PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

University of Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila

Faculty of Literature and Language

Department of Foreign Language

Section: English

A Cultural Content Evaluation of the First Year Middle School English Textbook "My Book of English"

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master's Degree in **Didactics of Foreign Languages**

Presented by:

Gholem Allah Meghlaoui

Walid Noufel Guerrout

Supervisor:

Dr. Fahima Nouichi

Board of Examiners:

Chairwoman: Dr. Boughouas Lemya

Supervisor: Dr. Fahima Nouichi

Examiner: Dr. Zemieche Amina

2025 – 2026

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Dedication

GHOLEM ALLAH MEGHLAOUI

I dedicate this work, first and foremost, to Allah, Alhamdullilah, for His infinite blessings, guidance, and for granting me the patience to reach this milestone.

To the lights of my life, my mother and father, this achievement belongs to you just as much as it belongs to me. Thank you for believing in me when I couldn't believe in myself.

To my siblings and entire family, whose love and constant presence have been my greatest source of motivation.

To my teachers, who lit the path of knowledge for me over the years with patience and dedication; your impact extends far beyond the classroom.

To my classmates and friends, thank you for the beautiful moments, the shared struggles, and the memories we built together during these years. You made this path worthwhile.

Dedication

WALID NOUFEL GUERROUT

Alhamdulillah, all praise is due to Allah for granting me the strength, patience, and guidance to complete this work. He is the One who eases the path of His servants and blesses them with success. I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents for their endless love, sacrifices, support, and prayers, which have been the foundation of my achievements.

To my dear partner, thank you for your encouragement, understanding, and constant support throughout this journey.

I would also like to thank the honorable members of the jury for their time and evaluation of this work, as well as all the staff of the English Department for their contribution to the academic development.

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Abstract

Since the 1960s, researchers have attempted to explore how language relates to culture and the extent to which the cultural aspect can be taught through English foreign language (EFL) instruction. Research has shown that cultural education plays an important part today, due to the fact that students will need cultural knowledge to successfully communicate across cultures in a global society. This research aims to assess the current state of learning and teaching culture in Middle schools. It also assesses first year middle school textbook "*My Book of English*" for content related to culture and investigates how middle school English teachers view the inclusion of culture into EFL classroom activities. A mixed research method was employed. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to Algerian middle school English teachers, capturing their perspectives on their work as professionals. The findings indicate that although teachers recognize that teaching culture promotes the development of cultural awareness, they believe there are limitations in cultural depth and task structure in the textbook's cultural content.

Key words: Culture, Textbook Evaluation, My Book of English, Middle School Education.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APA: American psychological Association

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

ERIC: Educational Resources Information Center

TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

There has always been significant interest in contemporary Applied Linguistic circles regarding the interconnectedness between the acquisition of language skills and cultural literacy. Since language cannot be acquired in a vacuum of culture, vocabulary and grammar are always tied together through common history, value systems, and social norms. Thus, teaching language without considering this cultural component will result in learners who possess linguistic capabilities but have insufficient knowledge about how these abilities should function pragmatically.

Therefore, assessing how cultural content is developed in educational materials is a necessary concern. The basis for this assessment need arises from the unique linguistic structure of Algeria's educational system. As opposed to French, which maintains a considerable legacy of colonial institutions and continues to maintain a presence domestically in Algeria, English remains an entirely peripheral element in Algerians' daily social lives. In addition, since English exists as a nonexistent ambient factor in students' daily lives, the nationally prescribed textbook becomes transformed from being a supplementary tool to serve as an isolated and sole window into the English speaking world.

Consequently, each decision made during the construction of the textbook represents long term educational ramifications that cannot be mitigated by students' informal contact with English outside of class. This research focused exclusively on the 2025 Edition of *Models* for first year middle school students. Due to this material representing students' first formal introduction to the language at age 11 and 12, there exists an urgent need for a systematic evaluation of cultural components included within this material. This research aims to provide an empirically based evaluation of cultural components represented within the early stages of implementing this material prior to its assumptions and biases becoming

ingrained in classroom practices throughout Algeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

The main issue behind the rationale for this investigation is not just that there will be cultural material in *Models* but also that there is currently no theoretical structure based assessment of what that material is, which culture(s) it exemplifies, and whether it assists the inter cultural goals that the curriculum indicates as being intended.

From an academic perspective, the cultural content of Algerian EFL books has not been evaluated by means of a framework oriented analysis, similar to those developed for use in other countries. For example, researchers involved with EFL materials in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, China and Japan have created detailed analyses of the cultural content functions in their respective national textbooks. In contrast, the Algerian middle school system has remained essentially unrepresented in the aforementioned international literature. Moreover, because Models was only recently implemented as a 2025 curriculum, it exists in an entirely empirical void; there is thus far no data to verify whether the design of the curriculum meets its progressive declarations.

In addition to the above mentioned issues at the academic level, the problem is equally significant at the practical level. Daily, teachers who are utilizing Models make cultural and pedagogical decisions—when to add to, challenge, or dismiss the cultural content included in the book—that are made in the absence of systemic evaluations. Similarly, educators who are creating future editions of the curriculum do so based upon a lack of clarity regarding the cultural merits and deficits of the current edition. This study will serve as a basis for providing both groups with the necessary analytical base.

3. Research Objectives

This research aims to:

- Determine what cultural content is represented in *My Book of English*, the primary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook used by all first year students at the middle school level throughout Algeria.
- Identify how well the cultural content of *My Book of English* represents an equal or fair balance of the three cultural groups of Algerians, native speakers of English and the world community at large.
- Identify those aspects and/or methods of *My Book of English* where the most effective transmission of cultural content can be achieved among first year middle school EFL learners in Algeria.
- Assess the ability of *My Book of English's* cultural content to promote authentic intercultural knowledge, rather than merely basic factual knowledge about various cultures, but also promoting greater awareness of different values and encouraging learners to think critically and negotiate their own identities.
- Explore EFL teachers' opinions/attitudes regarding the cultural content of *My Book of English* using their own professional experiences teaching the textbook within the context of their Algerian middle school classes.
- Provide suggestions based upon evidence collected from this research to improve the

cultural aspect of *My Book of English* in order to enhance the intercultural education and development of EFL learners in Algeria.

4. Research Questions

1. How, and at what level of cultural depth (Big C, Little c, or Deep Culture), is cultural content represented in *My Book of English*?

2. How does the textbook allocate cultural attention toward Algerian source culture, English speaking nation cultures, and international perspectives?

3. To what extent does the textbook's instructional architecture use textual and visual mediums to promote students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) versus a passive reception of culture?

5. Methodology

The present study adopts a mixed research approach. To collect data, a semi structured teacher questionnaire was designed and administered online to Algerian middle school EFL teachers. The decision to administer the questionnaire online was motivated by practical considerations of accessibility and convenience, allowing participants across different regions and institutions to respond at a time and pace suited to their professional schedule. The questionnaire was distributed digitally and completed in written form, giving participants sufficient time to reflect carefully and honestly on each question.

6. Structure of the Study

The present dissertation is organized in two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework of the study. It is divided into two parts. The first part, on the one hand, reviews the key concepts and scholarly debates surrounding cultural content in EFL textbooks, drawing on the work of established researchers in the field including Cortazzi and Jin (1999), Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993), Holliday (1994), and Kilickaya (2004).

The second part, on the other hand, situates the study within the Algerian EFL context, examining the role of *My Book of English* within the national curriculum and the particular cultural and pedagogical challenges that characterize English language teaching at the middle school level in Algeria.

The second chapter constitutes the fieldwork of the study. It begins by describing the methodology adopted for data collection and analysis, including the rationale for the qualitative approach, the design of the semi- structured questionnaire, and the online administration procedure. Then, it presents the analysis of the data collected from the teachers' questionnaire, a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework, followed by pedagogical implications and recommendations for teachers, and textbook designers.

Chapter One

Culture and Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation of the study. It opens by examining the relationship between language and culture, drawing on the work of Kramsch, Agar, and Risager to argue that cultural content is not an optional addition to language teaching but an inseparable dimension of it. It then introduces Moran's Big-C, Little-c, and Deep Culture taxonomy as the primary lens for categorising cultural content, followed by Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which defines the broader pedagogical goal this study uses to evaluate the textbook. The chapter subsequently addresses the nature and function of EFL textbooks, positioning them not merely as instructional tools but as cultural and ideological texts whose content carries significant consequences for learners' identities and worldviews. It concludes by presenting the three analytical frameworks Risager's cultural orientations, Kilickaya's evaluation criteria, and Kramsch's Third Place concept that together form the evaluative structure applied throughout the fieldwork chapter. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives equip the study to move beyond surface-level description and engage critically with the cultural decisions embedded in My Book of English

1. Culture

1.1 culture definition

Culture refers to the shared system of values, beliefs, customs, behaviours, and social practices that characterise a particular group or society and are passed down from one generation to the next. It encompasses both visible elements, such as food, clothing, celebrations, and artistic expression, and invisible ones, such as attitudes, norms, and ways of thinking. In the context of language education, culture is understood not merely as a collection of surface level facts about

a given people, but as a dynamic and evolving framework through which individuals construct identity, interact with others, and communicate meaning.

1.2 What Is Culture in Language Education?

Culture has been both a very difficult and a vital topic for many decades in the social sciences and humanities. In order to help us analyze what we are looking at, a definition of culture will need to be developed. A definition needs to be as precise as possible so that we can use it for our research, and at the same time it needs to be general enough to cover all of the complexities involved.

In the linguistic relativity paradigm, language represents reality only when it dictates how people focus their attention through habitual patterns of communication grammar that compels

speakers to notice certain aspects of experience, which then form the basis of social norms (Whorf, 1956; Deutscher, 2010). Culturally speaking, language provides the structure that guides the way humans perceive reality (shared perceptions), and these shared perceptions provide the foundation for common practices, physical realities, and collective values (communal practices) (Everett, 2008). Together, these two approaches to understanding culture present it as both part of language, constructed through a set of shared ways of perceiving the world, and supported through collective or communal action — dynamic instead of static and constantly being recreated through everyday social interactions.

To operationalize the complex nature of culture within educational materials, researchers frequently categorize cultural content based on its visibility and depth of meaning. A widely adopted approach relies on the distinction between « Big C » culture, « Little c » culture, and « Deep Culture » (Moran, 2001).

