be given to many a criterion, and the most important of them is certainly the learner himself who is supposed to take benefit from this knowledge. As such, some variables amongst pupils are to be taken into account while choosing the cultural content of a textbook, notably their age, sex, needs and linguistic background.

### 3.2.1.3.1. Age

As stated earlier, learners' young age might be considered by some educationalists as a serious impediment to successful foreign culture teaching, asserting arguments related to a possible poor linguistic background. As supported by Rose (British Council, 2002), such assumptions prove not to be relevant any longer, since she sees that :

> **"Previously, cultural awareness has often only been seen as something for advanced learners…This is partly due to the all-too often frequent error of assuming that students with a low level of English also have a low intellect generally".**(Rose 2002**)**

Such beliefs have, actually, led language teachers to focus on some specific tasks while presenting cultural information. They may emphasise on classroom discussion tasks, or proceed by mere direct exposition and explanation of foreign cultural data, as they have generally been intended for students of advanced levels (Rivers 1981:234).

Other theoreticians, however, view that it is only when learners are young that better culture learning occurs, seeing that the final aim through that is not gaining a certain amount of cultural knowledge only, but the development of sympathetic thoughts of understanding and tolerance towards foreign culture users. Such a conceptual objective is believed to be easily reachable when the whole process of culture teaching begins at early stages. Ellis (2004: 15) describes children as being **"shrewd observers…** [and] **prejudice free"**. These two characteristics are, undoubtedly, in favour of foreign culture learning and would certainly serve, in the most optimal ways, the final objective of such process.

As for Book One, it seems that learners' age has to a large extent been the influencing parameter in the selection of the cultural topic-areas. In this regard, the reference to games that British or Scottish children play (Section Three, page 75), and the exhaustive use of young-aged characters throughout the suggested themes do reflect such an influence. Other topics that can easily be grasped by young pupils are met in Section Four (page 96) which describes school life of English children of the same age.

Still, some other suggested cultural aspects do not seem to be at the reach of so young children's understanding. Attention, here, is particularly drawn to topics as environment protection and international organisations concerned with preserving forests, animals and historical sites around the world (Section Seven, page 159).

### 3.2.1.3.2. Sex

Of equal importance in selecting cultural content of ELT textbooks is the learner's sex, as some topics might gain considerable interest among female pupils, and may demotivate male learners, or vice versa.

In Book One, it is noted that the majority of the suggested topics hardly discriminate male from female learners and thus address them as being individuals not boys or girls. Such a remark does not, however, include Section Three (page 75) dealing with sports practised around the world, and which might draw male learners' attention more; or Section Five (Page 115 – 116) dealing with culinary habits of the English community which would certainly motivate female learners to a higher degree.

### 3.2.1.3.3. Interests

Foreign culture learning cannot be effectively accomplished if the selected themes do not meet the pupils' needs and interests. Consequently, trying to provide learners with target cultural aspects which do not raise up their interests might lead them to some form of detachment, demotivation and indifference towards the foreign culture and its users.

In the same vein, the selection of the cultural data of Book One has, to a larger extent, been made by taking into account such a criterion. This can, actually, be seen in the suggested themes of the culture sections which, one must admit, do reflect pupils' interests, notably topics as sports, games, schooling and music. Yet, issues as world environmental organisations and their roles in fauna and flora protection might not sustain as much high a degree of interest amongst pupils.

### 3.2.1.3.4. Linguistic Background

The difficulty of presenting cultural knowledge to learners having a more or less a limited linguistic background has interested educationalists as Rivers(1981) and Brown (1994). In this regard some believe that culture learning should be restricted to university students who are supposed to have some advanced linguistic level, arguing that without this learners would be unable to handle cultural information, namely when the majority of tasks assigned to them evolve round a direct use of the target language (Rivers 1981). Focus is made, then, on classroom discussion and report presentations.

In this way, introducing the teaching of the British culture to Middle School learners who experience English for the first time might seem to be a very hard task for teachers if we consider that a minimum linguistic background is needed to get started in culture learning. In the same context, over half of the teachers questioned agree that the suggested cultural content of the Spotlight on English textbooks suits their learners as far as their needs, and interests are concerned. What is noted, however, is that 25 out 60 of them see that what is proposed in the textbooks is clearly divergent with pupils' age, gender, and in a particular way to their elementary linguistic level. However, going from the theoretical idea that foreign language learning should go alongside with target culture learning, it becomes quite feasible to initiate beginners to both, provided that they be presented in the same degree of difficulty and following the same patterns of gradation.

Concerning Book One, it should be noted in this context that the textbook opens with a section entitled "*You Know English*" (pages 13-18) whose aim is to reactivate the very small amount of English learners have acquired from their surrounding environment or from other previous formal learning experiences. As such, former knowledge of the Latin alphabet and of some English words and expressions is capable of decreasing learners' anxiety towards a first experience of the English language. As regards culture, it is obvious that the linguistic background of the pupils at such a stage can, actually, not be considered as an obstacle to culture learning, seeing that the great majority of the selected topics, not to say all of them do not require a higher degree of linguistic proficiency than what learners are supposed to have acquired throughout the sections aiming at developing their language skills. Table 3.1 shows clearly the

correspondence of the language skills with the cultural themes to be introduced to learners.

### 3.2.2. Book Two

#### 3.2.3.3.Physical Aspect

The second book of the Spotlight on English series has been implemented a year after the first one. As described before (see 2.3.2, page 39), the textbook is made of five files which all end with the *"Learn about Culture"* Section which, as presented in the structure of the textbook, serves learners as being **"a guided tour to open a window on the culture of English speaking countries. Short and simple pieces of writing and activities will guide** [learners] **in discovering and exploring texts and documents related to topics"** (Book Two, Page 5).

#### 3.2.2.1.1. *"Learn about Culture" Sections*

The occurrence of cultural data in a separate section after language skills shows, on the one hand, the pursuing in dissociating the teaching of culture from that of the language, and presents, on the other hand, culture learning as subordinate to foreign language skills development. Still, it is easily noticeable that some files present target cultural knowledge within language sections as in File One (Figures as artists and writers), File Two (Places of interest in Scotland). However, as it has been noted before, focus, in our research, is put on the aspects presented in the *Learn about Culture* Sections only, seeing that they are the ones which draw language teachers' attention to culture teaching. In other words, while dealing with language skills enhancement, teachers might use foreign cultural data as a means to achieve some linguistic goals, and would aim to provide learners with cultural knowledge when they are dealing with the *Learn about Culture* Sections primarily.

### 3.2.2.1.2. Authenticity

While going through the content of the culture sections of Book Two, it has been noted that all of them consist of texts which are, in the most general case, accompanied by illustrations. As for texts, the first observation that can be drawn is that all of them seem to have been prefabricated by textbook designers certainly to make them at the reach of pupils' linguistic background. Furthermore, no reference is made, at any part of Book Two, as far as these descriptive passages have been taken or adapted from.

Concerning illustrations, Book Two makes use of a small number of pictures and drawings, when compared to what has been introduced in Book One. Moreover, the inadequate size of the majority of illustrations makes some of them inexpressive, and might be misleading to learners, those of Section One (page 21) and Section Two (page 41) notably. Also, it has been noted that two pictures of the three suggested in Section Three (page 65) and which are supposed to correspond to the theme of "Grandmother's Remedies", do not show any relationship with the cultural topic of the section. These remarks do not, actually, apply to the drawings of cartoon characters and comics included in Section Four and which, one must admit, would be the most motivating and attractive to learners' attention.

As a general conclusion to the physical aspect of the introduced cultural data in Book Two, one would, undoubtedly, notice that none of the sections contains typically British or American cultural facts, but rather themes related to some general cultural knowledge.

### 3.2.3.3.Cultural Content

### 3.2.2.2.1. Aims

Before going into an in-depth analysis of the suggested foreign cultural patterns in Book Two, it would be beneficial to state again how *"Learn about Culture"* Section is presented to learners. As such, Book Two opens with a descriptive plan (pages 4-5-6) aiming at introducing the structure of the second coursebook to learners. In this regard, *"Learn about Culture"* Section in Book Two is supposed to be **"an open window on**

**the English speaking countries and their cultures**(<u>Spotlight on English</u>, Book Two,2004:5).

Following this line of thought, and to specify the sought objectives of culture teaching in ELT for Middle School learners, it is noticeable that the great majority of subjects introduced in Book Two is not restricted to British or American cultural patterns particularly. In other words, culture sections of the second <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbook provide pupils with a variety of topics which do not all give them insights into British or American culture in particular, nor are they representative of other English speaking countries as described in the objectives of the *Learn about Culture* Sections.

As such, the cultural content of the five sections of Book Two supply learners with what could be described as features belonging to "world or universal culture" [3]. By way of example, using home-made remedies for curing an illness (Section Three page 65) is, actually, a behaviour that can be found in all societies. The same remark might apply for patterns showed in Section Two (page 41) which introduce pupils to origins of language games throughout the world; or for Section Five (page 111) in which different theatrical genres are described without the least reference to those that can be found in England.

Still, some sections do make reference to some British or American cultural patterns, as in Section One (page 21) which brings to learners historical facts about origins of some musical genres as Rap or R&B. Other instances of American cultural aspects are found in Section Four (page 89) in which pupils are presented with some world famous comic heroes as "Yellow Kid".

In sum, and to bring an answer to the second criterion of our cultural checklist evaluation which questions whether the suggested cultural themes of Book Two reflect other sub-cultures of English speaking communities, it is clear that British, American or other sub-cultural aspects are considerably eclipsed on the expense of world-cultural knowledge, as the following diagram shows.

British
8%

American
15%

- British
- American
- Sub-culture
- Local
- Other

Other
57%

Sub-culture
8%

Local
12%
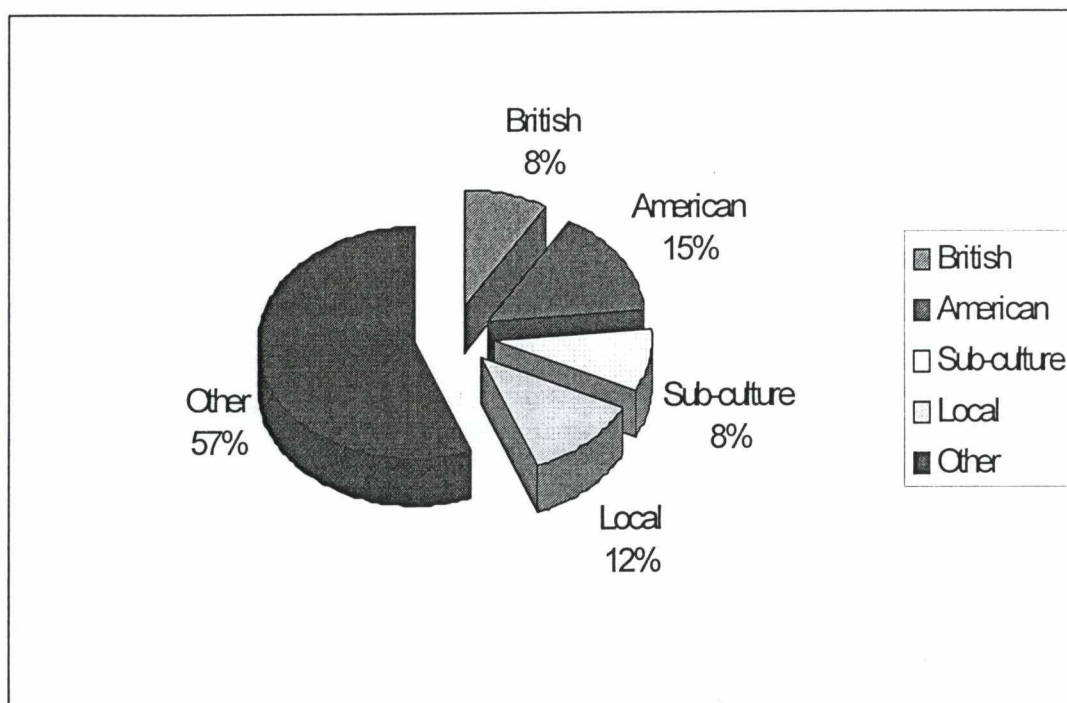
Diagram 3.1 Portrayal of Cultural Aspects in the Culture Sections of Book Two.

In the same vein, the relevance of presenting a considerable amount of world cultural patterns is questioned as far as the impact of these data on foreign language learning. In other words, one might ask how can French (Section Four, page 89) or Japanese (Section Five, page 111) cultural knowledge serve pupils in terms of linguistic competence development. This does, of course, not mean that such knowledge is in no way beneficial to learners, still, what is presented to them throughout the culture sections of the book does not seem to coincide with the objectives of these sections, being an open window on the culture of English speaking countries, to use the textbook designers' words.

### 3.2.2.2.2. Local Culture Vs Target Culture

As it has been mentioned in Chapter One, intercultural learning cannot be achieved if focus is made on one culture only, be it the foreign or the learner's culture. On the contrary, it is only by considering both cultural patterns that cross-cultural competence can be fostered. Being so, local culture does, actually, have its importance

in the process of culture learning as it is taken as a point of departure from which comparison tasks between the target and the local cultures are designed. In other words, the whole process of foreign culture learning does not rely only on providing learners with aspects of the target or the native culture, but rather on comparison that should be drawn between both of them, so as to enable learners to develop a reflective attitude towards their own cultural patterns.

In this respect, although Book Two has been designed to be a continuation of Book One, and thus to follow the same procedure in dealing with the native culture, it has been noticed that very little reference has been made to learners' native culture. As a matter of fact, the first four sections of Book Two bring to pupils aspects of different cultures, and no one of them presents similar or corresponding data drawn from the local culture; apart from mentioning questions like *"Do you know other games?"* (Section Two page 41), *"What do you do when you have a headache?"* (Section Three, page 65), or *"Do read cartoons?"* (Section Four, page 89). Consequently, apart from Section One (page 21) which presents *"Chaabi"* as a local musical genre, the learners' native culture seems not to have had its due right of presence in Book Two. On the other hand, with such an issue, learners might have very little chance to practise any sort of compare/contrast activities, since the answers they could suggest might either be drawn from general cultural knowledge. In this respect, knowing the rules of a game, or the fact of reading cartoons or not, do not both show pictures of the very local cultural frame learners belong to. Such a lack does, undoubtedly, not work in favour of target cultural learning, nor does it serve the wider objectives of tolerance and mutual cultural understanding, especially if such aims should be attained through intercultural-based teaching principles.

### 3.2.2.2.3. *Cultural Aspects Vs Theory*

At first glance, Book Two seems to focus on cultural knowledge that is not typically representative of the British, American or other English speaking society. Such diversity of cultural themes can be viewed as positive from the angle of providing pupils with a certain amount of knowledge related to practices of other societies. Still, bringing to learners facts and pictures belonging to British or American speech

communities would certainly have far more positive effects on them in the sense that they get knowledge about people whose first language is the learners' target one.

In the same vein, and while going through the suggested cultural data of Book Two, it has been noticed that textbook designers have, to a large extent, put emphasis on knowledge that is related to the area of arts and achievement. Learners are, therefore, provided with much information dealing with the origins of arts like musical genres (Section One, page 21), origins of word games (Section Two, page 41), famous cartoons and drawing-strips (Section Four, page 89), or knowledge in relation with some theatrical genres (Section Five, page 111). Section three (page 65), on its part, helps pupils gain insights into some common behaviours while using home-made remedies to cure a headache or a sore throat. However, the question that might be asked, in this context, is why having opted for such type of cultural knowledge; and why having left out data in relation to British or American daily behaviours or to the history of these societies? It can, actually, be understood that pupils at such an age are much interested in cartoons or games; still, providing them with other instances of representative pictures from the English speaking societies would certainly be of great benefit to them. In addition to this, other cultural areas could have been referred to as the geography of Great Britain or of The United States which have been discarded in Book One and in Book Two.

Moreover, the selection of the foreign cultural data of Book Two has been made on the basis of an emphasis on fine arts, achievements and games; and despite the above mentioned lacking topic areas, the sections of culture learning are, actually, free of any content or illustrations that might hurt learners' or teachers' personal cultural or religious beliefs.

### 3.2.2.3  Cultural Content in Relation with Learners

The selection of the cultural knowledge of an ELT textbook can, undoubtedly, not be achieved adequately if learners' age, sex and interests are not taken into consideration, since these variables can, actually, affect the whole process of culture learning. In other words, a given target cultural aspect might sustain learners' interests of a certain age, and might equally be uninteresting if it is intended to pupils of another

category of age. Similarly, female pupils would, certainly, show a different degree of interest towards some topics from male ones. Still, the whole process of target culture teaching/learning might directly be impeded if culture lessons deal with subjects which require from learners a high level of linguistic proficiency.

### 3.2.2.3.1. Age

Many educationalists insist on learners' young age to start teaching them the culture of the target language. As such, the choice of samples drawn from target culture societies to be introduced in textbooks should, actually, be done thoroughly bearing in mind pupils' age.

Put into practice, Spotlight on English Book Two presents a variety of cultural themes which, at first glance, seem to be adequate for learners aged from 12 to 13. By way of example, Book Two brings to learners cultural topics which are mostly related to leisure like games (Section Two, page 41), cartoons and comics (Section Four, page 89) or musical genres (Section One, 21). This would, certainly, help teachers have a motivated audience within their classes. However, the last section of Book Two (page 111) introduces learners to theatrical genres like drama. This cultural aspect is thought to be susceptible of creating difficulty as far as pupils' understanding. Still, it can always be dealt with from the point of view of being an introduction to the literary dimension of culture.

### 3.2.2.3.2. Sex

What can be noticed from the analysis of the cultural load of Book Two, while dealt with as far as learners' sex is concerned, is that the whole sections do not seem to favour one sex over the other. i.e. both male and female pupils might equally be interested in topics like world music, reading cartoon strips, or in language games. As such, language teachers would, certainly, not be embarrassed by having a more motivated sex group over the other. On the other hand, unlike Book One whose designers have opted for topics that might gain interest within boys (sports) and other within girls (recipes), Book Two shows a very neutral type of cultural themes which, at the same time, raises interest of both sexes among pupils.

### 3.2.2.3.3 Interests

Both target language learning and culture teaching would not, effectively, be achieved if they are not tackled on the basis of an enhanced motivation on the part of learners, which, as educationalists posit, can be ensured by fulfilling a set of conditions amongst which is the topic taught itself. In other words, the selected theme can either be of positive or negative impact on learners' motivation. For this reason, opting for some particular cultural aspects and discarding others is, actually, conditioned by the extent to which such a content would have in raising learners' interest and involvement (Harmer 2001:309).

The cultural content provided in Book Two has, seemingly, been selected by taking into account themes in which 2AM learners are likely to be interested. By way of example, the first culture section (page 21) brings to pupils cultural lore about different musical genres and insists on those which are in vogue among learners, Rap and Hip-hop notably. Still, what Section Three (page 65) deals with as cultural aspect, home-made remedies, might not sustain as much interest among learners.

### 3.2.2.3.4 Linguistic Background

Assuming that language learning should go in parallel with culture learning, it becomes clearer that a certain degree of linguistic proficiency among pupils becomes vital for this process. However, going from the idea that 2AM pupils have, at least, gone through 90 hours of language lessons during their preceding grade, one can notice that the suggested cultural aspects can be handled by learners without difficulty. This is thought to be so as the five culture sections of Book Two make use of lexis and structures that pupils are supposed to get familiar with during the preceding language sections of each file.

This does, actually, not imply that, during the culture lessons learners are only to recycle the linguistic patterns previously dealt with. In fact, the five sections of the book always provide pupils with some sort of novelty especially at the lexical level.

However, learners might come across some difficulty when they are asked to establish a comparison between the target and their native cultural patterns. As such, problems of perfect English equivalents for some vocabulary is raised when they are

asked to provide examples of local home remedies (Section Three, page 65), where the register related to phythotherapy is strongly needed.

To sum up our analysis of the cultural content of Book Two, some points need to be recalled, the first of which might be the introduction of a considerable variety of foreign cultural themes with which pupils are to get acquainted. Still, the great majority of them do not reflect particularly British or American cultural practices, but relate rather to some general patterns that might be encountered out of the inner circle of the English speaking societies. Furthermore, a sensitive lack of reference to learners' own culture makes the task of active comparison between target and local culture difficult., especially when we retain the importance of critical thinking in developing learners' reflective attitude on their own practices and behaviours. Nevertheless, the choice of leisure topics to be dealt with in four culture sections out of five denotes the will of textbook designers to ensure and maintain a certain degree of motivation among so young learners as far as target culture learning is concerned.

### 3.2.3. Book Three

#### 3.2.3.1. Physical Aspect

The third ELT textbook of the <u>Spotlight on English</u> series has been introduced in 2005, as a continuation to Book One and Book Two. In this regard, Book Three is constituted of four files, made up each of three sequences. Following the same pattern of the previous textbooks, the section in relation with culture appears after the three language sequences of the files. As such, Book Three contains four culture sections, now, named *"Snapshots of Culture"*. What should be noted, however, is that target cultural content is not restricted to these sections only, but appears in other sections of every file. Still, as it has been mentioned in the first chapter, the current analysis takes into consideration the target cultural patterns which are included in the sections designed for this purpose.

### 3.2.3.1.1 *"Snapshots of Culture" Sections*

<u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Three presents the culture sections to learners as a being a means to **"meet Britain and other speaking countries... [to] compare and contrast them with Algeria in class discussion, reports and writing tasks...[and to] sit back and relax"**( Book Three, 2005:07)

Clearly then, much emphasis is put on British and American cultures in Book Three as it is stated in the preface of the book: **"the cultural component is made to be more significant _ again in compliance with the MS3 curriculum. The British isles and the USA feature quite reasonably...in the Snapshot of Culture Sections"**(Book Three, 2005:04).

As a matter of fact, the four sections of Book Three Provide pupils with cultural data that are solely drawn from the British or American societies. Such dominance of the culture of the traditional English speaking countries is not a characteristic of Book One and Book Two as seen before. Furthermore, *"Snapshots of Culture"* in Book Three is introduced to pupils as being a **" recreative interlude"**(Book Three,2005: 04) where learners are to get familiar with patterns of the target culture through relaxing tasks.

In sum, textbook designers seem to have opted for following the same pattern of textbook layout, since the culture sections in the three books occur separately from those in relation with language skills. In addition to this, both Book One and Book Two provide pupils with cultural themes representative of English and non-English speaking countries, while Book Three has been designed so as to deal with British and American cultures only. This raises the question in relation to the status of the English language in our society, since it is one of the determining factors of what cultural aspects should be introduced to learners. As a matter of fact, patterns of world culture are presented to pupils when the English language is regarded as an international language and thus, representative of no specific community.

### 3.2.3.1.2 *Authenticity*

*"Snapshots on Culture"* Sections in Book Three do not, actually, differ from those of the preceding textbooks. The four culture sections are made up of descriptive texts, carrying British or American cultural data. These descriptions are accompanied by

illustrative photos, except the last culture section (page 115) which contains a table showing differences between American and British English.

Regarding these texts and photos from the angle of authenticity, one would notice that none of the presented pieces of writing are of authentic aspect, nor do they carry the least reference as far as their sources are concerned. As such, all texts presented to learners seem to be artificially designed to serve the purpose of transmitting the cultural knowledge without difficulty.