Table 1.1: Moran's (2001) Big C / Little c / Deep Culture Taxonomy

Type	Category	Definition and Examples
Big C	*High Culture / Institutional*	Institutionalized products of society (national literature, history, civic institutions, symbols). Highly visible and easy to describe.
Little c	*Everyday / Behavioral*	Social behaviors and practices (norms of behavior, rules for interacting, family traditions). Observable in daily life but generally not acknowledged by individuals.
Deep	*Worldview / Values*	Unseen mental assumptions, core values, beliefs

Type	Category	Definition and Examples
Culture		and worldview orientations. Deeply influential upon human actions but extremely hard to include in educational texts.

1.3 The Interrelationship between Language and Culture

Language and culture do not stand apart from each other in terms of their role in shaping perception of reality. Instead, language is inextricably linked with culture. In fact, language is not just reflective of reality in culture but also constructs, recreates and changes culture (Kramsch 1998, p. 3). Claire Kramsch illustrates the interconnectedness of language and culture by explaining that language represents, embodies, and symbolizes reality (Kramsch 1998, p. 3). Furthermore, language acts as a medium for sharing community experiences as well as a storehouse of culturally grounded habits of thinking and a means of expressing social identity.

In order to establish formally that there exists no distinction between language and culture, anthropologist Michael Agar (1994, p. 60) coined the term *languaculture*. Through his coining of this term, he established that culture is not an option that can be included or excluded from a pedagogy at the discretion of teachers. Rather culture is deeply ingrained in every aspect of language including every word choice, every social rule/interaction and every example/model dialogue.

Taking further this contextualist viewpoint regarding the bound nature of linguistic meaning, Risager (2006) argues that because language meaning cannot occur independently of cultural influence, there is no such thing as linguistically neutral language teaching. Thus, every single pedagogically based decision regarding situated examples/models and

thematic units/speech styles for students involves a decision about culture. This study operationalizes the perspectives discussed above and examines specifically the cultural decisions made in *Models*, comparing them with those expected to take place in the pedagogical and inter cultural environments faced by the Algerian learners who are studying using *Models*.

1.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The curriculum as a vehicle for promoting cultural understanding through pedagogically driven tasks has been examined using models of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which move away from a sole focus on linguistic competence. The foundation of ICC lies with Michael Byram's (1997) definition of the successful language learner as an *"intercultural speaker."* An intercultural speaker is someone who can manage interaction across cultural boundaries without losing his/her own identity. The ICC model provides a structure that goes beyond grammatical correctness to include both linguistic and pragmatic competences along with five distinct dimensions of intercultural capabilities referred to as *savoirs*. These are presented in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Byram's (1997) Five Savoirs of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Savoir (Dimension)	Description
Savoirs (Knowledge)	The comprehension of the social groups, products and practices of both the source (Algerian) and target cultures.
Savoir être (Attitudes)	A learner's curiosity, open mindedness, willingness to set

Savoir (Dimension)	Description
	aside ethnocentrism or skepticism towards other cultural systems.
Savoir comprendre (Skills of interpreting/relating)	Cognitive skills to interpret or relate an unfamiliar cultural document or event, including identifying the inherent bias (es) and relating them to your own cultural system.
Savoir apprendre/faire (Skills of Discovery/Interaction)	Skills to develop new cultural knowledge and use it in actual time communicative situations.
Savoir s'engager (Critical Cultural Awareness)	To provide explicit evaluation standards to assess the perceptions, products, and practices of both native and foreign cultures.

In this study, Byram's framework was used to create a basis for evaluating whether the *tasks*, embedded in *Models,* have the potential to activate these *savoirs* or place Algerian students in a static position of passive cultural reception.

2 Textbook Evaluation

2.1 What is a textbook?

A textbook is an official educational reference that can be used formally, is usually created to represent all of what has to be learned within one area of knowledge or one course at a

certain grade level. A textbook, according to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 7), is a tool that will assist students and teachers in meeting their predetermined goals; « the goal was established based on student need. » In addition to providing a framework for sequencing lessons, textbooks are structured teaching/learning aids (Sheldon, 1988). The two main components of this structure include the materials included in the textbook itself and the activities developed by the authors. Textbooks may function as sources of information, models of how to present a lesson plan, or models of how to develop language skills in EFL classrooms (Cunningsworth, 1995).

2.2 Definition of Textbook Evaluation

Textbook evaluation is an objective, structured assessment methodology, which evaluates textbooks using a set of predetermined standards (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomlinson, 2003), with respect to their applicability, efficiency, and relevance to a pre specified learning population (Tomlinson, 2003). This process includes two analytically separate processes: pre use evaluation, which assesses whether a textbook will have value prior to use, and post use or in use evaluation, which determines if a textbook has achieved the intended teaching/learning objectives (McGrath, 2002).

Unlike previous studies that employed informal assessments using cursory examination of textbooks to determine suitability, this study employs an objective assessment method, employing a transparent, reproducible assessment framework to identify clear visible characteristics (Sheldon, 1988). Textbook evaluation is fundamentally an interpretive analysis; therefore the evaluator must move beyond the superficial descriptors provided in the text and evaluate the implied ideologically based representations of the author. Because each evaluation is culturally, institutionally, and socially based upon the particular environment of the learner (Tomlinson, 2003); thus, the material

must be evaluated relative to the cultural, institutional and social environment of the targeted learners (i.e., First Year Middle School Students in Algeria).

2.3 The Function of the Textbook in the EFL Classroom

The textbook acts as the central organizing mechanism of language instruction in formal EFL environments, controlling the sequencing of linguistic input and the selection of communication task. Harmer (2007) described the course book as a fundamental educational tool providing coherence and progression to what would be an unmanageable body of linguistic and cultural information. In reality, the textbook functions as three entities at once; it is an instructional support system, a cultural guide, and an ideological text. A cultural guide, as such, creates a mental representation of the target language community for learners without ambient experience with it in everyday life. Thusly, it represents specific values and priorities embedded in the structural neutrality of the textbook. In the Algerian context, there is no choice; The Ministry of National Education mandates *Models* as the sole instructional resource for this level. Therefore, this monopolization of resources greatly increases the importance of textbook review. Not only is a thorough analysis of textbooks an academic pursuit but also it becomes a necessary practical activity.

2.3.1 Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Content Representation

A systematic critique of the cultural content of a textbook assumes that since language and culture mutually constitute one another; all textbooks possess inherent ideological properties. Therefore, utilizing Moran's (2001) taxonomy discussed above in Chapter One, this research goes beyond identifying surface characteristics to examine how identity is represented structurally in these texts. Analyzing texts critically is an investigation into issues of power and fairness. If the

textbooks present foreign target culture norms exclusively and do so in a way that suggests learners' success linguistically is contingent on giving up their own native cultural heritage, type of linguistic imperialism that occurs via educational materials (Canagarajah, 1999).

On the other hand, a curriculum that validates source culture for learners while concurrently creating critical awareness of global perspectives may prevent cultural disorientation. Through striking an equilibrium between these two concerns; a textbook can develop the reflective intercultural identities advocated by Kramsch's (1993) concept of Third Space — a psychological and linguistic place where learners exist between their original culture and target culture, critically examining both cultures. Assessing cultural content is an evaluation of which groups' experiences, values, and ways of being are legitimized and which remain invisible.

2.4 A Framework for Assessing Cultural Content in ESL/ELT Textbooks

In order to transition from theoretical concepts to concrete textual analyses, this research develops an evaluation structure that integrates macro theoretical philosophical perspectives and both practical and dialogue based assessment structures. The three specific frameworks together with Byram's (1997) six dimensions of the ICC provide the framework for assessing *Models* based upon these three frameworks.

2.4.1 Risager's (2007) Four Orientations towards Language Instruction model

Karen Risager (2007) developed a macro classification system for categorizing the primary cultural philosophies behind language instructional materials. Based upon her classification system, she identified four orientations that represent different assumptions about how the target language relates to world cultures:

Table 1.3: Risager's (2007) Four Cultural Orientations in Language Instruction

Orientation	Analytical Foci	Risk Level of Education
Intercultural Approach	Encourages comparative dialogue between the student's source context and target speaking communities and uses cultural exchange as a basis for mutual reflection.	Low Risk: Standard for contemporary communicative learning goals.
Multicultural Approach	Describes the diverse forms of social organization found within each society including linguistic, ethnic, regional, and socioeconomic aspects.	Minimal Risk: Avoids creating a homogenous image of the learner's culture and other cultures.
Transcultural Approach		Risk: If disassociated from local realities may appear too abstract.
Foreign Culture Approach	Places all emphasis on a single, idealized and homogeneous native speaker culture.	Maximum Risk: Limits the ability of students to express themselves

Orientation	Analytical Foci	Risk Level of Education
		culturally while promoting stereotypes of non native speaking cultures.

During the content analysis section of Chapter Two, this study will apply Risager's typology to evaluate if *Models* includes intercultural and multicultural comparisons, or if it continues to follow a traditional foreign culture approach.

2.4.2 Kilickaya's (2004) Evaluation Criteria Model

Whereas Risager deals with macro philosophical orientations toward language instruction, Fatih Kilickaya (2004) develops a practical, teacher centered methodology for assessing cultural content at the level of classroom activities. He converts cultural assessments into tangible and empirically verifiable questions:

Table 1.4: Kilickaya's (2004) Four Criteria for Evaluating Cultural Content in EFL Materials

Criterion	Evaluative Question
Viewpoint Diversity	Does the instructional material present a range of views? Or does it use a single narrative voice?
Actor Authenticity/Credibility	Do cultural characters portray realistic and nuanced cultural identities or are they reduced to shallow caricatures?
Social Political Context	Is the social political context presented in the language instructional material accurately represented? Or is it made simplistic?
Reflective Thinking	Does the instructional design encourage learners to question their own cultural biases?

For this study, Kilickaya's final criterion of what constitutes quality instructional material is its ability to elicit critical thinking; and for him, cultural content should be used as an inquiry process that encourages open discussion, rather than providing a passive repository of facts to be memorized.

2.4.3 Operational zing Kramsch's (1993) Third Space model

Claire Kramsch's (1993) concept of the *third place* is also used as the ultimate evaluative

framework for this study. According to Kramsch (1993), as well as according to domestic scholars (Merrouche, 2006), the purpose of teaching culture is neither to have learners reproduce uncritically the norms of the target culture nor to protect them from the influence of another culture through their native heritage. Rather, it is to create a critical relational space that exists between a learner's home culture and target culture. Using his framework when examining instructional design, Kramsch evaluates whether or not a teacher has created an environment where learners can engage in active *cultural mediation*. This model is consistent with Byram's (1997) dimensions of *savoir comprendre* and *savoir s'engager*. For this study, we combine these models to evaluate whether or not *Models* contains the structural components necessary to facilitate comparative, reflective, and critically engaging cultural interactions.

Conclusion

Chapter one has provided the theoretical base for this study. Theoretical frameworks about culture, language, and intercultural competence were drawn upon to create an overall analytical model used to assess the cultural aspects of *My Book of English* . The analytical model goes beyond simply assessing the textbook technically to explore some of the deep cultural values, implicit assumption, and pedagogic decision making included in the textbook. Importantly, the evaluative criteria chosen are adjusted based on realistic development of first year middle school students so the analysis is based on reasonable adult like standards rather than adult standards.

Chapter Two

Field Work

Introduction

This chapter presents the practical dimension of the present study. It describes the methodology adopted for data collection and analysis, identifies the population and sample of the research, and explains the instrument used to gather data. Furthermore, it provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the semi structured teacher questionnaire, drawing on the responses of ten EFL practitioners who teach with Models at first year middle school level in Algeria. The chapter concludes with pedagogical implications, recommendations, and an acknowledgement of the limitations encountered during the research process.

2.4.3.1 Methodology

The methodology utilized for this research involved collecting and analyzing data. The chapter outlines the population sampled within this study. In addition, the chapter details the method utilized to collect data. The chapter ends with conclusions drawn from the results of the data analysis, along with pedagogical implications, recommendations, and a recognition of the constraints faced throughout the research process.

2.4.3.1.1 Sample of the Study

The population targeted in this study involves EFL instructors employed in middle schools in Algeria, utilizing Models as their primary or exclusive EFL textbook. Due to its qualitative nature, a purposeful sampling procedure was applied, as it enables researchers to choose participants who may provide the type of knowledge and/or experience required to respond to the study's research questions

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Consequently, ten practicing EFL middle school teachers were chosen as the sample for this study. As a result of these selections, the ten participating teachers have a diverse range of teaching experience, and include novice practitioners in the initial phases of their careers and veteran teachers with over ten years of experience. Additionally, although none of the teachers formally studied intercultural education, several did receive some formal training in intercultural pedagogy. The diversity of the participants' backgrounds was intended to yield a more detailed and complex array of viewpoints concerning the cultural elements included in the textbook.

2.4.3.1.2 Research Approach

This study used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research designs with the same instrument. The quantitative method was achieved by means of the closed format rating items included in the research instrument. This allowed for the generation of quantifiable data that may then be summarized, compared or graphically displayed. A qualitative methodology, and the most critical aspect of this study is realized through the open ended questions also contained in the same research instrument. These open ended questions allow researchers to collect rich descriptive data that provide insight into the complexities experienced by teachers as professionals and their reflective thinking. Combining these two methods allow for the interpretation of statistical trends based on participant responses. An interpretative paradigm is utilized to guide this study. In this paradigm it is understood that all aspects of reality are socially constructed from an individual's perspective and the task of the researcher is to accurately understand and describe that construction (Creswell, 2014).

2.4.3.1.3 Research Tools

The primary tool used for collecting data in this study is a semi structured teacher questionnaire. Semi structured questionnaires combine both closed rating items and open ended questions, thereby making them ideally suited for studies that seek to establish participants' points of view as well as gain a deeper qualitative understanding of their experiences (Cohen et al., 2018, pp. 244–246). The teacher

questionnaire developed for this study was organised into five thematic areas. Area Zero obtains demographic information about participants' professional backgrounds. Area One evaluates the types and themes of cultural content contained in the textbook. Area Two evaluates whether cultures are represented equally. Area Three assesses how cultural content is displayed across various parts of the textbook. Area Four evaluates the extent to which intercultural competence is developed through textbook use, drawing on Kilickaya's (2004) evaluation criteria and Kramsch's (1993) notion of the Third Place. Area Five asks participants to evaluate their perception of the overall quality of the book and suggest ways for improving it. The questionnaire was administered to ten EFL middle school teachers via paper and pencil format; therefore, participants had ample opportunity to reflect thoughtfully and truthfully on each question.

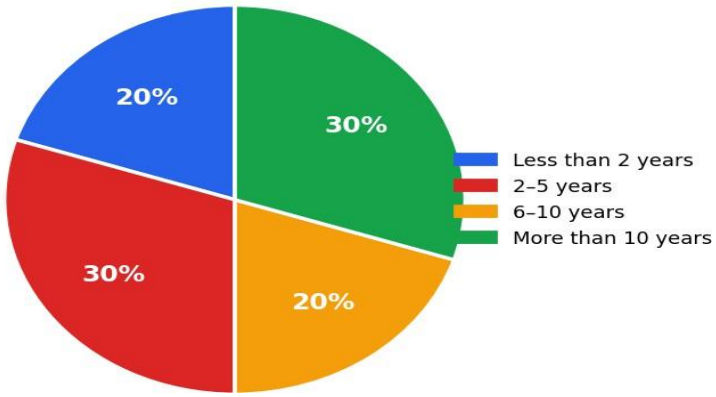
2.4.3.2 Data Analysis

This section includes a presentation and analysis of the data obtained via the participant's online semi structured teacher survey. The participant's survey is organised into sections based upon the organisational structure of the tool. Responses to closed rating type items will be summarised for comparison purposes among all (n = 10) participants who completed the tool. Open ended responses were assessed thematically using participants' own wording where possible. Participants are identified using Participant One through Participant Ten so as to maintain anonymity. The nature of this project included an online administration of the questionnaire which allowed participants from various educational institutions and geographic locations to complete it at their own pace while having ample opportunity to reflect carefully and honestly on each item.

Section One: Teachers' Profile

Question 1: Years of Experience Teaching EFL at Middle School Level

Figure 1: Years of Teaching Experience (n=10)

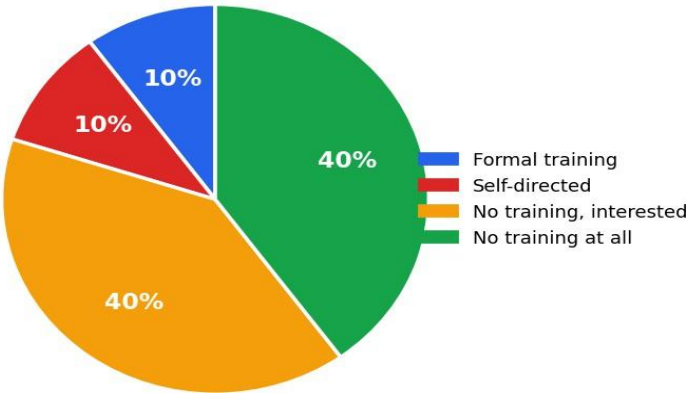


The ten study participants exhibit a great deal of variability in terms of their professional experiences. Three teachers (30% of the sample) indicated they had over ten years of experience at the middle school level; these participants have clearly developed both a significant amount of teaching expertise as well as an extensive knowledge base related to EFL instruction in Algeria.

Two participants (20% of the sample) indicated between six and ten years of teaching experience, while three (also 30% of the sample) were teaching for between two and five years. Finally, two (20% of the sample) indicated they had been teaching for less than two years. Therefore, it is clear that the sample captures a full range of views among practicing teachers, from new teachers who are still defining themselves professionally through to experienced teachers who possess a deep and long standing understanding of the national curriculum and the textbook resources associated therewith.

Question 2: Training in Intercultural or Culturally Responsive EFL Teaching

Figure 2: Intercultural Training Background (n=10)



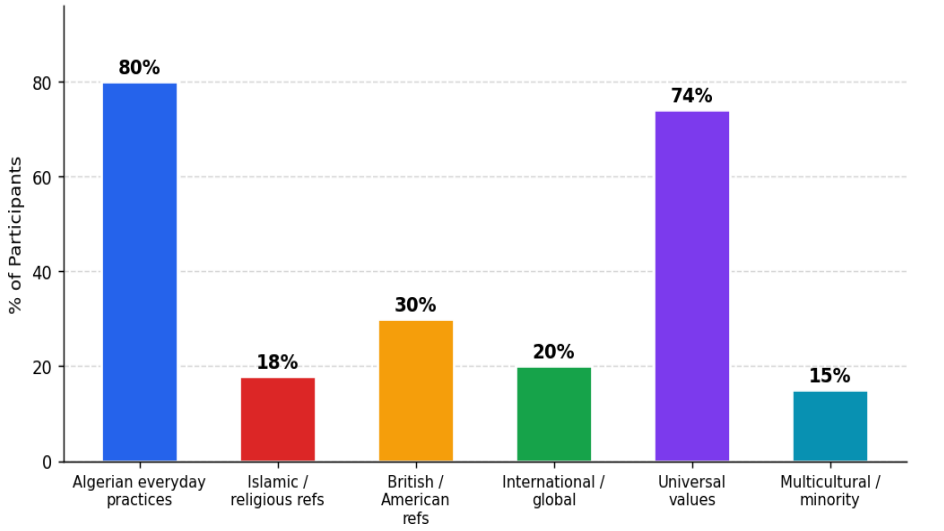
The findings from Figure 2 show there to be a large and continuing gap in formal intercultural training among all participants. Forty percent of the participants have never had any type of formal training; a further 40% have never had formal training but would like to. Twenty percent of the participants have had some formal or non-formal training: one was formally trained by his institution and another undertook self-directed professional development through reading and attending workshops. The above indicates that 80% of the participants do not have a formal theoretical framework with which to evaluate the cultural aspects of their instructional materials, and therefore may not handle the cultural content appropriately within the classroom.

Section Two: Types and Themes of Cultural Content

Question 3: Frequency of Cultural Themes in the Textbook

Participants were asked to rate how frequently six cultural themes appear in Models on a scale of 1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often). Figure 3 below illustrates the percentage of participants who rated each theme as often (4) or Very Often (5).