As for illustrations, it is clear that all of them are taken from original sources and they are not the product of any artificial work. The following table carries a list of the illustrations contained in the culture sections of Book Three and their possible sources.

| Culture Section | Illustration | Origin |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | One photo showing a Royal Guard parade. | A real parade near Buckingham Palace. |
| 02 | One photo showing the legendary monster of the Lock Ness. | Artificially realised. |
| 03 | Four photos related to school life in Britain. | Taken from "Harry Potter" film. |
| 04 | One table showing differences between British and American English in terms of spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation. | Authors' realisation |

Table 3.2 Illustrations carried in the culture section of Book Three.

The above table, therefore, shows the type of illustrations contained in every culture section and how they relate to the suggested topic. Still, the first and the third section do not carry any tasks that invite learners to establish a link between the photos and the proposed cultural patterns.

Furthermore, no clear reference is made to the actual sources from which the above mentioned illustrations have been taken or adapted from. It is a fact, however, that Book Three closes with an "Acknowledgements" Section where some of the

extracts, adaptations and photographs contained in the whole book have been taken from; yet, those of the culture sections do not appear among these.

### 3.2.3.2.Cultural Content

#### 3.2.3.2.1. Aims

Describing the nature of the foreign cultural themes suggested to 3AM learners in Book Three can, certainly, not be undertaken without a clear understanding of the aims of the four culture sections of the book. In this respect, *"Snapshots of Culture"* Sections is intended to be a means to help pupils compare the introduced English-speaking cultural aspects with their corresponding ones in the native culture. Therefore, still working on the basis of intercultural assumptions, 3AM learners would be induced to get familiar with new instances of British and American cultures through **"...observation, identification, description of scenery (paysage), monuments and ways of life..."**(Document d'Accompagnement 2004,89). This, consequently, draws the frame-work for language teachers as far as what target cultural knowledge they are to transmit to learners.

Practically, the four culture sections of Book Three provide a range of target cultural facts which do not show any leaning towards favouring British cultural patterns over American ones or vice versa. On the contrary, in the four sections, British and American cultures feature far more than any other subcultures. Instances of these include themes dealing with British Royal Guards (Section One, page 37), The Lock Ness Legend (Section Two, page 75), Schools in Britain (Section Three, page 113) and British Vs American English (Section Four, page 155).

#### 3.2.3.2.2. Local Culture Vs Target Culture

Reference to local cultural aspects cannot be bypassed, as these are essential in comparison tasks assigned to learners. For this reason, although Book Three does not provide pupils with explicit native cultural themes, it urges them to establish links between what is brought to them as new foreign cultural patterns and similar ones in the native culture. In fact, all the culture sections of Book Three begin with a presentation of the target cultural theme and close with questions that require from pupils to go back

71

onto their own local practices, so as to spot similarities and differences between the two cultures. By way of illustration, Section One (page 37) familiarises learners with the police force in England, their uniform and equipment. The second task of the section aims at drawing comparison between the Algerian police and the British royal guards. The same pattern is followed in Section Two (page 75) in which the song "*Auld Lang Syne*" is compared with a local song "*Ila Likaa Ya Ikhwani*" (Farewell Fellows). Section Three (page 113), on its part, helps pupils get insights into the school life in Britain in terms of the time-table, topics learned and recreational activities. What is different, however, is that comparison questions with the Algerian school system occur as a first task of the section, in a pre-reading activity. The fourth culture section of Book Three (page 155) provides pupils with differences there are between instances of British and American English in terms of lexis, spelling and pronunciation. The section closes with a task which requires from pupils to compare the language they learn at school with the one they speak at home.

In sum, what can be noticed from the local cultural content of the "*Snapshots of Culture*" in Book Three is that in all cases, learners are incited to reflect on similarities and differences in their own practices, and not any of the sections brings any of the supposedly corresponding native cultural aspects in an explicit way. This might be due to the fact 3AM pupils are supposed to have acquired enough local cultural patterns that would enable them to go through compare/contrast tasks.

### 3.2.3.2.3. Cultural Aspects Vs Theory

As for variety of the suggested target cultural themes, Book Three makes use themes in relation to target institutions as Royal Guards (Section One, page 37), or schools in Britain (Section Three, page 113). In addition to this, reference is made to some symbols as the Lock Ness Legend, and songs like "*Auld Lang Syne*" (Section Two, page 75).

What is worth mentioning, in this context, is that target and local cultural aspects do not constitute the content of the culture sections only, but are, actually, met in other sections throughout the files of Book Three. The following table shows instances of the target cultural patterns that occur in other sections of the book.

| Cultural Theme | Nature | File | Sequence | Section |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • John Bull<br>• Uncle Sam | Symbols | 01 | 01 | Read and Write I |
| • Map of London | Geographical | 02 | 02 | Practise |
| • Pictures of places of interest in London | Geographical | 02 | 03 | Read and Write II |
| • New Age Travellers in Britain | People | 03 | 01 | Read and Write II |
| • American Schools | Institutions | 03 | 02 | Read and Write II |
| • The United Kingdom | Geographical | 04 | 01 | Read and Write I |
| • Short texts about: Britain, Canada, Ireland, USA, New Zealand, Australia and Jamaica. | Historical | 04 | 01 | Read and Write II |

Table 3.3 Instances of Target Cultural Themes met out of the Culture Sections of book Three.

Clearly, the above table shows that textbook designers have opted for a more or less different dispatching of foreign cultural aspects in Book Three from the two preceding Spotlight on English textbooks. Target cultural knowledge is not, therefore, restricted to the culture sections only, but appears quite reasonably in other sections of the book in the form of descriptive passages, illustrations or even maps as those on pages 09 and 168 which show respectively the British Isles and the United States. In this regard, language teachers would, certainly, not have a better opportunity to integrate the teaching of the language and of its culture, bearing in mind the importance that it has on developing learners' communicative competence.

### 3.2.3.3.Cultural Content in Relation with Learners

As it has been mentioned earlier, the learner, being the most significant element in the teaching/learning process, should be given its due share of importance while selecting the content of textbooks in general and target cultural knowledge in particular. This is the reason for which pupils' age, sex, interests and linguistic level of proficiency are, perhaps, the most essential criteria that should be taken into consideration while undergoing such a delicate operation as textbook foreign cultural content selection.

#### 3.2.3.3.1. Age

Spotlight on English Book Three is intended to pupils aged between 13 and 15. In this regard, the suggested themes throughout the culture sections of Book Three might, certainly, not be considered as an impediment for culture learning. On the contrary, some topics might suit best pupils of this range of age. Attention is drawn, here, to themes like the British school life (Section Three, page 113), where the British school system and the behaviours of English pupils are portrayed by means of "Harry Potter", a well known cinema character amongst teenagers. What is more, Book Three, as it has been explained before, does not explicitly provide pupils with facts of their local culture, but it requires from them to use the language as a means to explore these native cultural aspects. This might be due to the fact that learners of 13 or 14 years of age show certain abilities to establish direct links between what is introduced to them as foreign cultural facts and what they have already acquired as local customs, habits, beliefs and practices. In other words, the criterion 'age of learners' seems to have inspired textbook designers to rely on the personal abilities of pupils who are, now, supposed to externalise ideas about facts from their own cultural frame.

#### 3.2.3.3.2. Sex

Deciding on what foreign cultural knowledge pupils need to have ought to be done on the basis of some other criteria that are closely related to learners themselves. Female and male pupils might show equal interest to some topics, as they might be attracted by different topics. To avoid falling into learners' detachment during language lessons in general, and culture ones particularly, textbook designers can either seek for a

balanced content between themes that are likely to sustain interest of boys and girls equally, as they (designers) might opt for some sort of neutral topics for which both male and female learners might show equal degrees of interest.

As for <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Three, the writing team seems to be in favour of including some sort of target cultural knowledge which is, seemingly, intended to both boys and girls. Samples of such neutral cultural data are reflected in Section One (page 37), Section Three(page 133) or Section Four (page155), which deal respectively with Royal Guards, Schools in Britain and British Vs American English.

### 3.2.3.3.3. Interests

Pupils' motivation towards target language and culture learning is, certainly, enhanced if they are provided with cultural subjects that go in parallel with their interests. In this regard, looking at what cultural knowledge Book Three suggests to pupils, it is noticeable that themes as Schools in Britain (Section Three, page 113) would, in fact, converge with learners' interests. What should be noted in this context is that pupils are attracted more by topics that directly relate to their own environment and their personal experiences. This can, undoubtedly, be best realised when language teachers follow the principles of interculturality (see 1.4.3.2. page 17) which focus on comparison tasks in culture teaching.

Furthermore, a highly interested audience in culture classes would, actually, be achieved when a certain variety of cultural topics is ensured. In this respect, Book Three, be it in the *"Snapshots of Culture"* or in other language sections (see table 3.3, page 73), tries to bring a wide range of subjects which might be appealing to learners.

### 3.2.3.3.4. Linguistic Background

Intercultural assumptions insist on tackling culture lessons integrated with language ones. Target culture teaching should, therefore, be planned so as it aims at developing learners' cultural awareness and linguistic proficiency alike. The issue of taking up culture lessons on the basis of prior, or even a non-existent linguistic background cannot be raised in the case of 3rd AM learners, seeing that, at such a stage, pupils are supposed to have acquired a sufficiently acceptable degree of linguistic

proficiency which would enable them to cope with the proposed target cultural content of the *"Snapshots of Culture"* in Book Three. What is worth mentioning in this context is that, as it has been shown before, these sections consist of reading passages related to a given cultural theme; and thus, pupils would be, in most general cases, faced with reading comprehension tasks. As such, the most probable linguistic difficulty that pupils would encounter might be that of new lexis which is typically related to the cultural subject dealt with. By way of example, Section One (page 37) suggests to pupils some new vocabulary as *"Scarlet Tunic"* or *"bearskins"* which describe the clothing of the British Royal Guards; while Section three (page 113) carries a text which introduces the British school system, and which contains some vocabulary as *"comprehensive school – compulsory – boarders – sport day – school day"*. Still, the question of new lexis can, actually, not be a serious obstacle in culture learning especially when teachers make use of their savoir faire so as to overcome the problem of unknown or unfamiliar vocabulary.

Examining the cultural content of Book Three leads us to note that despite the fact that a separate section is devoted to culture teaching, the book brings to learners instances from the target culture in other sections of every file, namely those in relation with developing pupils' reading comprehension skills (see table 3.3 page 73). Such a remark cannot but be a positive characteristic of Book Three, seeing the role this distribution of foreign cultural data would play in enabling a continuous learning of both the target language and its culture.

## 3.3. Conclusion

The choice of certain foreign cultural patterns to be taught to young learners alongside with the linguistic aspect of the target language proves to be a daunting task., as many criteria need to be accounted for before deciding on the final cultural content of ELT textbooks. Factors in relation to learners are, certainly, the most influencing ones. This is why textbook designers need to consider how much interesting, and motivating a cultural aspect can be among pupils otherwise, culture lessons would be addressed to an uninterested audience.

Considering the case of the <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbook series, the selection of the target cultural load has largely been made on the basis of providing pupils with a considerable variety of cultural topics drawn from British and American societies, as well as other societies for which English is not necessarily a native or a first language. Furthermore, the content of the culture sections seems to have been chosen so as it goes in parallel with the overall theme treated in every file, despite the fact of having opted for a separate section to deal with target culture teaching.

What should be mentioned, however, is the total absence or the very naïve reference to certain cultural topic areas in the three textbooks. Such themes as the geographical characteristics of the English speaking countries, which are believed to be one of the most important cultural aspects as they help pupils have insights about where the target language is used as a mother tongue or as a first language. Also, textbook designers seem to have opted for a non-explicit reference to the spiritual and religious sides in the target community, apart from some celebrations as Christmas or Halloween.

Consequently, it becomes the language teachers' task to decide what cultural aspect should be exploited, which one should be adapted to serve in the most optimal way learners' needs and interests, and which one needs to be completely discarded, namely such themes which are believed to bring about some sort of monotony or detachment during the culture lessons.

# Notes to Chapter Three

1.  The competency-based approach (CBA) is based on developing in learners **"a know-how-to-act process which integrates and mobilizes a set of capacities, skills and an amount of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem-solving situations or in circumstances that have never occurred before"** (Ministry Guidelines, 2003:04)

    In ELT CBA has got the following ends:
    -   Linguistic Objectives:
        > Provide learners with the basic amount of the linguistic code, and develop their grammar skills.
    -   Methodological Objectives:
        > Foster their learning strategies to reach autonomy.
        > Help them acquire methods for working and thinking.
        > Encourage them to self-evaluation.
    -   Cultural Objectives:
        > **"Make the pupil open up his mind through discovering the context of English civilisation and culture"** (Ministry Guidelines, 2003:03)

2.  See Benmoussat (2003: 128-129)

3.  In his article for the Marshal Cavendish Education online Magazine (March 2005), Jeremy Harmer discusses the issue of teaching world cultural knowledge, and stresses on differences that may affect the teaching of culture, namely when English is regarded as an international language. The article is entitled: *CULTURE or culture? Language, Methodology and Content in a Complex World.* See:
    http://www.mcelt.co.uk/conferences/2005/tesol.asp

# CHAPTER FOUR
# TOWARDS NEW DIRECTIONS IN CULTURE TEACHING

# CHAPTER FOUR

# TOWARDS NEW DIRECTIONS IN CULTURE TEACHING

**4.1. Introduction**

**4.2. Teaching the Target Language with its Culture**

**4.3. Adapting the Cultural Content**

**4.4. Developing Cultural Competence**

**4.5. Local Culture Vs Target Culture**

**4.6. Materials to Motivate**

4.6.1. Songs

4.6.2. Videos

4.6.3. The Internet

**4.7. Teachers' Cultural Development**

**4.8. Conclusion**

# CHAPTER FOUR

# TOWARDS NEW DIRECTIONS IN CULTURE TEACHING

## 4.1. Introduction

Reaching an appropriate method in culture teaching remains the concern of educationalists and language teachers alike. This is, actually, due to the fact that theoreticians might suggest various ways and methods that reflect their conceptual views of how the target culture should be brought to learners. Still, putting these assumptions and theories into practice might not bring about the expected results, since more than a parameter would be accounted for in the learning process.

In this respect, foreign language teachers need to be, first, and foremost, aware and convinced of the unfruitfulness of culture teaching based on the concept of dissociating the target language from its original cultural patterns. Furthermore, they should try to adapt either the linguistic or the cultural content, so that one can, in no way, be presented without the other. Such a task cannot be achieved without giving as much importance to the target culture as well as to the local one, considering the fact that intercultural teaching is primarily based on comparison and contrast between cultures. In addition to this, culture teaching does not have to be performed so as to provide learners with descriptive and factual knowledge only, but has to go beyond and over to urging pupils to adopt some sort of critical thinking. This would, certainly, require from teachers to make use of a considerable variety of tasks aiming at developing learners' cultural knowledge and skills alike. Obviously, such activities cannot be selected without bearing in mind the fact that they have to meet learners' needs and interests so as not to fall into pupils' demotivation and detachment during the course. Many a teaching material can, for this purpose, be used by language teachers in order to maintain and enhance learners' motivation towards foreign culture learning. Finally, considering the very variable social aspect of the concept of culture, language teachers need to keep informed of the up-to-date ways of conveying culture in order to enable their learners to take full benefit from this knowledge.

## 4.2. Teaching the Target Language with its Culture

The first and foremost recommendation aiming at an eventual successful culture teaching is to help language teachers be confident in the concept of integrating both the teaching of the target language and its culture. In this respect, presenting target cultural data should not be accomplished on the basis of isolating the cultural knowledge, but rather on ensuring a permanent combination aiming at the fostering of the four language skills with foreign cultural competence as much frequently as possible.

Considering the content of the culture sections of the Spotlight on English textbooks series, it is clearly noticeable that the reading skill is favoured, as the whole suggested cultural patterns are brought to pupils in the format of texts. Consequently, a thorough teaching of the target culture on the basis of the content of the culture sections only would, certainly, lead to have learners who are interculturally competent only when they are reading about the target culture. This, of course, is one of the objectives of intercultural teaching, but not the sole one. In this respect, language teachers are advised to extract data from the culture sections, namely those of Book One and Book Two, to be used during other language skills lessons.

By way of example, teachers can combine the writing task with the introduction of famous figures among British and American societies. This would serve them in dealing with the language function of narrating introduced in File Six of Book One, while trying to inculcate in their learners the importance to conform to norms of coherence and chronology of events in a biography writing task.

What is worth mentioning, however, is that Book Three contains some very perfect examples of dealing with teaching the target language and its culture in an integrated way, as it carries samples of British and American cultural patterns dispatched throughout the content of the files (see table 3.3. page 73).

Other instances showing the possibility of integrating language skills development in culture learning can be adopted by teachers. Still, it should be mentioned that such cultural knowledge need not be used as a means to achieve linguistic competence only, but should rather be followed by some sort of tasks like classroom discussion [1], so as to give the cultural component its due right share of importance as well.

## 4.3. Adapting the Cultural Content

Language teachers have, for so long, been told not to follow the content of textbooks slavishly. This is, actually, due to the fact that what textbook designers select as content might be considered as some kind of suggestions to enable teachers to understand and imagine other possible ways of putting ideas for the linguistic and cultural notions into practice. In other words, the content of a textbook, be it linguistic or cultural, is only one of many other possible interpretations aiming at the practical realisation of the pre-outlined objectives.

Furthermore, one must admit that a given content might satisfactorily work with a group of learners, but would not bring about the same results with another. Equally, the same language or cultural aspect might not be interesting among learners within the same group or class, especially when such content does not suit learners in terms of their age, gender, needs or interests. Consequently, it is the "**...job of the course designer and teacher to select topics and tasks that will motivate learners, engage their attention, present a suitable degree of intellectual and linguistic challenge and promote their language development as efficiently as possible**" (Willis 1996:23).For this reason, only our language teachers can decide for what to use, what to modify, or what to discard in the suggested content of textbooks in general, and in cultural themes particularly.

As for <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbooks, teachers might, for instance, bring modifications on Section Six (Book One, page 138) which urges learners to guess the dates of emergence of some musical genres.

| DATES | MUSIC |
|---|---|
| 1963 | Rock'n Roll |
| 1966 | Pop |
| 1975 | Reggae |
|  | Disco |
|  | Rap |
|  | Techno |

Table 4.1 (<u>Spotlight on English</u>, Task E page 138 )

The task appears in the format of a table (table 4.1) to be completed with dates. It would be, in fact, difficult for so young learners to guess the exact dates unless teachers suggest another procedure to deal with this exercise. They can, for instance, provide learners with a matching-pairs exercise (table 4.2) where pupils are required to link the musical genres with their corresponding dates of appearance.

| DATES | | MUSIC |
|---|---|---|
| 1971 | | Rock'n Roll |
| 1988 | | Pop |
| 1947 | | Reggae |
| 1992 | | Disco |
| 1973 | | Rap |
| 1955 | | Techno |

Table 4.2 Suggested Matching-pairs Task

Furthermore, teachers might come to see that a given theme would serve better in another section or file of the book, and have, therefore, to displace it. By way of example, one can notice that the function of the first file of Book One deals with greeting; and it would be wiser, then, to introduce various language forms used to fulfil this function in combination with other expressions that show levels of formality that Britons or Americans use in corresponding situations. It should be noted that this cultural aspect of daily spoken language is, paradoxically, referred to in File Two, which has introducing people as a function.

As for Book Two, it has been noted that the greater part of the suggested culture topics are those in relation with world culture (see Diagram3.1. page 63). What would, certainly, have better impact on learners' linguistic and communicative abilities is to deal with cultural patterns of the language they are learning. This is why it is highly recommended that teachers substitute the content of the *'Learn About Culture'* sections of Book Two by some similar British or American cultural data, i.e. cultural patterns representative of an English-speaking socio-cultural texture. As such, pupils would, actually, find greater benefit in gaining insights into games that British children of their age play than having general knowledge about crosswords or about chess (Book Two, Section Two, pages 41-42) which are found in all societies. In the same way, teachers might bring to their pupils more interesting information about English cartoon heroes (Book Two, Section Four page 89) to be dealt with instead of that dealing with French or Belgian cartoon characters.

It is also suggested that language teachers might discard any sort of cultural content which they believe unnecessary, or which they qualify as difficult or uninteresting for their learners. This can, for instance, be done with some exercises of Section Seven (Book One, pages 159-160) which present to learners the issue of environment protection, and which might, to a certain extent, be difficult for 1$^{st}$ AM learners, and would, probably, end up into their demotivation and detachment.

The general conclusion that can be drawn as far as adapting the suggested cultural patterns of Spotlight on English textbooks is that the great majority of themes are likely not to interfere in the process of an eventual successful culture teaching/learning. This might be due to the fact that these culture topic-areas have been selected so as to respond to the pupils' needs and interests. Still the variable characteristic of learners might urge language teachers to bring some modifications on the pre-selected culture subjects in order to make them at the reach of their pupils in terms of their understanding and their expectations; and to enable a continuous flow of motivation during the whole target culture course.

## 4.4. Developing Cultural Competence

It has been shown it the first chapter that cultural competence does not consist in gaining insights into other cultures only, but goes further to underlying a body of knowledge and skills that have to be developed in learners. As such, this can be accomplished by designing some exercises and tasks that are not solely based on descriptive facts of how the target culture users behave. As a matter of fact, among its objectives, culture teaching aims at urging learners to adopt critical thinking, observation, contrast and comparison as far as their native cultural pattern are concerned. Such behaviour is to lead pupils to discover other cultures through identifying differences and accepting others' points of view, ideas and beliefs.

In the same line of thought, and to compensate for the absence of tasks and exercises that work for fostering learners' cultural competence, namely in Book One and Book Two, it is suggested that language teachers might introduce some sort of activities based on classroom discussion, during which teachers demonstrate and explain what pupils might find strange or ambiguous in the foreign culture while compared to their own practices. Of course, pupils at so young an age as that of 1st AM learners, and at such an early stage of English learning might encounter difficulties to hold a discussion. Such a stumbling block can be overcome when learners achieve the minimum linguistic proficiency required for this purpose; still, a moderate use of the mother-tongue can help them in such situations. This type of tasks, though it appears at the end of the majority of the culture sections in the three textbooks, is preferred to occur during the language lessons as well, even if the allotted time for discussion would be smaller, compared with that devoted for language skills teaching.

However, what many teachers reproach to such types of tasks is that they do not involve all the learners in the discussion; and therefore, only those who take the floor would benefit from the discussion activity. Consequently, it becomes of the teachers roles to adopt some techniques aiming at ensuring a permanent equity in the talking time among students. Techniques of this sort may require from pupils to list down some notes in relation with the cultural topic dealt with to make sure all the class would have something to present when given the chance to.

It should be noted, in this context, that teachers are required to avoid giving any personal opinion or judgement as far as the foreign cultural patterns are concerned, in order not to lead learners to adopt the teacher's influencing point of view about the discussed issue.

## 4.5. Local Culture Vs Target Culture

As previously stated, the three textbooks of the <u>Spotlight on English</u> series make use of pupils' native culture to enable comparison and contrast tasks with target cultural patterns, considering that a learner is himself " **a cultural being with a cultural perspective on the world**" (Wajnryb 1992:40). As a matter of fact, native cultural knowledge is either provided to pupils as factual data (table 4.2), or learners are asked to identify, in their own culture, similar or corresponding cultural patterns as those of the target community. Clearly, this aims at inciting learners to compare, and to a certain extent, to discover what they do not know about their own practices.

| Book | Section | Page | Local Cultural Content |
|------|---------|------|------------------------|
| One | One | 33 | Monuments and Currency |
|  | Two | 56 | Celebrations. |
|  | Five | 116 | Food and Eating Habits. |
| Two | One | 21 | Musical Genres |
|  | Four | 89 | Cartoon Heroes |

Table 4.3: Factual Local Cultural Patterns Presented in the Culture Section of Book One and Book Two

However, considering that <u>Spotlight on English</u> textbook designers have opted for some native cultural data, and have preferred not to refer to others, and taking into account the fact that not all local cultural patterns are the same throughout the country, it is therefore the teachers' task to make use of the very local culture to which their learners belong. This would, undoubtedly, get the majority of pupils involved in the process of culture learning. Still, what needs to be mentioned, in this context, is that teachers are not required to focus their work on native culture only, i.e. practices followed within the geographical borders of the town, city or village their pupils live in,

but should rather provide learners with other forms of local cultural knowledge from outside the borders of their hometown.