Figure 3: % of Participants Rating Each Cultural Theme as Often/Very Often (n=10)



The results shown in Figure 3 reveal an obvious hierarchy in the relative ranking of cultural themes based on how frequently they are perceived to occur. Everyday routines and socialization in Algeria ranked first, with 80% of respondents seeing these elements as occurring very frequently or fairly frequently, yielding a mean score of 4.10 out of 5. Next came universal concepts such as family and friendship, where 74% of respondents gave high ratings, resulting in a mean of 3.70. Moderately represented were both British and American cultural references, which averaged only 2.50, with only 30% of respondents viewing them as frequent. Thus, while present, their representation was limited. Least well represented were international and global themes, which also had a mean score of 2.00. Perhaps most significantly, Islamic and religious cultural references were rated as frequent by only 18% of respondents, producing a mean of 1.80. Least represented of all were multicultural and minority group perspectives, rated as frequent by a mere 15% of respondents, which produced the lowest mean of all theme types at 1.50. Together, these results demonstrate the almost complete marginalization of religion based culture and culturally diverse material from the textbook.

Question 4: Most Prominent Forms of Cultural Content in the Textbook

Participants were asked to identify the forms of culture that appeared most commonly in the content of Models. All ten participants stated that the most prominent form of cultural content in the book is Algerian everyday social life.

Participants One and Two described the content of the book as being composed of everyday Algerian practices, specifically referring to the use of Algerian character names, recognizable city and town locations within Algeria, and family social practices such as visiting and greeting.

Participant Three stated that cultural content in the book is primarily influenced by the order in which topics are sequenced, manifesting in the inclusion of place names and school related contexts.

Participant Four stated that the textbook is primarily a representation of everyday Algerian social life and family values.

Participant Five identified place names and landmarks as the principal means by which culture is portrayed.

Participant Six stated that there is a very strong focus on school life and common family routines, in particular greetings and basic social etiquette.

Participant Seven stated that civic and national themes are represented throughout the book, including Algerian cities and public spaces, though they appear less frequently than other types of content.

Participant Eight identified daily routines and Algerian family life as the two most evident representations of culture.

Participant Nine focused on narrative contexts, particularly those associated with family stories, as the primary mechanism by which culture is presented.

Participant Ten identified the content of the book as representing a typical sample of the daily experiences of a middle school student living in Algeria, based on school attendance, participation in family activities, and membership of his or her neighborhood. The consistent nature of these responses among all ten participants clearly indicates that the cultural content present in the textbook is predominantly Algerian and centered on domestic concerns.

Question 5: Missing Cultural Themes and the Consequences of Their Absence

Each participant agreed upon certain aspects of Algerian cultural existence that were absent from the book. A majority of respondents indicated that the omission of Islamic and religious cultural content was a major theme missing from the book, raised by Participants One, Two, Six, and Nine.

Participant One made direct reference to the omission having an adverse effect on students in relation to their religious backgrounds.

Participant Two also mentioned the lack of everyday traditions that exist among families, such as family gatherings and local celebrations.

Participant Three raised a broader structural concern, indicating that the book represents a failure to accurately reflect the true connection between Algerian culture and the English language.

Participant Four also noted a lack of regional diversity and traditional Algerian art and oral culture.

Participant Seven felt that the book presents an idealised view of Algerian life that does not accurately depict significant cultural differences existing between the northern and southern regions of Algeria, nor between urban and rural communities.

Participant Eight felt that there is a complete absence of traditional crafts, music, and storytelling.

Participant Ten felt that historical and civic culture was almost completely absent from the book. Collectively, these responses illustrate a clear disconnection between the cultural content contained in the textbook and the total range of expression inherent in Algerian cultural identity.

Question 6: Specific Sections or Activities That Are Highly Representative of Culture

Participant One referred to Sequence Two, Me and My Family, as providing a good example of how

Cultural values can be represented in a single unit; specifically, when Omar's large family greets their parents and grandparents, they demonstrate respect for elder generations. Participant Two referenced Unit Five, Food around the World, for its comparative presentation of eating customs around the world, including Morocco, Japan, and Italy.

Participant Three referenced conversations relating to summer vacations that mentioned Algerian cities.

Participant Four described a dialogue discussing a family celebration as culturally relevant and relatable.

Participant Five identified reading materials as the best examples of cultural richness.

Participant Six referenced a sequence describing rooms found in an average Algerian home as creating strong interest among students.

Participant Seven referenced a reading concerning a school trip to a historic site in Algeria as possibly the only time during which students learned about national heritage using English.

Participant Eight described a writing activity about favorite Algerian cities as personal and meaningful.

Participant Nine remembered a conversation concerning preparation for Eid as particularly memorable due to its infrequent appearance relative to religious cultural practice in the textbook.

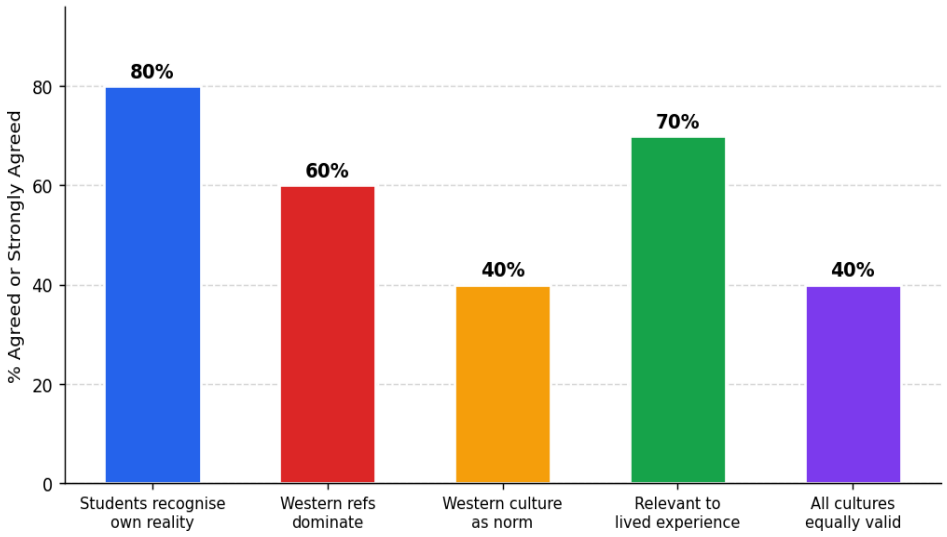
Participant Ten noted a sequence addressing Algerian marketplaces and food as highly successful, since students could quickly relate it to their own daily lives.

Section Three: Cultural Balance and Representation

Question 7: Agreement Ratings on Cultural Representation

Participants rated their level of agreement with five statements about cultural balance and representation on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Figure 4 below illustrates the percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Figure 4: % Agreement with Cultural Balance Statements (n=10)



The results from Figure 4 show a very mixed and often divided perspective of how practitioners think the textbook supports a balanced representation of different cultures. For Statement 1, Algerian students can recognise their own cultural reality in this textbook, the mean rating was 4.20, the highest of all five statements, with 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This shows that there is almost complete agreement that the content in the textbook is culturally familiar. Statement 4, The cultural content is relevant to my students' everyday lived experience, has a mean rating of 3.80, with 70% of respondents agreeing; similar to Statement 1, there is considerable agreement, though not universal. On the other hand, Statement 2, Western cultural references dominate at the expense of Algerian ones, produced a mean of 3.10 with 60% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, indicating a clear division of opinions amongst the group. Similarly, Statement 3, The textbook implicitly positions Western culture as the norm or ideal, yielded a mean of 2.60 with only 40% of respondents agreeing, suggesting that although many respondents see no evidence of explicit pro-Western ideology, many others do. Finally, Statement 5, The textbook treats all cultures as equally valid and worthy of attention, produced the lowest mean of 2.50, with only 40% of respondents agreeing, and responses distributed across the full scale; therefore, no consensus exists regarding cultural equality.

Question 8: Whose Culture Does the Textbook Mostly Represent?

The largest number of respondents provided varied answers to this question. Respondents One, Four, Six, and Ten each indicated that the textbook mostly represented Algerian culture and that familiarity with this culture contributed to increased engagement with the material. Respondent One indicated that the children will take to it quickly because it is what they are used to every day. Conversely, Respondents Two, Five, and Seven held a counter position, claiming that Western cultural references carry implied prestige and represent the focus of the textbook much more so than they initially appeared. Respondent Three provided perhaps the most negative assessment, arguing that the overwhelming presence of English culture in the textbook resulted in boredom among her students who could not identify with it. Respondents Eight and Nine indicated that while the textbook attempted to provide a balance between representing both cultures, it did not completely succeed. They indicated that even when depicting Algerian settings, the assumptions made concerning those settings remained fundamentally based on Anglo American cultural values. These divergent views further support the notion that issues surrounding representation involve deeper considerations regarding framing and hierarchy, and that surface level content analysis is insufficient to resolve these questions.

Question 9: Effect on Student Engagement

Teachers who felt the textbook prioritised Algerian content reported higher levels of student motivation and identification with the material. Participants One, Four, Six, and Ten all noted that cultural familiarity directly increased student engagement, with Participant One stating that students took to the content quickly because it reflected what they encounter every day. Conversely, Participants Two, Five, and Seven perceived a stronger Western orientation and noted occasional disengagement, with Participant Seven going so far as to state that Western references conveyed to learners that English belongs to someone else's language and culture.

Question 10: Culturally Alienating Content

Most teachers reported no significant cultural alienation, as Algerian content formed the primary frame of the textbook, with seven out of ten participants finding no culturally alienating sections. However, Participant Two recalled a dialogue about adolescents working independently as culturally foreign, given the relatively low rate of independent work among Algerian teenagers. Participant Seven similarly identified a section about receiving pocket money and making independent purchases as disconnected from his students' reality. Participant Eight noted that occasional references to cinema or concert attendance caused slight cultural detachment among his students.