Put into practice, Book One provides pupils with some local cultural knowledge as in Section Five (page 116) which deals with food and eating habits. Still, one might ask if these practices are identified by learners as being their own patterns. To avoid such an issue, teachers might use instances of dishes or other eating habits that their learners are used to practising.

What is worth mentioning, however, is that the question of local patterns which are not typically representative of the learners' native cultural background cannot be raised when the presented topic-area deals with themes like institutions. As such, general subjects like the Algerian school system (Book Three, Section Three page 113), the Algerian police force (Book Three, Section One page 37 are, certainly, identified as being local practices which are part of the Algerian identity.

In the same line of thought, a common aspect that characterises a considerable number of our teachers has to be underlined, namely teachers who are new (or have a short experience in teaching). In fact, novice teachers are, for the most general case, required to work outside the boarders of their hometown for sometime. Therefore, they would certainly face differences between the local cultural patterns of their learners and their own ones. This might lead to have teachers who lack knowledge about their pupils' native cultural texture, and might, consequently, impede comparison tasks. To avoid this eventuality, language teachers need to be informed of the target cultural patterns as well as their learners' ones, seeing that the main objective in the process of interculturality is having pupils who are able to perform comparison/contrast tasks actively between what they have acquired from their own socio-cultural surrounding and what is brought to them as foreign practices and behaviours.

## 4.6. Materials to Motivate

Language teachers, while dealing with some sort of cultural knowledge, might notice that their learners do not show great interest towards the lesson. This can, either be due to the presented topic itself which is, sometimes, far from learners' expectations as far as their needs and interests are concerned, or to the way the language teacher

handles the cultural component. As a matter of fact, not only does the topic dealt with demotivate learners, but so does the method followed by the teacher to convey the cultural knowledge.

As for the content to be taught, teachers can always, as it has been mentioned in 4.3, adapt it so as to make it at the reach of their learners' age, needs and personal interests.

Pupils' demotivation and detachment, which can be caused by the method and techniques language teachers adopt during the lesson of culture, can be overcome by making use of a variety of teaching materials. It has, actually, been proved that using the same teaching material repeatedly might bring about some sort of monotonous reactions among learners, and would probably result in their total detachment from the lesson. This is why it is strongly recommended to teachers to select materials which can gain a certain degree of interest among pupils and enhance their motivation towards learning patterns of the target culture. Instances of such materials and techniques might include songs, videos as well as a guided use of the internet. In the same context, informants seem to agree on classifying the textbooks they have at hands as the first source of target cultural data, and do refer that they happen to make use of other materials as songs, maps, coins and magazine pictures.

### 4.6.1. Songs

Language teachers will certainly not find better than songs as a teaching material, being of benefits for learners on more than a level. Actually, in addition to the fact that they contain authentic natural language, songs almost carry a variety of new vocabulary, with useful phrases, idioms and expressions. They can, therefore, be selected on the basis of learners' needs and interests. Furthermore, most songs, if not all of them have a theme or story enabling the extraction of cultural elements. The virtue of such a flexible teaching material on culture learning is clearly seen especially when they are performed by children from the target culture community. These songs can, consequently, **"build conceptual bridges between the culturally familiar and the unfamiliar"** (Alptekin 1993, cited in Ellis 2004, 17).

Unfortunately, Spotlight on English textbook designers seem to have missed the importance of including songs in the textbooks, and the very small number [2] of songs suggested throughout the three books is not reflective of such significance. Teachers need, then, to go through a careful selection of the songs that might, on the one hand serve them linguistically and culturally, and on the other hand enhance pupils' motivation.

The following table includes samples of titles of songs that teachers may use to introduce or consolidate some of the cultural themes of the three Spotlight on English textbooks. The lyrics are in appendix I

| Cultural Patterns | Song Title |
|---|---|
| • Celebrations | |
|   - Christmas | - At Christmas I Share |
| | - Christmas Snowflakes |
|   - Thanksgiving | - It's Thanksgiving |
|   - Halloween | |
| | - A Little Baby Ghost |
| | - Trick-or-Treat Rap |
| • School life | - Here In The Classroom |
| • School System | - Oh, We're Off Kindergarten |
| • Children's Behaviour | - We Are All The Same |
| | - We Are Going To Tidy Up |
| • Children's Game | - Recess Song |
| • Formal Greeting | - Good Morning |

Table 4.4 Samples of songs carrying cultural patterns.

### 4.6.2. Videos

Of equal importance is the use of videos in order to bring the foreign language and its culture into the classroom, where our learners may have little, if no access to other forms of contact with natives. In this regard, a video presents language in the context of life, by showing pupils how the target language is used naturally in realistic settings. Learners are, thus, provided with opportunities to observe how people behave, what children wear, or the type of games they play. In advanced levels of culture learning, they can, also, see facial expressions, gestures, and whether the speaker is hesitant or not about a particular subject, in addition to the body language of a situation, how far apart people stand and how the characters react to emotional situations. Such information is, actually, believed to be difficult to get from a book or an audio tape. Furthermore, language teachers, while using video sequences for dealing with certain cultural topics, address learners who are of both auditory and visual styles of learning. This would, undoubtedly, be in favour of a great number of pupils as Gibson (1998) points out that today's learners are part of the television era and that they are more visually oriented.

For the purpose of target culture teaching, more than a cultural topic suggested in the Spotlight on English textbooks can, actually, be dealt with by means of video sequences. Special attention is drawn, here, to themes as celebrations (Book One, Section One page 56), games and sports (Book One, Section Three page 75) and food and eating habits (Book One, Section Five page 115). Yet, two perfect examples of video sequences can serve language teachers in introducing to their learners insights into The British Royal Guards (Book Three, Section One page 37) or into the school life in England (Book Three, Section Three page 113). Teachers can, here, make use of sequences respectively excerpted from the *Mr Bean* [3] serial and the *Harry Potter* movie.

Activities which might be assigned to learners to accompany a song or a video might go from mere observation of behaviours, clothing items or reactions to gap-filling exercises or intonation focus tasks. Of course, only teachers are able to select the most suitable teaching materials that would help best the process of target culture teaching/learning. As such, the choice of what technique to adopt cannot ignore such items as the cultural theme to be introduced, as well as the learners' ability to interact

with the selected material, namely when it carries what appeals for their needs and interests.

However, one of the most discouraging arguments which might prevent language teachers from using such motivating teaching materials is the question of availability of songs and videos enabling target culture teaching. Still, one might note that many video recordings, song and pictures are, now, available from the internet or on satellite TV channels. A list of websites links where teachers can find a variety of songs and video sequences is proposed in appendix II.

### 4.6.3. The Internet

Gaining insights into the practices and behaviours of the target community is best achieved when a direct contact or immersion within the community is ensured. However, because most learners do not have the chance to experience other cultures first-hand, it is always possible for them, in these days of global electronic communication, to establish contacts with people from the target culture. In this respect, variety of teaching materials enabling the development of learners' cultural knowledge and the enhancement of their motivation can be extended to the use of the internet. As such, educationalists, namely Corbett (2003) insist on the benefits that language teachers might have from using the web.

Teachers may, for instance, encourage pupils to keep some permanent email exchange with British or American children. And in addition to the opportunity that learners would have in using the target language for real life purposes, they might be guided to explore cultural themes dealt with in the classroom as school life or eating habits. This activity may, of course, not work that perfectly with 1$^{st}$ AM learners, considering their elementary linguistic capacities at such an early stage of target language learning. Yet, it might be done with the teacher's help if some time is devoted to email writing.

Furthermore, what is positive in initiating learners to use the internet is that, on the one hand, it enables them to get in touch with both the target language and its cultural patterns outside the formal setting of learning, and thus gives them opportunities to practise, consolidate, and discover other cultural patterns in real-life

situations. On the other hand, using the web and the mega range of learning openings it provides will, undoubtedly, work in favour developing some sort of autonomous acquisition of knowledge [4] as far as foreign language and culture learning are concerned.

## 4.7. Teachers' Cultural Development

English language teachers, being the first conveyors of foreign cultural knowledge, can, certainly, not be neglected in considering them as the most important link in the learning/teaching process. In this respect, Benmoussat (2003:265) focuses on teachers' necessity to **"have a sound knowledge of both the target culture and their native one to open up learners to other cultures"**. Consequently, initiating pupils to aspects of British, American or other sub-cultures needs to take roots from the teachers' personal knowledge of these patterns.

Our language teachers, when asked about how well informed they consider themselves about the target culture, have unanimously answered that they critically lack knowledge in this field. They, also, consider training to culture teaching of key importance to achieve the wider goal of equipping their learners with the necessary tools to face all sorts of unfamiliar cultural situations.

For this purpose, many procedures can be adopted by teachers who care about improving their knowledge about the target culture, and about the most recent ways and techniques they can use in their classes. Educationalists, actually, view that teachers' qualifications to undergo target cultural teaching need to be developed following a three-level process. Edelhoff (cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:256) believes that this ability to convey and deal with foreign cultural patterns does not consist only in knowledge in relation with the behaviours and practices characterising the socio-cultural texture of the target community, but should encompass a set of skills and attitudes as well.

- *Knowledge* should, therefore, include aspects related to both of the native culture and the foreign one. Teachers are, also, required to work for developing some sort of active knowledge so as to be easily applicable to

the learning situation, and easily transferable to different learning styles of pupils.

■ *Skills* which teachers need to develop for the purpose of an eventual effective culture teaching include their foreign linguistic abilities to face different forms of communication situations. Such situations may go from written texts to **"…authentic data in all media (print, audio, audiovisual) and face-to-face interaction"** Edelhoff (cited in Byram and Fleming, 1998:256). Teachers should, also, extend their skills to use their learners' experiences and ideas as a starting point in creating suitable learning environments.

■ *Attitudes:* what should be mentioned in this context is that teachers, before attempting to develop in their learners positive attitudes towards the foreign community and the learning of its culture, should themselves be intercultural learners. For this purpose, they are recommended to adopt some sort of behaviour which would reflect their readiness to:

- Consider how others see them, what Benmoussat (2003:256) refers to as the attitude to being observed.
- Be curious about themselves and about others.
- Be prepared to share experience with people from other countries and their own learners.
- Take part actively in the search for the language contribution in promoting international and cross-cultural understanding.
- To behave as social and intercultural interpreters working for enlightening learners who face difficulties or ambiguities within the foreign culture.

(adapted from Edelhoff 1987, cited in Byram and Fleming 1998:265-257)

Put into practice, instances that would help language teachers foster their skills and enlarge their knowledge about their local culture and the target one may include email exchange with teachers from other parts of the world [5]. Teachers are, also, advised to adhere to international teaching organisations and associations; and to attend,

as much frequently as possible, meetings and seminars aiming at assuring their in-service training. Furthermore, they might attend lectures of cultural studies which have, now, become part of the curriculum of the would-be teachers at the level of foreign language departments. In addition to this, some time spent in an English speaking environment would be of great value to our teachers, since they would, certainly, find no better way to be in contact with the foreign culture than getting immersed in it.