Question 11: Cultural Content That Generated a Strong Sense of Connection in Your Students

Each of the ten respondents reported identifying specific content that generated a strong sense of connection in their students, and the examples cited share a common theme. Respondent One referenced a high level of engagement exhibited by students with The Family Tree Project. Respondent Two reported a strong connection to a reading about sharing meals during family celebrations. Respondent Three reported that texts about Algerian cities generated significant connections among her students. Respondent Four described daily routine lessons as particularly successful in terms of connecting with students, evidenced by students readily sharing their personal experiences. Respondent Six reported a high success rate with an activity about a traditional Algerian home. Respondent Seven referred to a reading about a school trip to a Nearby historical site as producing one of the greatest successes, he experienced. Respondent Eight reported a successful use of a writing prompt asking students to describe their favourite local market. Respondent Nine reported a high success rate with dialogues related to Eid celebrations. Respondent Ten reported that greeting and family introduction sequences were successfully implemented across all classrooms. The results illustrate a very clear and strong pattern: students respond most positively to content that reflects their own daily lives, family structures, and cultural practices.

Question 12: What Made Content Resonate

Teachers consistently explained that cultural resonance occurred when students could see themselves, their families, their neighborhoods, and their social practices reflected in the textbook. Participants One, Four, and Ten all pointed to the direct correlation between students' lived experiences and textbook content as the primary driver of engagement. Participants Six, Eight, and Nine provided specific examples activities about the Algerian home, local markets, and Eid celebrations all of which worked precisely because students could immediately relate them to their own daily lives. Cultural familiarity was thus unanimously identified as a key motivational factor.

Question 13: Implicit Prestige of Western Culture

Opinions were divided. Participants One, Four, Six, and Ten saw no evidence of this dynamic in their experience with the textbook. However, Participants Two, Three, Seven, and Eight expressed serious concern. Participant Three clearly articulated that seeing an attractive version of English culture well-equipped schools and comfortable homes creates the impression that Western culture is inherently superior. Participant Seven corroborated this, suggesting that visual materials often depicted Western locations as more desirable than Algerian ones. Participant Eight added that repeated exposure to idealized Western cultures gradually shapes students' cultural attitudes in ways teachers do not immediately recognize, pointing to a cumulative and largely invisible ideological effect.

Section Four: Presenting Cultural Material

Question 14: Vehicles for Delivering Cultural Material

Each participant mentioned reading texts and dialogues as a means of delivering cultural material.

Participant One cited letter writing assignments, where students can write about their own culture from the perspective of someone sending a letter to an imaginary foreign friend, as a particularly effective way to deliver cultural material.

Participant Two stated that reading stories that show tradition and day to day activities help to sustain the cultural atmosphere.

Participant Six noted that pictures are also important in helping to deliver cultural information through visual and implicit means.

Participant Seven stated that project work provided the best opportunity for cultural self expression.

Participant Eight stated that comparing cultures was one of the most effective methods to develop intercultural awareness.

Participant Nine observed that even a richly cultured dialogue, when used strictly for grammar practice, loses much of its potential for promoting intercultural awareness.

Participant Ten felt that writing assignments were underused as a vehicle for delivering cultural material and that increasing this type of assignment would greatly enhance the intercultural dimension of the book.

Question 15: Most Effective Components

Reading passages and dialogues were unanimously identified by all ten participants as the most effective means of transmitting cultural understanding. Participant One specifically highlighted letter-writing activities, where students write to a fictional foreign friend about their own culture, as particularly effective. Participants Seven and Eight felt that project-based learning and comparative cultural assignments represented the greatest potential for meaningful intercultural experiences. Participant Nine made a key observation, noting that when culturally rich dialogue is used solely for grammar practice it loses much of its intercultural value, suggesting that how material is used in class may matter as much as the material itself. Participant Ten felt that writing assignments were significantly underutilized as

cultural vehicles and would greatly enhance the textbook's intercultural dimension if expanded.

Question 16: Visual Materials

Most participants described the visual materials as reasonably accurate and representative of Algerian daily life, with six participants expressing general satisfaction. However, Participant Four noted that while visuals were generally engaging, they often lacked local specificity, with many students feeling the images did not accurately depict their world. Participant Six found that illustrations typically presented an idealized image of everyday Algerian life that failed to account for the diverse environments of her students. Participant Seven raised a more serious concern, stating that Western scenarios were illustrated more appealingly than Algerian ones, creating an implicit visual hierarchy. Participant Eight observed that although character images generally included students of various backgrounds, none accurately represented the regional and ethnic diversity that exists within Algeria.

Question 17: Cultural Accuracy of Visuals

While the majority of teachers felt the visuals were sufficiently accurate, several raised concerns. Participant Six noted that visuals presented a clean and idealized version of Algerian daily life that did not reflect the variety of students' actual home environments. Participant Eight acknowledged that while character depictions were generally inclusive, they never offered a fair representation of the regional or ethnic diversity found across Algeria. Participant Seven added that the more aspirational visual treatment of Western settings compared to Algerian ones further undermined the overall accuracy and balance of the visual content.

Question 18: Student Responses to Visuals

Teachers generally reported positive student responses to visual materials. Participant Four noted that students responded positively to pictures and characters representing familiar settings and routines,

but reacted with less enthusiasm to visuals that did not fit their normal reality. No participants reported strong negative reactions or adverse student responses to the visual representations, suggesting that even where visuals were imperfect or lacking in specificity, they did not significantly alienate or disengage students.

Question 19: Realism of Dialogues

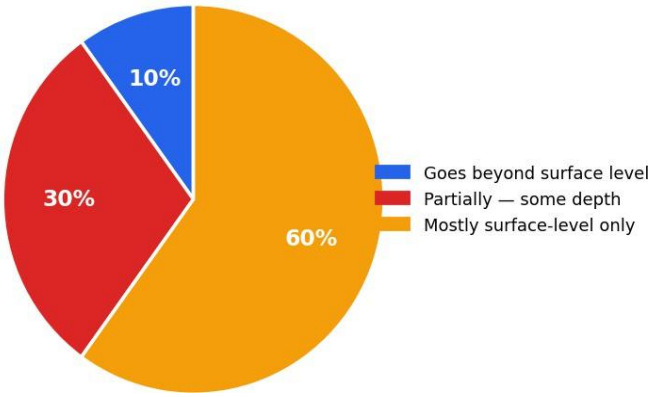
Most participants found the dialogues realistic and useful for language learning. Participants One, Three, and Five described the dialogues as depicting real communication situations students are likely to encounter. Participant Four offered a more mixed assessment, finding everyday dialogues such as greetings realistic but some exchanges overly simplified. Participant Seven felt that while dialogues depicted recognizable social situations, they came across as unnatural due to being overly sanitized. Participant Eight suggested that situating dialogues more specifically within Algerian contexts such as shopping at the souk or attending a family gathering would significantly increase both their realism and their intercultural value.

Section Five: Intercultural Competence and Cultural Depth

Question 20: Does Cultural Content Go Beyond Surface Level?

This question produced the most consistent responses across the entire questionnaire. Figure 5 below summarises the distribution of participant responses.

Figure 5: Distribution of Responses — Cultural Depth (n=10)



As clearly depicted in Figure 5, 60% of the study's participants rated the textbook's cultural coverage as mostly being surface level. Thirty percent stated that while there was some limited exploration of deeper values, this was done in an incomplete manner. Only 10% of participants viewed the cultural coverage of the textbook as truly providing more than surface level fact.

Participant One acknowledged that while her engagement with national identity building focused primarily on surface level facts such as landmarks and food, some deeper values were addressed through social norms relating to rights and responsibilities, though this aspect was only minimally represented.

..Participant Two suggested that the primary focus of the textbook is on surface level visual representations of culture and does not consistently explore the underlying social norms or ways of thinking that relate to those representations.

Participant Three explicitly described the textbook as providing only surface level representations of culture without going deeper.

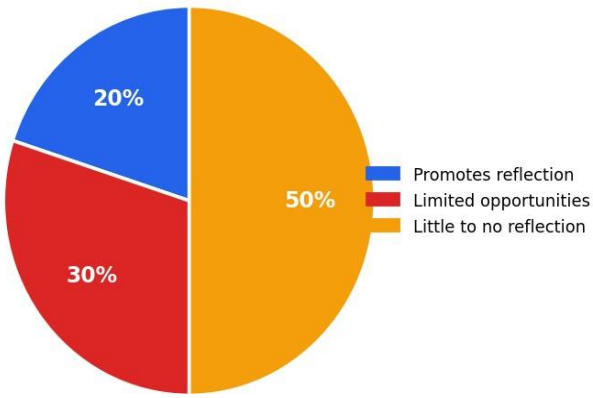
Participant Six commented that while the textbook does introduce cultural concepts, it rarely allows for further development, thereby creating an atmosphere in which culture exists as a background element rather than a true area of investigation.

Participant Seven indicated that a culturally competent learner should be able to identify both what people do and why they do it, and that based upon his experience with the textbook, the former had

been addressed while the latter had been nearly completely neglected. These results provide very solid and consistent support at the practitioner level to demonstrate that the textbook provides no more than a shallow representation of culture.

Question 21: Does the Textbook Encourage Critical Cultural Reflection?

Figure 6: Distribution of Responses — Critical Cultural Reflection (n=10)



Participants were asked whether they felt the textbook provided an opportunity for students to critically reflect upon their own and other cultures. As shown in Figure 6, the results indicate that 50% of all participants believed there was little to no systematic way in which the textbook allowed for this type of reflection, 30% of respondents reported seeing limited or partial ways in which the book promoted reflection, and 20% of all participants indicated that they believed the textbook did genuinely promote student reflection.

Participant One had the most positive response, claiming that one of the best aspects of the textbook is when students are able to share their own traditions with their international friends and thus view their Algerian identity within a global framework.

Participant Two saw the textbook as providing limited opportunities for critical reflection and stated that the textbook often does not allow for cultural comparisons or self reflection.

Participant Three made it clear that the textbook does not promote critical reflection, explaining that because of the emphasis placed on Western culture, there is very little room left for the critical

examination of Algerian culture.

Participant Six stated that the lack of specific questions to prompt reflection means that students' ability to think critically about their own culture is completely dependent upon the initiative of each individual teacher, resulting in likely inconsistencies from class to class.

Participant Seven stated that in order to engage in true critical cultural reflection, students must be able to challenge both their own cultural assumptions and those of others, and concluded that the book does not currently provide students with sufficient guidance to help them develop what he called metacultural thinking.

Question 22: Does the Textbook Help Students Find a 'Third Place'?

Kramsch's (1993) theory defines the Third Place as a space in which language learners use the target language to express their own cultural identities rather than simply imitating a model of another culture.

Of all ten participants, Participant One provided the most favourable assessment, indicating that the book is helpful because it uses English to discuss Algerian reality, giving students the opportunity to learn new vocabulary with which to communicate about their own habits.

Participant Two felt that some lessons did ask students to speak about their own culture and therefore supported the idea of the Third Place, though he felt that students need to be given more time to think and express themselves more openly and reflectively.

Participant Three responded very negatively and did not feel that the book was supportive of the Third Place.

Participant Four thought that the book allowed for a little personal cultural expression, but that mostly it encourages imitation of another culture and does not allow for real negotiation of identity.

Participant Six believed that letter writing and project tasks are the most likely examples of Third Place activity in the current version of Models, as they require students to write about their own world in English for an imaginary audience.

Participant Seven also believed that these types of assignments represented the best chance for Students to find a Third Place, though she felt that there were too few and they were too infrequently assigned to truly provide a Third Place experience.

Participant Eight felt that the book provides examples of two cultures placed side by side but does not create a genuine dialogue between them, and therefore no true Third Place is created.

Question 23: Cultural Stereotypes in the Textbook

Most of the participants surveyed for this study found no significant cultural stereotyping in Models. Six of the ten participants indicated that they had seen no clear cut stereotypes.

Participant Two indicated that while the book may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes from time to time, he has used critical thinking activities in class to minimise any potential impact.

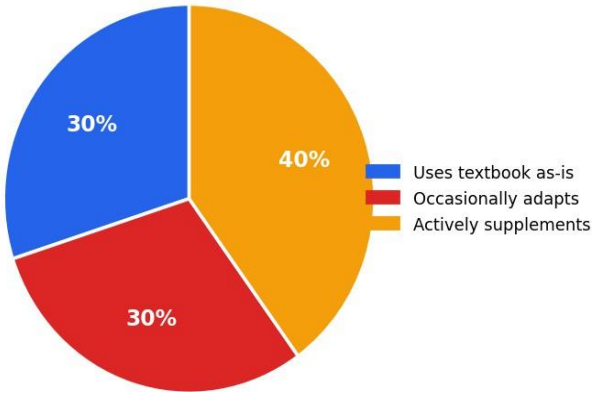
Participant Seven expressed concerns regarding the implied stereotype of Western teenagers as independently motivated, active, and consumerist, based upon many of the scenarios presented throughout the book, and believes this type of stereotype may subtly influence students' perceptions of what is culturally acceptable.

Participant Eight indicated that some of the dialogues present somewhat traditional representations of male and female relationships and do not adequately depict the complexities of modern day Algeria. Overall, the relatively low level of cultural stereotyping evident in this particular textbook is a positive finding. However, other less obvious ways of simplifying or distorting cultural information will need to be considered when revising future editions.

Question 24: How Teachers Deal With Cultural Content

Figure 7 below summarises the distribution of teachers' pedagogical approaches to the cultural content of the textbook.

Figure 7: Distribution of Teacher Approaches to Cultural Content (n=10)



As indicated by Figure 7, 40% of participants add their own materials to help bridge the cultural gap created by the textbook, 30% follow the textbook but make some modifications periodically, and 30% follow it precisely as given.

Participant Two added real life examples, videos, and discussions to assist in bridging cultural gaps.

Participant Six stated that he would add video, images, and other supplemental digital or visual information drawn from Algerian cultural sources.

Participant Seven said she would specifically identify where the textbook was culturally framed by the West and develop her own critical thinking strategies through discussion rather than being a passive receiver.

Participant Eight stated that she developed her own comparative cultural activity supplements. Therefore, this study demonstrates that teachers' individual actions are critical in helping to create a bridge over the cultural gaps contained within the textbook, and that the success of intercultural education in Algerian EFL classes is directly related to the individualised initiatives taken by teachers in addition to the textbook provided.

Section Six: Overall Assessment and Recommendations

Question 25: General Cultural Meaning of the Textbook

Participants One and Six both made generally positive observations about the overall cultural message of the textbook, indicating that it emphasizes English as a way to share aspects of Algerian culture with others while being receptive to the cultures of others.

Participant Two stated that the general message was one of awareness and introduction.

Participant Three made the most negative assessment of all participants, stating that the textbook culturally implies that Western culture is an attractive and modern world that Algerians will find interesting to observe but will ultimately not be able to join on equal terms with their own culture.

Participant Four found a contradiction between the textbook's stated goal of emphasizing Algerian culture while simultaneously promoting non Algerian cultural models.

Participant Seven found that the textbook implied that English belongs to someone else's culture and that Algerian learners would therefore have to adapt themselves to another culture's norms in order to use the language successfully.

Participants Eight and Ten provided more neutral assessments, both feeling that there were many good aspects to the cultural message but that it lacked sufficient detail and consistency to generate truly intercultural aware learners.

Question 26: Greatest Cultural Content Strengths of the Textbook

The majority of participant responses identified the cultural content strengths of the textbook in how it relates to the everyday life of Algerians.

Participants One, Four, Six, and Ten found that this cultural connection allowed learners to feel

confident in their learning, motivated them to engage with English, and helped them view English as a means of expressing themselves rather than abandoning their identity.

Participant Three viewed a different aspect of the textbook's cultural strengths, stating that it gives significantly more emphasis to the speaking skill than previous course books.

Participant Seven viewed the cultural strengths of the textbook through the lens of accessibility for young learners.

Participants Eight and Nine viewed family and community oriented lessons as consistently providing strong student engagement and creating excellent opportunities for cultural discussion.

Question 27: Greatest Weaknesses and Gaps of the Textbook

Each of the ten participants identified the lack of cultural depth as the greatest weakness and gap of the textbook.

Participant One stated that no critical cultural analysis occurred.

Participant Two stated there was no cultural depth.

Participant Three stated that Algerian culture did not receive adequate representation.

Participant Four indicated that the textbook failed to link with all of students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

Participant Six stated that the absence of religious cultural content was missing to a great extent.

Participant Seven stated that there was insufficient cultural comparative activity.

Participant Eight indicated that the lack of oral culture, traditional art, and regional diversity represents a major missed opportunity.

Participant Nine indicated that since the Third Place concept was never developed, students rarely experienced English as a means to express their own culture.

Participant Ten stated that because cultural content became repetitive across each unit without increasing in complexity or depth, this created significant limitations.

Question 28: What Is Missing

Teachers collectively pointed to the same core gaps. Participant One noted the complete absence of critical cultural analysis. Participant Two identified a general lack of cultural depth. Participant Three felt Algerian culture itself was not adequately represented despite forming the book's primary setting. Participant Four argued the book failed to take the full scope of students' diverse cultural backgrounds seriously. Participant Six identified the near-total absence of religious and cultural content as a major gap. Participant Seven noted very few comparative cultural activities. Participant Eight pointed to the lack of oral culture, traditional arts, and regional representation as a significant missed opportunity. Participant Nine felt that since the Third Place concept was never developed, students rarely experienced English as a genuine vehicle for expressing their own cultural identity.

Question 29: Recommendations for Revision

Each participant offered specific and detailed suggestions. Participant One recommended including real-world cultural misunderstanding scenarios and authentic online resources such as Algerian blogs and social media. Participant Two suggested developing « Compare and Reflect » structures within every unit. Participant Three called for greater clarity and balance in how Algerian culture is portrayed throughout the book. Participant Four recommended developing critical thinking tasks and incorporating real-life intercultural situations. Participant Six suggested that religious and cultural traditions be integrated systematically into each lesson. Participant Seven proposed developing intercultural comparison tasks that place Algerian and international practices side by side.

Participant Eight called for the use of more authentic images of real Algerian people and environments. Participant Nine suggested drawing on short authentic texts from Algerian literary sources.

Participant Ten recommended that every unit include at least one task based on the Third Place concept, allowing students to express their own cultural perspective in English to a global audience.

2.4.3.3 Discussion of the Results

The results of the analysis provided here yield a wealth of findings directly related to the three research questions that form the basis of this investigation. The following discussion synthesises these findings thematically, placing them in relation to appropriate theoretical and empirical contexts.

The first research question was: How and at what level of cultural depth (Big C, Little C, or Deep Culture) is cultural content depicted in My Book of English? The qualitative responses offer consistent evidence for the representation of cultural content, but the quantitative data presented in Fig. 3 show that the everyday social and cultural practices of Algeria form the dominant focus of the book. As evidenced by the fact that 80 % of participants rated this theme as frequently represented, assigning a mean rating of 4.10/5. Only 18 % of participants rated the representations of religion and Islam as frequent occurrences, giving them a mean of 1.8, and the representations of multiculturalism and minorities gave the lowest mean ratings of all the themes studied at 1.50.

All participants agreed that the everyday cultural content from Algeria dominated in the book, with the majority of participants agreeing that students understand and react positively to this familiar content. These results match the objectives of the Algerian national curriculum, which intends to position English language acquisition into learners' immediate cultural reality. However, there were also significant gaps. Cortazzi & Jin (1999) argue that EFL books should function as both a cultural mirror in which learners can view themselves as they are, and a cultural window in which learners can discover new worlds. At best, this book serves as a partial cultural mirror, representing only a surface level depiction of generic Algerian everyday life while leaving behind numerous elements of its more complicated and disputed dimensions, including religious practices, local specifics, oral traditions and historical consciousness.

The second research question extended upon the above distribution when analyzing: How will the textbook distribute cultural attention towards Algerian source culture, English speaking nations, and international perspectives? The findings shown in Fig. 4 are enlightening. The great deal of agreement (with 80 % concurred with Algerian students can recognize their own cultural reality") illustrates that teachers

agree to a large degree that the textbook includes content representative of students' cultural realities. On the other hand, the lesser amount of agreement (with 60 % concurred with "Western cultural references dominate over Algerians"), with responses across the full range of possibilities, reveals differences in teacher opinions regarding their perceived cultural balance.