## 4.8. Conclusion

Improving foreign language culture teaching might not be attained if some favourable environment is not provided. First, teachers need to be convinced of the necessity to present language alongside with culture, by considering the cultural patterns of the English language as being of equal importance as any other language skill. More than that, culture need not be considered as an additional skill to be tackled in isolation, namely in such a time when language theoreticians claim for the integration of all skills. Also, teachers' ability to adapt the cultural content suggested by "Spotlight on English" textbook designers, and make it approach as much closely as possible their learners' age , sex and interests will certainly be of great help to them, especially in cases where learners' demotivation and detachment are noticed during the lessons of culture. Other ways to enhance learners' interest towards learning the target culture include the use of the learners' own culture as an essential element in the comparison/contrast tasks assigned to them, in order to make culture learning more experiential and concrete for so young pupils. In addition to this, teachers might, certainly, find great benefit in varying in the use of teaching materials, namely those with which learners feel some sort of ease during the lessons, as songs, pictures, videos or the internet. It should not be left out, in this context, the urging necessity for teachers to be in charge of their personal development; especially when the question is about culture teaching, which can be so daunting a task for them if they are not aware of the different ways to introduce the cultural dimension, and if they do not consider the necessity to get their cultural knowledge regularly updated.

# Notes to Chapter Four

1. Learners' linguistic level in Middle school education might be an obstacle in dealing with classroom discussion tasks, especially with pupils of 1$^{st}$ and 2$^{nd}$ AM. Still, neglecting this useful type of activities does, actually, not serve culture learning. Teachers need to deal with these exercise by aiming at – as informants among textbook designers insist- rising learners awareness to the existence of another culture, other ways of doing things, other ways of seeing things.

2. Spotlight on English textbook designers did not give songs the degree they should have as an important component in the content of an ELT textbook. Only five songs have been included in the three textbooks.

3. What is positive in taking video sequences from the *Mr. Bean* serial is that, on the one hand, pupils would never reject having some fun in the classroom, and would therefore, be motivated to explore the content of the sequences, and on the other hand, the question of language would not be raised as the whole serial is of silent type. Focus, would, then be made of other cultural aspects as behaviours, customs, gestures and body language.

4. Learner Autonomy is one of the priorities of the current educational approach in Algeria. The teaching of all subjects, including English, is done following a project-based methodology. Middle School learners are, actually, provided with enough knowledge and research methodology that would help them in the preparation of a project related to some specific topic. This is regarded as a first step of a long learning process that would end with them in a relative degree of independence which will enable them take their own learning in charge. (see Scharle and Szabo: 2000)

5. A cross-cultural e-mail project has been implemented to provide a group of EFL student teachers in Taiwan with the opportunity to interact with bilingual/EFL pre-service teachers in the U.S. and to engage in critical reflection with only minimum intervention from the instructor. The results have, actually, been very encouraging as they revealed that the Taiwanese participants obtained from their U.S. colleagues valuable information in relation with the areas of interpersonal, socio/cultural, pedagogical, and language learning issues. A complete description of the project and its results is accessible on the specialised internet magazine *TESL-EJ* issued in March 2003 on the following web link:
   http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej24/a2.html

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

English Language Teaching in Algeria has recently noticed one of the most important changes since the independence. As a matter of fact, seeing that the former ELT methodology does not respond any longer to our learners' needs as far as fostering their target language communicative abilities. This necessary practical knowledge of today's world language, to use Harmer's terms (2005), emerged as one of the direct effects of global expansion and integration that most nations undergo. Put in practical grounds, Algerian authorities have opted for an ELT methodology that would, on the one hand, enable our pupils to develop their cognitive and social abilities so as to be gradually autonomous while facing different sorts of problem-solving situations, those related to communication using the target language notably. On the other hand, target cultural knowledge seems to have been restored value as being a clear objective of the adopted methodology. Middle School Algerian teachers of English are, now, required to target a learner's exit-profile able to behave adequately when facing foreign linguistic and cultural situations. This, therefore, implies a teaching framework based on presenting the English language within instances of its original socio-cultural texture.

The present research work has tried to undertake an analysis of the target cultural component which has been introduced in the three recently-implemented Spotlight on English textbooks.

For this purpose, the first chapter attempted to shed light on the possible reasons that brought about the need for implementing the current ELT methodology by underlining the failure of the teaching theories in equipping learners with acceptable communicative abilities, as well as the urging need for a workable understanding of one's own and others' cultures, regarding the aspect of today's new world characterised by high degrees of interconnectedness between nations and cultures. The chapter has, then, tried, to explain the tight relationship between language and culture, referring to the importance of cultural knowledge as being an integral part among the components of communicative competence. Implications of such a relationship on ELT have, thus, been stressed by making reference to the four major theories based on target culture teaching. Special emphasis has been put on cross-cultural assumptions and on the

development of intercultural competence among learners as one of the major objectives held in the current EFL methodology in our schools. Reference has, also, been made to the theory in relation to the different ways the target culture is depicted in ELT textbooks, and to the literature dealing with checklists aiming at evaluating the target cultural load of textbooks.

Chapter two opened with a brief description of the former ELT textbooks adopted in the Algerian Middle School since the 1970's, and tried to show how the cultural component has been discarded until the recent implementation of the Spotlight on English course books. The chapter has, also, struggled to show how the English culture is, now, brought to pupils in the newly-designed textbooks. The second chapter ended with a personal attempt of a checklist elaboration whose aim is to analyse the content of the culture sections of the textbooks.

Chapter three has tried to uncover the positive and negative aspects of what the Spotlight on English textbook designers have selected as content for the culture sections mainly. This has been done in the light of what educationalists conceive of the nature of the cultural topic-areas of an ELT course book. Using the evaluative points of our checklist on the one hand, and the answers gathered from language teachers, textbook designers and pupils on the other hand, the third chapter has attempted to stress the unnecessary dissociation of the target language from its culture, seeing that separate sections have been designed for developing pupils' linguistics abilities and others for providing them with target cultural data. Also, special emphasis has been made on the relevance of a teaching of the foreign culture relying on a very poor experience of our language teachers in such a new domain in ELT.

Chapter four has attempted to bring some suggestions as far as the remarks drawn from the analysis of the Spotlight on English textbooks. As such, it has, first, underlined the necessity for teachers to be confident in the effectiveness of teaching the target language without marginalising its cultural component. Such an integration between the teaching of English and its culture would begin by adapting the content of the textbooks so as to make it serve the objectives of fostering both learners' linguistic and cultural competence. The chapter has mentioned, for this purpose, the necessity of giving equal importance to the target culture and to the native one, considering that

intercultural assumptions aim at leading learners to reflect on their own practices by means of comparison with instances from the target culture. The chapter has, then striven to show the importance of variety of teaching materials and their virtues on ensuring a continuous flow of learners' motivation and interest as what regards target culture learning. It has, then, been shown that such a delicate process as foreign culture teaching/learning lies heavily on our teachers' personal knowledge of the target culture and of the methods and techniques to adopt to transmit this knowledge to pupils. For this purpose, a permanent in-service training needs to be undertaken by teachers themselves in order to be effective intercultural learners and conveyors equally.

In sum, the present research work attempted to bring to light the different aspects of the target cultural data selected for the three Middle School ELT textbooks. It has, also, tried to provide eventual suggestions for language teachers to overcome such difficulties as tackling target language teaching separated from its culture, or undergoing foreign culture presentation without prior knowledge of the theories and assumptions in relation with the teaching of the target culture.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## List of Books

BENMOUSSAT, S. (2003)  *Mediating Language and Culture: An Investigative Analysis of the Cultural Dimension in The Algerian Newly-Designed ELT Textbooks.* Unpublished Doctorat d'Etat Thesis, Aboubekr Belkaid University, Tlemcen.

BROWN, H.D. (1994)  *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching.* Third Edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc..

BROWN, J.D. (1988)  *Understanding Research in Second Language Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BYRAM, M. and MORGAN, C. *et al* (1994)  *Teaching-and-learning Language-and-culture.* Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

BYRAM, M. and FLEMING, M. (eds.) (1998)  *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

COOK, G. (2003)  *Applied linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CORBETT, J. (2003) *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching.* Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

CUNNINGSWORTH, A. (1984) *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Teaching Materials.* London: Heinemann.

DOFF, A. (1988)  *Teach English. A Training Course for Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

GARDNER, R.C. and LAMBERT, W.E. (1972) *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning.* Rowley, Mass. : Newbury House.

HARMER, J. (1991)  *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* New Edition, London: Longman.

HARMER, J. (2001) *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* London: Longman.

HAYANE, O. (1989)  *L'Enseignement de la Langue Anglaise en Algérie depuis 1962.* Alger: OPU..

HINKEL, E. (ed.) (1999)  *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HUDSON, P. (1980) *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HYMES, D. (1972) '*On* Communicative Competence'. In: J.Pride & J.Holmes(eds.). *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.

KRAMSCH, C. (1993) *Context and Culture in Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KRAMSCH, C. (1998) *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KIRSTEN, M. (1991) *The Linguistics Encyclopaedia*. London and New York: Routledge

LAVERY, C. (2001) *Language Assistant*. UK: The British Council.

MACKEY, S. L. (2002) *Teaching English as an International Language: Rethinking Goals and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MALINOWSKI, B. (1923) 'The Problem in Meaning in Primitive Languages'. In Ogden, C.K. and Richards, I.A. (eds.). *The Meaning of Meaning*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.

MELLIANI, M. (2003) *Foreign Language Teaching Approaches, Methods and Techniques*. Oran: Dar El Gharb.

MORAN, P. (2001) *Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice*. Boston, Massachusetts : Heinle and Heinle.

O'MALLEY, J.M. and CHAMOT, A.V. (1990) *Leaning Strategies in Second Language Acquisitions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RICHARDS, J. C and LOCKHART, C. (1997) *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RIVERS, W, M. (1981) *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

SCHALE, A and SZABO A. (2000) *Learner Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SEELYE, H.N. (1984) *Teaching Culture. Strategies for Intercultural Communication*. Lincolnwood, Illinois: Textbook Company.

STERN, H.H. (1992) *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Edited by Allen P. and Harley B. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TRUDGILL, P. (2000)      *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society.* Fourth Edition, London: Penguin Books.

WAJNRYB, R. (1992) *Classroom Observation Tasks.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

WIDDOWSON, H.G. (1979)*Explorations in Applied Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WILLIS, J. (1996) *A Framework for Task-Based Learning.* London: Longman Handbooks.

WILLIS, J. and WILLIS, D. (1996) *Challenge and Change.* Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.

## List of Articles and Official Ministry Guidelines

(N.a.). (2003) *Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language 1$^{st}$ AM.* Ministry of National Education. Algiers.

(N.a.). (2003) *Guidelines for Users, Document d'Accompagnement du Programme d'Anglais.* Ministère de l'Education Nationale. Alger.

(N.a.). (2003) *Guidelines for Users, Support Document for the Competency-Based Approach.* Ministry of National Education. Algiers.

(N.a.). (2003) *Teacher's Handbook.* Ministry of National Education. Algiers.

(N.a.). (2004) *Document d'Accompagnement des Programme de la 2$^{ème}$ Année Moyenne.* Ministère de l'Education Nationale. Alger.

(N.a.). (2004) *Programmes de la 2$^{ème}$ Année Moyenne.* Ministère de l'Education Nationale. Alger.

(N.a.). (2005). *Document d'Accompagnement des Programme de la 3$^{ème}$ Année Moyenne.* Ministère de l'Education Nationale. Alger.

(N.a.). (2005) *Programmes de la 3$^{ème}$ Année Moyenne.* Ministère de l'Education Nationale. Alger.

ALPTEKIN, C. (2002) 'Towards Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT'. *ELT Journal* Volume 56. N° 1: 57-64.

BLOCK, D. (2004) 'Globalization and Language Teaching'. *ELT Journal* Volume 58 N° 1 : 75-77.

DECKERT, G. (2004) 'The Communicative Approach: Addressing Frequent Failure'. *English Teaching Forum* Volume 42. N° 1: 12-17.