Furthermore, the smallest amount of agreement (only 40 % concurred with "the textbook considers all cultures to be equally valid") demonstrates how critical teachers are about assessing the cultural equity included in this textbook. Variation in practitioner evaluations of cultural balance provides additional information. Their assessment of the representation of cultural content in textbooks suggests that concerns about content representation include far greater deliberation about framing, cultural hierarchy, and pedagogic mediation than could be determined simply based on an examination of content at face value. As Holliday (1994) points out, the hidden curriculum embedded in EFL textbooks communicates cultural hierarchies which are internalized through repeated exposure to certain forms of living and desires. Support for this theory comes from comments made by Participant Three and Participant Seven respectively, who said that the aspirational presentations of Western culture may influence students to think that Western culture is inherently better than others. Additionally, they provided further support for scholarly discourses concerning cultural hegemony within EFL publishing (Phillipson 1992; Canagarajah 1999).

The third research question changed perspective to pedagogy asking: In what way does the textbook's instructional architecture employ textual and visual mediums to develop students' ICC instead of just receiving culture passively? The data clearly showed that reading texts, dialogues, and writing exercises were the principal means by which the authors communicated cultural content, whereas visual materials and project assignments were secondary. Teachers felt that every mode was successful but admitted that often the cultural content that they conveyed was too simple and shallow. Letter writing projects and project tasks cited by some practitioners as being culturally valuable require some additional thought theoretically. Students are encouraged to utilize target language to communicate their culture to a fictional foreign audience during letter writing or project tasks as well as providing opportunities for students to express their culture authentically. This corresponds to Kramsh's (1993) concept of a third

place. But again, the data shows that these types of tasks occur occasionally but do not become part of a coherent pedagogical structure used throughout the textbook itself.

As seen in Figures 5 and 6, 60% of respondents believe the cultural content of the book is largely surface level, and 50% of respondents stated that the book did not offer enough systematic opportunities for critical cultural reflection. Thus, the data collected in conjunction with the rich responses provided through open ended questions clearly support the conclusion that the textbook does not promote the type of intercultural communicative competence discussed by Byram (1997). This finding is also consistent with studies conducted by Aliakbari (2005), Rashidi and Moghadam (2014), and Benyahia (2020), which indicated that textbooks used in EFL courses in both the Arab world and North Africa focus primarily on providing students with superficial cultural knowledge rather than promoting genuine intercultural competence.

2.4.3.4 Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

There are several implications based upon the results of this study for EFL teachers, textbook designers, curriculum planners, and teacher educators working within the Algerian middle school system.

For Teachers:

Since it was found that 40% of the respondents actively supplemented or adapted the textbook's cultural content in a critical way, these teachers will likely be able to provide their students with an enriched intercultural learning experience. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to view the cultural content of Models as a starting point, rather than a static and authoritative source. Additional supplementary resources could include documentary video clips about different cultures, digital texts representing Algerian cultural references, literary passages comparing cultures, and comparative cultural projects. Given that 80% of the participants reported receiving no formal training in how to teach using interculturally inclusive methods, as depicted in Figure 2, it is highly advisable that they receive such training. Training in this area may allow them to apply Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, Kramsch's (1993) concept of the Third Place, and Kilickaya's (2004) criteria for evaluating cultural competence when

facilitating their students' access to cultural content.

For Textbook Designers and Curriculum Developers:

There are several concrete, evidence based recommendations derived from participant feedback and patterns observed in the figures that could serve as an agenda for revising Models:

- The textbook needs to represent more examples of deep and varied Algerian cultural identity, including regional variation, art forms, oral tradition, religious practice, and historical consciousness, alongside additional representation of everyday social interactions.
- Every unit should contain at least one structured Compare and Reflect task where students evaluate similarities and differences between their own culture and those of others, thereby developing a genuine sense of intercultural awareness.
- Students' writing and project assignments need to be significantly increased and written in such a manner as to require students to express themselves culturally in English and negotiate their identity through English.
- Examples of authentic digital and visual materials, such as quotes from Algerian cultural blogs, social media posts, and pictures of actual Algerian settings, should be incorporated into the textbook.
- Tasks designed to encourage students to question cultural representations and challenge stereotypical views should be woven throughout the textbook as core rather than supplemental activities.
- Visuals should be presented in a manner that represents diversity among various regions, ethnicities, and religions within Algeria.

2.4.3.5 Limitations of the Study

Any research investigation is subject to many different limitations, and this study was no exception. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge these limitations as part of being transparent as scholars. Firstly, although ten participants represent a reasonable number of people for a qualitative study at this stage of

development, this number still constitutes a small enough group that they may not be representative of all EFL teachers in Algeria. Therefore, further studies could reasonably expect to produce even more varied and additional perspectives if they included a greater number of participants and participants who came from different geographic locations across Algeria and different kinds of schools. Secondly, using a questionnaire as the only source of data has several obvious limitations. Although some of the participant responses were very short for some of the open-ended questions, this limited the extent of analysis possible. Using a follow up interview protocol would have permitted more probing questions, resulting in richer qualitative data. For example, future studies could adopt a tri modal design where both questionnaire data and in depth semi structured interviews were used in combination with observational data from actual classrooms. Thirdly, the study examined only the viewpoints of the teachers involved and did not take into account those of the students. Since students receive the cultural information embedded in textbooks, their opinions represent a key missing dimension. Further studies should therefore attempt to collect student viewpoints, possibly via focus groups or learner journals. Fourthly, this study did not involve a systematic content analysis of Models. Conducting such an analysis simultaneously with collecting practitioner questionnaire data would have provided an independent means of evaluating the textbook's cultural content and for providing supporting evidence for, qualifying, or contradicting the practitioner perspectives collected in this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described the fieldwork component of the present study. In doing so we have attempted to answer our three research questions: What types of cultural content appear in Models? How do cultures get balanced and represented in the textbook? By what method or methods will cultural content be most easily transferred to first year middle school EFL learners in Algeria? Our results, illustrated quantitatively in the figures, suggest that the cultural content presented in Models is primarily comprised of images depicting Algerian daily life; 80% of participants rated Algerian everyday practices as appearing frequently, yielding a mean score of 4.10. Only 18% of participants selected frequent for religious content, and only 15% for multicultural perspectives, as shown in Figure 3. Our agreement ratings indicate that while 80% of respondents agreed that students could recognize their own culture, only 40%

agreed that all cultures are equally valid, as shown in Figure 4. Sixty percent of participants judged the cultural content as mostly superficial, and 50% indicated there were little to no systematic opportunities for critical reflection about cultural issues, as shown in Figures 5 and 6. As shown in Figure 2, eighty percent of participating teachers have never had formal intercultural training.

The qualitative answers completely support and expand upon the findings depicted in the figures. The qualitative data clearly illustrate that Models provides a successful model for teaching English language skills based on a culturally familiar Algerian framework; however, the book lacks sufficient depth in terms of engaging with more complex cultural values, critical reflection regarding cultural differences and similarities, intercultural comparisons, and representation of the full range of cultural identities found in Algeria. The specific pedagogical implications and suggestions made throughout this chapter provide a clear and empirical foundation for future revisions of the textbook as well as for developing intercultural pedagogy in Algerian EFL teacher education programmes.

General conclusion

This research explored the culturally oriented content of My Book of English , the government approved first year middle school EFL textbook in Algeria from the viewpoint of ten practicing EFL teachers. A mixed methodological design was employed to investigate whether the textbook presents culturally oriented content, how different cultures are presented and balanced and by which methods (modes) culturally oriented content can best be conveyed to learners. The results of this research indicated that although the textbook is successful in situating English language acquisition in an Algerian cultural environment, thus affecting learner motivation and interest, religious and regional components of Algerian cultural identity were largely omitted, the presentation of culture remained primarily at the level of superficiality and there were few opportunities for students to engage with authentic intercultural exchanges or critically reflect upon the cultural aspects of language use. Moreover, most participating teachers stated that they had not been formally trained on teaching interculturally and therefore experienced a large gap in the area of teacher education. In conclusion these research findings indicate that while My Book *of* English does contain culturally oriented content, the content fails to provide the true intercultural knowledge that will produce competent EFL education. Therefore, future editions of *My Book of English* should include deeper representations of culture; have comparative and reflective tasks throughout the book; and provide a consistent opportunity for students to represent themselves culturally through the medium of English. Similarly, teacher education programs should place intercultural pedagogy as a central focus rather than a peripheral one in all professional development courses. Although this research has identified many shortcomings in the culturally oriented content found in *My Book of English* , this research still contributes significantly and systematically to our understanding of evaluating EFL cultural content in Algeria, and provides clear directions for enhancing the intercultural aspect of first year middle school EFL education in Algeria.

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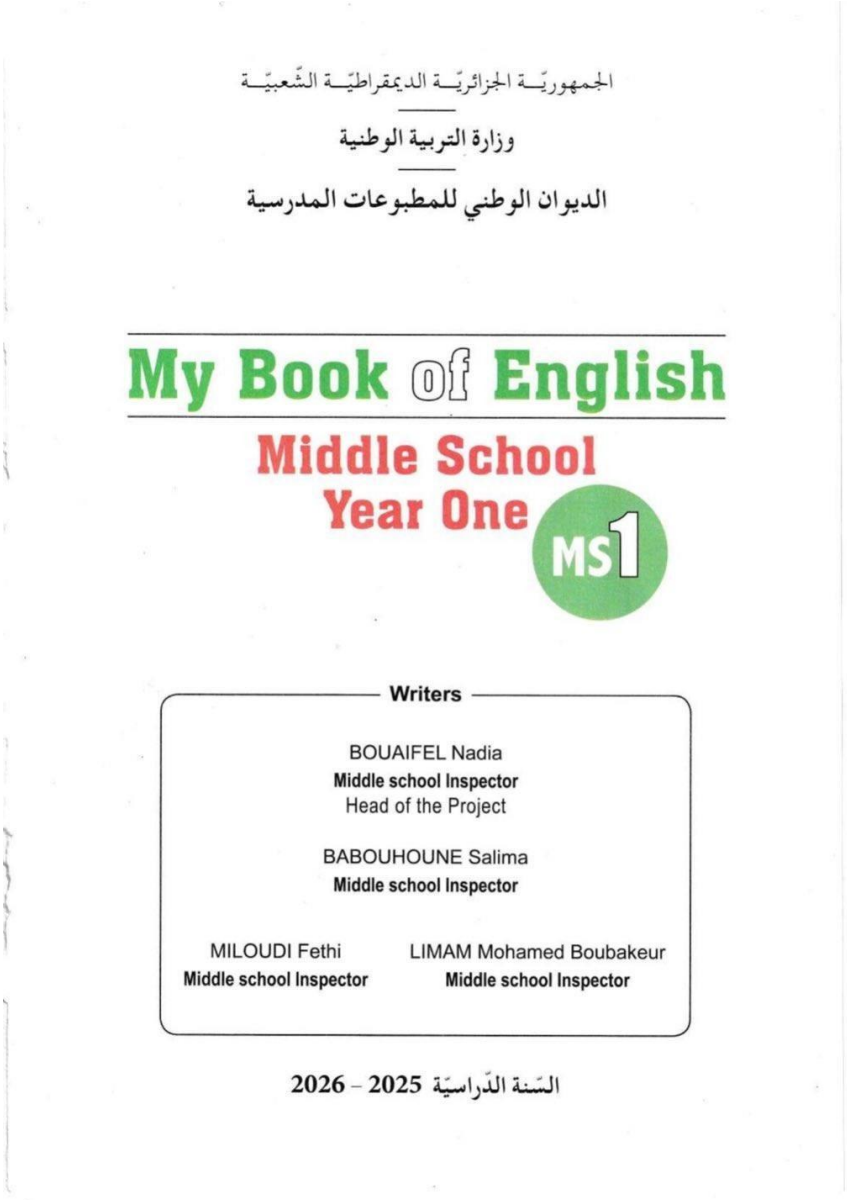
Appendices