DOGANCAY, A.S. (2005) 'Intercultural Communication in English Language Teacher Education'. *ELT Journal* Volume 59. N° 2: 99-107.

ELLIS, G. (2004) 'Developing Intercultural Competence with Children in the English Language Class'. *Thresholds*. British Council: 14-17.

GENC, B. and BADA, E. (2005) 'Culture in Language learning and Teaching'. *The Reading Matrix* Volume 5. N° 1: 73-84.

KIM, J. (2002) 'Teaching Culture in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom'. *The Korea TESOL Journal* Volume. 5. N° 1: 27-40

SHELDON, L.E (1988) 'Evaluating ELT Textbooks and Materials'. *ELT Journal* Volume 42. N°4 : 237-246.

SIFAKIS, N,C and SOUGARI A,M (2003) 'Facing the Globalisation Challenge in the Realm of English Language Teaching'. *Language and Education* Volume 17 N°1: 59-71.

TSENG, Y.H. (2002) 'A Lesson of Culture'. *ELT Journal* Volume 56. N°1: 11-21.

## List of Textbooks

(Na.). (1970) <u>Andy in Algeria</u> Book One 3$^e$ AM. Alger: Institut Pédagogique National.

(Na.). (1970) <u>Madjid in England</u> Book Two 4$^e$ AM. Alger: Institut Pédagogique National.

(Na.). (1984) <u>Spring</u> Book One 8 AF. Alger: Institut Pédagogique National.

(Na.). (1984) <u>Spring</u> Book Two 9 AF. Alger: Institut Pédagogique National.

MERAZGA, L. *et al* (2003) <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book One 1$^{st}$ AM. Algiers: The National Authority for School Publications.

MERAZGA, L. *et al* (2004) <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Two 2<sup>nd</sup> AM. Algiers:The National Authority for School Publications.

ARAB, S.A. *et al* (2005) <u>Spot Light on English</u> Book Three 3<sup>rd</sup> AM. Algiers:The National Authority for School Publications.

## Electronic References

BROWN, B.J. (1998). 'Textbook Evaluation Form'. Retrieved from: http://www.jalt-pubilcations.org/tlt/files/97/oct/brown.html

CULLEN, B. and SATO, K. (2000). 'Practical Techniques for Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom'. *The Internet TESL Journal*, Volume 5/12. Retrieved from: http://iteslj.org/techniques/cullen-culture.html

HARMER, J. (2005) 'CULTURE or culture? ? Language, Methodology and Content in a Complex World'. *Marshal Cavendish Education online Magazine.* Retrieved from: http://www.mcelt.co.uk/conferences/2005/tesol.asp

LIAW, M.L. (2003) 'Cross-Cultural E-Mail Correspondence for Reflective EFL Teacher Education'. *TESL-EJ*, Volume 6. N° 4. Retrieved from: http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/ej24/a2.html

ROSE C. British Council, Italy. 'Intercultural Learning'. Retrieved from: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/intercultural1.shtml

SKOPINSKAJA, L. (2003). 'The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching Materials: An Evaluation from an Intercultural Perspective'. Retrieved from: http://www.ecml.at/documents/pub123be2003_lazar.pdf Pages : 41-60 .

## List of Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias

HORNBY, A.S. (ed.) (1974) *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collins, H (ed.). (1998) *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.* New Edition. New York.

(Na.) (1996) *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia.* Microsoft Corporation

# APPENDICES

# APPENDICES

**Appendix I**

> Samples of Songs that can be Used in  Presenting Some Varied Cultural Aspects

**Appendix II**

> Suggested Links to Free Downloadable Video Sequences

**Appendix III**

> Questionnaires

**Appendix IV**

> Samples of the '*Learn about Culture*' and  '*Snapshots of Culture*' sections

**Appendix V**

> Layouts of <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Two and Book Three

# APPENDIX I

## SAMPLES OF SONGS THAT CAN BE USED IN
## PRESENTING SOME VARIED CULTURAL ASPECTS

## Song 1: At Christmas I Share

The snowflakes I see through my window,
Remind me that soon it will be ~
The time of the year that I love most ~
'Cause Christmas is special to me.

*Chorus*

But I know, I know
I know that at Christmas I share, I share.
I give presents,
To people to show that I care.

So, Christmas comes once every year and ~
I try to be good when I play.
I know Santa always is watching.
So, I'll try to be good every day!

*Chorus*


*Chorus*


## Song 2: Christmas Snowflakes

I see the little snowflakes
Falling all around.
I love catching snowflakes
Before they touch the ground.
When I watch these snowflakes
And see them falling fast.
I know Christmas will be here
And I'll be glad at last!

## Song 3: It's Thanksgiving

Oh, it's Thanksgiving, I love Thanksgiving,
And we will all join hands and pray.
We will say "Thank You", and count our blessings,
Because Thanksgiving is a special Day.

### Song 4: A Little Baby Ghost.

A little baby ghost went out one Halloween.
Along came a witch that the ghost had never seen!
But, mommy ghost came flying, she heard her baby cry…
And the witch that scared her baby went flying off so high!
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!

### Song 5: Trick-or-Treat Rap.

The sky is black, the moon is white
Do you know tonight's the night
When witches fly above the street
And boys and girls say Trick-or-treat!

Trick-or-treat, trick-or-treat
This is the rhythm of the street
Trick-or-treat, trick-or-treat
This is the rap with the spooky beat!

The wind is cold, the stars are bright
Do you know tonight's the night
White ghosts say BOO when they meet
And boys and girls say Trick-or-treat!

### Song 6: Here In The Classroom.

Here in the classroom where we play,
We work hard right here each day.
Working together happily,
Come and visit and you'll see.

We have fun, we all play,
Work and learn right here each day.
Here in the classroom we all play,
Working together every day.

### Song 7: Oh, We're Off to Kindergarten

Oh, we're off to Kindergarten, yes we are!
Oh, we're off to Kindergarten, yes we are!
Oh, we're off to Kindergarten,
We're off to Kindergarten,
Oh, we're off to Kindergarten, yes we are!

And we won't be here in Pre-School any more.
Oh, we won't be here in Pre-School any more.
Oh, we won't be here in Pre-School,
We won't be here in Pre-School,
Oh, we won't be here in Pre-School any more.

### Song 8: We Are All the Same.

In our class we have many children,
We're different but really the same.
In our class we have many children,
And we know every person by name.

But inside, inside, yes, inside our hearts
We're the same, the same ~
Inside, inside,
Inside all our hearts we're the same!

### Song 9: We Are Going To Tidy Up.

We are going to tidy up,
Tidy up, tidy up.
We are going to tidy up,
To keep our classroom clean.

We all put our things away,
Our things away, our things away.
We all put our things away,
And now our classroom's clean!

**Song 10: Recess Song.**

Here we go out to play with friends,
Play with friends, play with friends,
Here we go out to play with friends,
At recess time today.

We'll play nicely with our friends,
With our friends, with our friends,
We'll play nicely with our friends,
At recess time today.


**Song 11: Good Morning.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Teacher*: | Good morning. |
| *Pupils*: | Good morning. |
| *Teacher*: | I'm very glad to see you ! |
| *Pupils*: | We're glad to see you, here ! |
| *Teacher*: | Good morning. |
| *Pupils*: | Good morning. |

*Teacher and pupils*: Let us sing a song today
A song of cheer.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Teacher*: | Good bye ! |
| *Pupils*: | Good bye ! |
| *Teacher*: | Good bye ! |
| *Pupils*: | Good bye ! |
| *Teacher*: | I hope you'll come tomorrow. |

*Teacher and Pupils*: We'll sing another song.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Teacher*: | Good bye ! |
| *Pupils*: | Good bye ! |
| *Teacher*: | Good bye ! |
| *Pupils*: | Good bye ! |
| *Teacher*: | I'll see you here, tomorrow. |
| *Pupils*: | So long ! So long ! |

# APPENDIX II

# SUGGESTED LINKS TO FREE DOWNLOADABLE VIDEO SEQUENCES

**Suggested Internet Links to Samples of Downloadable Video Sequences Carrying Some Varied Cultural Aspects**

- http://cla.univ-fcomte.fr/english/tvcoms/index.htm

- http://cla.univ-fcomte.fr/english/trailers/trailersindex.htm

- http://cla.univ-fcomte.fr/english/sites/video.htm

- http://www.favoritepoem.org/thevideos/index.html

- http://www.wisconsinstories.org/general/sesquicentennial.html

- http://www.esl-galaxy.com/video.htm

- http://elrebumbio.org/video/video.htm

# APPENDIX III

# QUESTIONNAIRES

## 1. Questionnaire to Language Teachers

Male ☐   Female ☐   Teaching Experience: ☐   Levels in charge of: ☐

The aim from this survey is to analyse how culture is conveyed by teachers, the extent to which they can be successful in that, and how the cultural knowledge affects learners' abilities.

1. Do you think it is important to include aspects of the English culture in ELT?

   *Yes*                    *No*

2. Do you include cultural information in your teaching?

   *Yes*                    *No*

3. If you do include cultural content in your teaching, does it follow a pre-established plan?

   *Yes*                    *No*

4. How often do you teach English / British culture ?

   Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

5. How often do you shift to teaching language skill without going through the section *"Learn about Culture"*?

   Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

6. If you do teach it, do you do it as part of the language lessons of in isolation?

   As part of the language lessons                    In isolation

7. Do you think cultural information included in *"Learn about Culture"* suits learners'

    -   Age ?                    Yes          No

    -   Gender ?            Yes          No

    -   Linguistic background ?      Yes          No

    -   Needs and interests ?        Yes          No

8. How often do you use the textbook to teach culture ?

      Always      Often      Sometimes      Rarely      Never

9. Do you make use of other materials to teach culture? (If Yes, Please specify)

      *Yes*                 *No*

10. How strong is the influence of the cultural aspects on your learners?

      Big      Average      Little      No

11. How important do you consider knowledge of the cultural aspects of the target language for you?

      Important      Not Important

12. How well informed do you consider yourself to be about the British or American of other cultures ?

      Well informed      Average      Little      Not informed

13. How do you keep informed about language culture ?

14. Do you think teachers need specialised training to teach cultural aspects ?

      *Yes*                 *No*

15. Can you suggest other ways to teach or to improve the teaching of culture?

Pleas use a separate sheet to add any comments about the teaching of culture in your classes.

Thanks for helping me with this study .

**2. Questionnaire to <u>Spotlight on English</u> Textbooks Designers**

**Name:**...................... **Position in the Writing Team:**..................

The purpose of this questionnaire is to analyse the cultural content of the <u>"Spotlight on English"</u> textbook.

1. What is the aim of introducing British culture in ELT in Algeria?

2. Why initiate learners to cultural knowledge at so early an age ?

3. If we consider that there is no clear cut between language and culture, why having devoted a separate section to culture teaching?

4. Do you think that Algerian Middle school teachers are well informed about the culture teaching approaches ?

5. Do you think teachers are well informed about the target culture or cultures?

6. What criteria have been taken into consideration in the selection of the cultural content of the sections

Thank you very much for helping me with this study

# APPENDIX IV

116

# SAMPLES OF THE *'LEARN ABOUT CULTURE'* AND *'SNAPSHOTS OF CULTURE'* SECTIONS

1.  **Greetings: Formal / Informal;   Celebrations**

## LEARN ABOUT CULTURE

a. **Match the pictures with the expressions.**

hello!

hi!

good morning

good afternoon

good night

good evening

bye bye

b. **Greet in your language.**

c. **Greet in other languages you know.**

**CELEBRATIONS**

d. **What they say.**
   e.g. *In Great Britain: Happy New Year!*
   - *In Algeria*
   - *In France*
   - *In Italy*
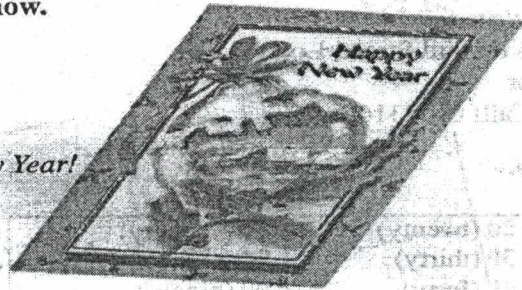
e. **What they have.**
   e.g. *In Algeria, for Eid El Fitr,  children have new clothes and have money.*
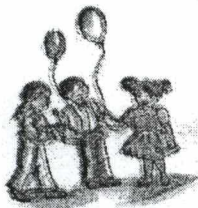
Eid El Fitr
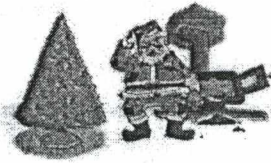
Christmas

Halloween

56
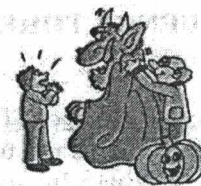
From: <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book One: '*Learn about Culture*' Section, page 56.

## 2. Music Around the World

**Objective : Learn about music in different cultures.**

**MUSIC AROUND THE WORLD**
**Read about these kinds of music. What do they express ?**

### CHAABI

"Chaabi" means popular. It is a style of music that comes from the Arabian-Andalusian classical music. Chaabi expresses love and absence of the beloved.
The "chaabi" is specific to city life and it is especially found in Algiers and its suburbs.
El Anka was the founder of "Modern Chaabi".

### RAP

Coming from the Bronx, Rap started in the sixties with the Last Poets, a group of black Americans. They wanted to send a message of anger through rimes and music. The rappers carried on the African "griot" tradition. A "griot" is a poet and a singer. He uses poetry and music to describe his tribe's way of life. Rap has its origins in the sound systems of Jamaican music. It is also a mixture of "Soul", "Funk" and "Jazz".

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

Beethoven (Ludwig Van) was born in 1770 in Bonn, Germany. He composed sonatas for the piano, quartets, symphonies and concertos for the piano and for the violin. He wrote operas too. He had a hard life and became deaf at an early age. But he carried on composing music. His music expresses strong will and joy. He died in 1827.

### RHYTHM & BLUES

Black American musicians created R&B (Rhythm and Blues) in the forties. The term R&B appeared twenty years later for the first time. It is different from the original Rhythm and Blues. It is a mixture of Funk, Soul and Disco produced by James Brown or Ottis Reading. During the eighties, R&B changed into New Jack and in the nineties, it was back again with singers such as Mary J. Blige and Craig David. In their songs, they talk about people's problems.

### HIP HOP

In 1982, Afrika Bambaataa gave the hip-hop a positive spirit. As a member of a gang, he saw his friends killed. He wanted to take them out of violence so, he founded the Zulu Nation round the hip-hop. It recommended a coming back to the African sources with a basic and simple principle "Peace, Love and Having Fun". The Golden Age of the hip-hop was between 1985 and 1992.

**Do you know other styles of music ? Do you like any special group ? Talk about it.** 21

From: <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Two: '*Learn about Culture*' Section, page 21.

**Schools in Britain**

### Schools in Britain

❶ **Read the text below, then compare schools in Britain with schools in Algeria.**

    **a.** Are school uniforms compulsory in British comprehensive schools?

    **b.** Do you wear uniforms in your own school?

    **c.** Do you have the same subjects in your school?

    **d.** What are the most popular and the least popular subjects?

    **e.** What is your favourite subject? Why?

### Harry Potter: Real or Imaginary ?

*Have you read one of the* <u>Harry Potter</u> *books? Have you seen one of the* <u>Harry Potter</u> *films? Are the events real or imaginary? Read and find out with me.*

In Britain it is compulsory for everyone between the ages of 5 and 16 to go to school. Harry Potter goes to "Hogwarth". It is a comprehensive school. In Britain comprehensive schools are schools for students aged eleven to sixteen. Harry Potter **has to** wear a uniform at school. In some comprehensive schools, boarders live in "houses". In each house there is a group of students of different ages who compete with the other houses. Do you remember? The four houses in *Harry Potter* are 'Ravenclaw', 'Hufflepuff', 'Gryffindor' and 'Slytherin'. It is Harry Potter's house, Gryffindor, which wins the cup on Sports Day.
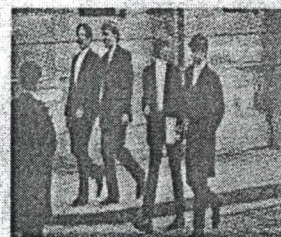
School day starts at around ten to nine, when the teachers take the register. The teachers call the students' names to check who is present and who is absent in class. After registration, all students **must go** to Assembly in the School Hall to listen to the headmaster. The headmaster reads a poem or a passage from a book. Then, he says a prayer and informs the pupils and teachers about what has happened in the school. The lessons start around 9.30 when the assembly is over. The subjects studied are Maths, PE, Science, Geography, Art, Writing, History, Home Economics, French, Drama, Technical Studies...
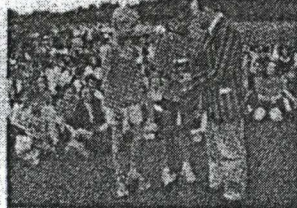
Sports Day is a day reserved for outdoor sports competitions at the end of the school year in Britain. There are no lessons on Sports Day, so all students meet on the sports grounds to compete for the school cup. The favourite sport for students at **Hogwarth** is "Quidditch".

From: <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Three: '*Snapshots of Culture*' Section, page 113.

**APPENDIX V**

**LAYOUTS OF <u>SPOTLIGHT ON ENGLISH</u> BOOK TWO AND BOOK THREE**

## Layout of Book Two



### Structure of the second English coursebook

- Five (5) projects in five (5) topical files.

- In each file there are three (3) sequences.

**OBJECTIVES**
The objectives of the sequences.

**PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING :**
An oral activity on phonology that will help you improve your pronunciation and intonation patterns.

**LISTEN AND SPEAK**
A short illustrated document for listening (said by your teacher) to train you in listening, picking out information and speaking at a simple level.

**PRACTISE**
An oral or written activity to re-use what you have just learnt.

**GO FORWARD**
A document for listening or for reading illustrated with pictures, photos or with another support to follow up the work on the language and to train you to understand a text you have heard or read.

## DISCOVER THE LANGUAGE
A short reading text with questions that will guide you discover the rules of English vocabulary, spelling and grammar.

## REMINDER !
Presented in a box and highlighted, this section is meant to remind you the key elements of spelling, grammar and vocabulary encountered throughout the sequence.

## PRACTISE
A series of exercises related to the lesson to make you practise the spelling, grammar and vocabulary items you have just learnt.

## LEARN ABOUT CULTURE
A guided tour to open a window on the culture of English speaking countries. Short and simple pieces of writing and activities will guide you in discovering and exploring texts and documents related to the topics.

## LISTENING SCRIPTS
Conversations, dialogues for you to listen to.

**CHECK**
A set of exercises is proposed for you to choose from, according to your needs in order to check your acquisitions.

**HELP ?**
This section suggests strategies to help you get through difficulties.

**SELF ASSESSMENT**
A grid that you will use to evaluate your acquisitions.

**PROJECT**
To train you do research work, work in groups and re-use what you have learnt not only in English but also in the other subjects such as : Sciences, History, Geography, Arabic etc.

6

From: <u>Spotlight on English</u> Book Two, pages 4-5-6.

## Layout of Book Three

### TO THE STUDENT

There are four projects in the book. They unfold in parallel with four <u>files</u>. Each file is divided into three <u>sequences</u>. These sequences are themselves followed by these sections:

- <u>Snapshots of Culture.</u>
- <u>Activate your English.</u>
- <u>Do the exercises and draw the rules.</u>
- <u>Where do we stand now?</u>

Your progress through every file is signposted by a number of <u>rubrics</u>. Here are some indications which will help you at every stage of the file.
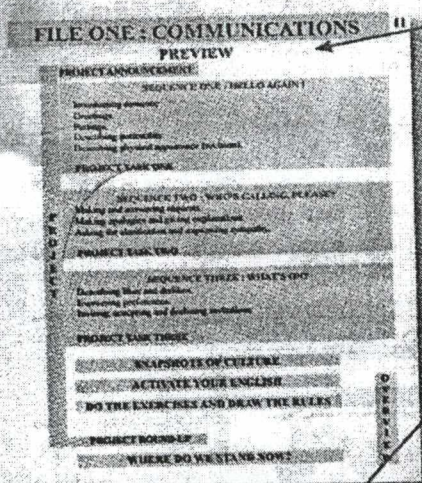
**PREVIEW**

It gives you, before even you start, the contents of the file and charts your progress, sequence by sequence.
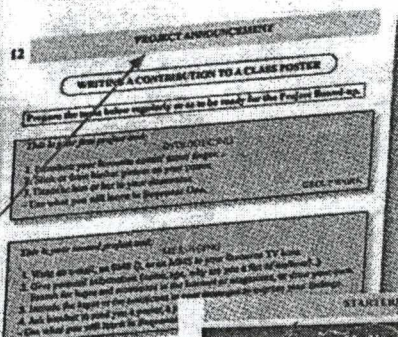
**PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT**

It tells you what project you will realise and how you will do it. Keep that in mind!
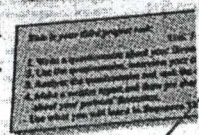
**STARTERS**

Whet your appetite ... with a smile.

**6**
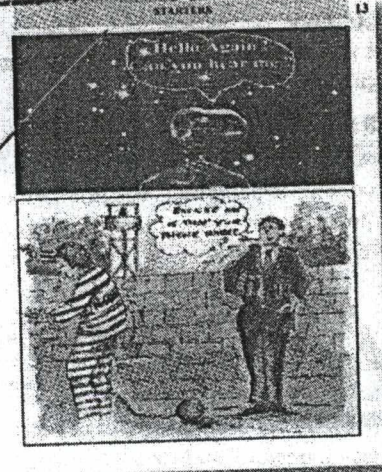
## LISTEN AND SPEAK

With books closed, listen to your teacher. Recognize the sounds of English. Make sense of what you hear.

## SAY IT CLEAR

Train your tongue and lips to speak correctly, but also meaningfully.

## PRACTISE

Act out guided dialogues. Interact with your partner. Make sure you understand each other.

## IMAGINE

Take your cues from pictures and texts. Play roles in situations that imitate real life. Use the sense, sounds and grammar items you have learnt.

## READ AND WRITE

The reading tasks will train you to be a good reader. Seek meaning. Pay attention to sentence structure and text organisation.

## PRACTISE

Use what you have just learnt in short sentences of guided writing.

## WRITE IT OUT

Now you're expected to write a longer piece, eg., a paragraph for communication purposes. Draw inspiration from what you have read.

*Go back to Project Announcement and start Project Task One.*

## PROJECT TASK

It reminds you, at the end of every sequence, of what remains to be done. Get back to project announcement for details. Get to work within your group. Don't be left behind!

## SNAPSHOTS OF CULTURE

Meet Britain and other English-speaking countries. Compare and contrast them with Algeria in class discussions, reports and writing tasks. Sit back and relax!

## ACTIVATE YOUR ENGLISH
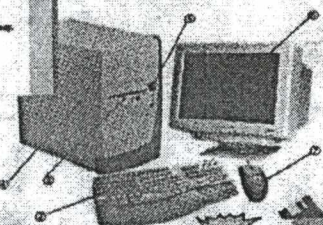
Build up your vocabulary. Make use of it in specific situations. Save your word treasury for the WORD FAIR. It's a competition that will take place at the end of the school year.

## DO THE EXERCISES AND DRAW THE RULES

Discover how language works. Check whether you're right or wrong by consulting the LANGUAGE REFERENCE at the end of the book.

## PROJECT ROUND-UP

Within your group, put the final touch to your project. It should reflect all you have acquired. Get ready to enter the competition that will take place at the PROJECT EXHIBITION. It will be held at the end of the school year.