الجمهوريّة الجزائريّة الديمقراطيّة الشّعبيّة

وزارة التربية الوطنية

الديوان الوطني للمطبوعات المدرسية

My Book of English

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Year One
MS1

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Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to complete this questionnaire, which aims to evaluate the cultural content provided in the first year middle school EFL textbook My Book of English. This study is conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages.

This questionnaire combines a small number of rating items with a series of open ended questions that form the analytical core. Please write as fully and honestly as you can.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time you devoted to completing the questionnaire.

Section One: General Information

Q1. Years of experience teaching EFL at middle school level:

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2–5 years
- ☐ 6–10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

Q2. Have you received any formal or self directed training in intercultural or culturally responsive EFL teaching?

- ☐ Yes — formal institutional training
- ☐ Yes — self directed (reading, workshops, etc.)
- ☐ No, but I am interested
- ☐ No

Section Two: Types and Themes of Cultural Content

Q3. Rate how frequently each cultural theme appears in the textbook: (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Algerian everyday cultural practices and social life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Islamic or religious references in an Algerian context	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
British or American cultural references and scenarios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
International / global cultural themes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Universal values (e.g. friendship, family, community)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multicultural or minority group perspectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4. Based on your experience, what types of cultural content appear most prominently in My Book of English? Describe them in your own words — think about what students are actually encountering on a regular basis.

- *Consider: social practices, values, places, characters, scenarios, language norms…*

_____

_____

Q5. Are there any cultural themes or aspects of Algerian life that you feel are noticeably absent from the textbook? What impact, if any, does this absence have on your students?

_____

_____

Q6. Can you recall a specific unit, reading, dialogue or exercise in the textbook that you found particularly rich in cultural content — positive or negative? Describe it and explain why it stood out to you.

_____

_____

Section Three: Cultural Balance and Representation

Q7. Rate your level of agreement with the following statements: (1 = Strongly Disagree · 2 = Disagree · 3 = Neutral · 4 = Agree · 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Algerian students can recognise their own cultural reality in this textbook.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Western cultural references dominate at the expense of Algerian ones.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The textbook implicitly positions Western culture as the norm or ideal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The cultural content is relevant to my students' everyday lived experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The textbook treats all cultures as equally valid and worthy of attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q8. In your view, whose culture does My Book of English primarily represent?

_____

_____

Q9. How does this affect your students' engagement with the material?

_____

_____

Q10. Have you ever encountered cultural content in the textbook that felt irrelevant, strange, or potentially alienating to your Algerian students? Please describe the situation and explain why you think it felt that way.

_____

_____

Q11. Conversely, can you give an example of cultural content in the textbook where your students felt genuinely represented or connected to what they were reading or seeing?

_____

_____

Q12. What made that content resonate?

_____

_____

Q13. Some researchers argue that EFL textbooks can subtly present Western culture as superior or more desirable than local culture. In your teaching experience with this textbook, have you noticed anything that might reinforce this impression? Please elaborate.

_____

_____

Section Four: The Presentation of Cultural Content

Q14. Through which parts of the textbook do your students most often encounter cultural content: reading texts, dialogues, illustrations, exercises, projects?

_____

_____

Q15. Which of these do you find most effective for actually transmitting cultural understanding, and why?

_____

_____

Q16. How would you describe the visual materials in the textbook: illustrations, photos, character images?

Q17. Do they feel culturally accurate and representative to you?

Q18. Do your students respond to them positively or critically?

Q19. Do you feel the dialogues and model conversations in the textbook reflect realistic cultural interactions, the kind your students might actually encounter or find useful? Please explain with examples where possible.

Section Five: Intercultural Competence and Cultural Depth

Q20. In your view, does the cultural content in the textbook go beyond surface level facts — holidays, food, famous places — to engage students with deeper cultural values, social norms, or ways of thinking? Can you give examples to support your answer?

Q21. Does the textbook encourage students to reflect on or think critically about their own Algerian culture alongside what they are learning about other cultures? How — or why not?

_____

_____

Q22. Some researchers argue that EFL learners should be helped to find a 'Third Place' — a space where they can express their own cultural identity in English rather than simply imitating a foreign one. Does My Book of English help your students find this space? What evidence do you have from your classroom experience?

_____

_____

Q23. Have you ever noticed the textbook reinforcing cultural stereotypes — about Algerians, about Western people, or about any other group? Please describe the instance and how you handled it in class.

_____

_____

Q24. How do you personally deal with the cultural content of the textbook in your teaching? Do you supplement it, challenge it, skip parts of it, or use it exactly as presented? Please explain your approach.

_____

_____

Section Six: Overall Assessment and Recommendations

Q25. If you had to describe the overall cultural 'message' that My Book of English sends to a first year Algerian middle school student — about the world, about English, about their own identity — what would that message be?

_____

_____

Q26. What do you consider the single greatest strength of this textbook's cultural content? What does it do well?

_____

_____

Q27. What do you consider the most significant weakness or gap in the cultural content?

_____

_____

Q28. What is missing or handled poorly?

_____

_____

Q29. If you were advising the team responsible for revising My Book of English, what two or three specific changes would you recommend to improve the way cultural content is handled?

_____

_____

Thank you sincerely for your time and your professional insights.

Your contribution will help ensure that future EFL materials serve Algerian learners with greater cultural sensitivity and relevance.

Résumé

La présente étude examine le contenu culturel de *My Book of English* , le manuel officiel d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) destiné aux élèves de première année moyenne en Algérie, du point de vue des enseignants en exercice. Depuis les années 1960, les chercheurs reconnaissent la relation indissociable entre langue et culture, ainsi que l'importance de l'éducation culturelle pour préparer les apprenants à communiquer efficacement d'une culture à l'autre dans un monde de plus en plus globalisé. S'appuyant sur des données recueillies auprès de dix enseignants d'anglais du moyen en exercice via un questionnaire semi structuré en ligne, l'étude adopte une approche de recherche mixte pour évaluer le contenu culturel du manuel et explorer les perceptions des enseignants quant à l'intégration de la culture dans les activités de classe. Les résultats révèlent que, bien que les enseignants reconnaissent la valeur du contenu culturel pour promouvoir la conscience culturelle chez les apprenants, ils identifient également des lacunes importantes dans le manuel en termes de profondeur culturelle, de représentation religieuse et régionale, ainsi que dans la structure des tâches conçues pour développer une véritable compétence interculturelle. L'étude se conclut par des recommandations fondées sur des données probantes visant à améliorer la dimension culturelle du manuel et à renforcer la pédagogie interculturelle dans la formation des enseignants d'anglais en Algérie.

Mots clés : Culture, Évaluation des manuels d'ALE, Compétence communicative interculturelle, *My Book of English*, Enseignement moyen en Algérie, Représentation culturelle, Tiers espace (Third Place), Enseignan**t.**

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في المحتوى الثقافي لكتابMy Book of English ، وهو الكتاب المدرسي الرسمي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والمقرر على تلاميذ السنة الأولى متوسط في الجزائر، وذلك من منظور الأساتذة الممارسين. فمنذ ستينيات القرن الماضي، أدرك الباحثون العلاقة الوثيقة التي لا تتجزأ بين اللغة والثقافة، وأهمية التعليم الثقافي في إعداد المتعلمين للتواصل الفعال عبر الثقافات في عالم يتجه نحولعولمة بشكل متزايد. وبالاعتماد على البيانات التي تم جمعها من عشرة أساتذة ممارسين للغة الإنجليزية في مرحلة التعليم المتوسط من خلال استبيان نصف موجه عبر الإنترنت، تتبنى الدراسة منهجاً مختلطاً لتقييم المحتوى الثقافي للكتاب المدرسي، واستكشاف تصورات الأساتذة حول كيفية دمج الثقافة في الأنشطة الصفية. وتكشف النتائج أنه على الرغم من اعتراف الأساتذة بقيمة المحتوى الثقافي في تعزيز الوعي الثقافي لدى المتعلمين، إلا أنهم حددوا أيضاً نقائص ملحوظة في الكتاب المدرسي من حيث العمق الثقافي، والتمثيل الديني والإقليمي، وبنية المهام المصممة لتطوير كفاءة تواصلية تفاعلية حقيقية بين الثقافات. وتخلص الدراسة إلى تقديم توصيات قائمة على الأدلة لتحسين البعد الثقافي للكتاب المدرسي، وتعزيز البيداغوجيا التفاعلية بين الثقافات في برامج تكوين أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية في الجزائر.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المحتوى الثقافي، تقييم الكتب المدرسية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات، كتاب*My Book of English*، التعليم المتوسط في الجزائر، التمثيل الثقافي، الفضاء الثالث(Third Place) ، الأستاذ.

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