Universidad de Jaén

Centro de Estudios de Postgrado

Trabajo de Investigación Fin de Máster

CULTURAL COMPONENTS IN EFL TEXTBOOKS FOR TEENAGERS:

An analysis of the cultural content of Argentinean EFL textbooks for secondary education.

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Junio, 2015

RESUMEN

Los materiales impresos utilizados para la enseñanza del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera se encuentran atravesados por diversos componentes culturales que reflejan determinadas concepciones mundo. El eje de este estudio es el análisis descriptivo de los contenidos culturales en libros de texto para la enseñanza del inglés en la escuela secundaria en Argentina. A lo largo del presente trabajo puede vislumbrarse que los elementos culturales no tienden a fomentar diversas interpretaciones de la realidad, lo que dificulta el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico y la posibilidad de que los alumnos analicen en profundidad su propia cultura y la de otros.

PALABRAS CLAVE

componentes culturales, libros de texto, interculturalidad, escuela secundaria, enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés

ABSTRACT

The printed material used for teaching English as a Foreign Language contains different cultural components that reflect certain perceptions of the world. This paper focuses on the descriptive analysis of the cultural content portrayed in English textbooks used in secondary schools in Argentina. Along this piece of research, it is possible to notice that the cultural elements neither foster students' critical thinking nor offer them the possibility to analyze in depth their own and others culture.

KEY WORDS

cultural components, textbooks, references, interculturality, secondary school, teaching and learning English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the incorporation of culture teaching in foreign language classes is a widely accepted need. However, the debate remains still open as to what cultural components should be taught and how.

The use of course books as one of the main means of instruction or as at least a powerful tool among a varied range or resources is part of the reality of many foreign language classes in Argentina. Therefore, aware of this key role that books play in students' learning process, teachers have a hard job to do: to choose textbooks and to evaluate their usefulness. In real, it is very hard to find material that is especially designed for every educator's group of students. However, it is possible to select among the textbooks available, those which contain a wide array of components of varied cultures with the aim of promoting students' understanding and reflection on their own culture and other people's cultural particularities.

In view of this, this research project will develop a theory-based content analysis in order to examine the cultural content illustrated in three textbooks frequently used in Argentina. Therefore, the material will be analyzed using two criteria. The former assesses the minimum cultural content course books should have and the latter classifies those components according to the culture they belong to.

This paper consists of different sections. The first one will account for the personal and academic interests that justify the selection of the topic. Then, the objectives of the project will be addressed. From the general objectives, specific objectives and research questions will be derived. The presentation of the theoretical background will follow and will include the areas of knowledge that support the analysis, the state of the art and previous studies already done. This part is going to introduce the significance of the models of Byram *et.al.* (1994), Risager (1991) and Cortazzi and Jim (1999).The concept of "Interculturality" and different approaches to tackle it will be included, too. The following section will discuss the methodology used for the project and then, the results will be presented through a description and an analysis of the cultural component of the textbooks.

2. JUSTIFYING ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL INTEREST OF THE TOPIC

Course designs should promote effective communication not only through communicative competence but also through intercultural competence, which can overcome cross-cultural miscommunication.

Thus, exploring and analyzing the way culture is depicted in material especially designed for EFL education is very appealing since language and culture are key features in people's life.

It is clear that teachers, students, teaching materials and textbooks are active culture bound subjects since they carry with them knowledge and cultural values which are activated and transformed in different ways in the class. Therefore, an analysis of the cultural elements course books contain will attempt to identify "implicit theoretical identities and pedagogical opinions on culture and language" (Varón Paez 2009: 97).

Uncovering the way culture is taught in certain textbooks will provide teachers with the necessary tools to evaluate and adapt the material they are already using or the one they will choose for future teaching practices.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. Main objective

The main objective of this project is analyze in depth the cultural content portrayed in three EFL textbooks for teenagers widely used in Buenos Aires high schools in order to determine whether these books foster the intercultural communicative competence.

3.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives are the following:

- To identify the categories of culture depicted in the textbooks as proposed by Cortazzi and Jim L: Source Culture, Target Culture and International Culture.
- To analyze the cultural elements found in relation to the principles developed by Lappalainen based on Byram's and Risager's categories of analysis.
- To present findings and draw conclusions.

3.3. Research questions

The research questions are:

1) Do the textbooks focus on components of the Source Culture, Target Culture and /or International Culture as stated by Cortazzi and Jin L.?

2) What cultural components are emphasized when they are classified according to the principles developed by Lappalainen?

3) Up to what extent does the cultural content illustrated in the course books promote the intercultural communicative competence?

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter the areas of knowledge that will sustain the study will be included. Then, the concepts will be defined and references to the state of the art in the subject will be done. Also, there will be comments on the contributions of other authors to the field.

4.1. Areas of knowledge that will sustain the project

Language and Culture and Evaluation of Teaching Materials are the subjects of study that will frame this project. In the following paragraphs why these two disciplines are relevant to this thesis will be argued.

As for the connection between language and culture, Byram and Esarte-Sarries (2011:5) state that "language is the main medium for expressing other phenomena, including culture. It expresses the values, beliefs and meanings and it also refers to the objects of a given culture."

Byram (2001: 5-6) also sustains that if students do not learn language and culture together, they might believe that the target language is not different from their own language and thus, they can use it in the same way and in the same situations they would use their own language, and this is not always the case.

When it comes to the evaluation of teaching materials, Cunningsworth (2002) and Ellis (1985) suggest that "textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionist assessment and it

helps acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Textbook evaluation can potentially be a particularly worthwhile way of professional improvement."

4.2. State of the art in the subject

Now, the state of the art and the previous studies on the subject will be accounted.

Textbooks are considered an important tool for students and teachers in language classes. They serve as facilitators of language teaching and learning. They are an effective instrument for the educational practice and can reflect values and senses for individuals and nations (Eli Hinker 2005:135). In his book *Choosing Your Coursebook* , Cunningsworth (2002:7) affirms that teaching materials can have a considerable influence on what educators teach and how they do it. In view of this and bearing in mind that textbooks are often taken as an objective reference and that students tend to consider them "scientific", it is meaningful to evaluate the cultural content that EFL course books cover.

4.2.1. Criteria for evaluating cultural content in textbooks

4.2.1.1 Byram and colleagues' model

Byram, Morgan and colleagues (1994: 51-52) are important linguists who have worked on the evaluation of cultural content in textbooks. They propose criteria with nine categories to evaluate the minimum cultural content a secondary school textbook should have.

1) *Social identity and social group*: social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities.
2) *National History:* historical and contemporary events as seen as markers of national identity.
3) *National Geography*: geographical factors seen as being significant by members.
4) *National Cultural heritage:* the cultural artefacts, which are known to the members of the nation.
5) *Belief and behavior*: moral, religious beliefs, daily routine.
6) *Socio-political institutions:* state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government.
7) *Socialization and the life cycle*: families, schools, employment, rites of passage.
8) *Stereotypes and national identity*: what is "typical" symbol of national stereotypes?

9) *Social interaction*: differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider.

Byram (1994) provides specialists with the opportunity to reflect on how to select the socio-cultural content when devising textbooks and how to evaluate the material once it is available in the market.

4.2.1.2 Risagers' checklist

Risager (1991) has also presented criteria for the evaluation of the cultural component in textbooks. She bases her list of analysis as follows:

1) *The micro level- phenomena of social and cultural anthropology*: the social and geographical characters, situations of interaction, interaction and the subjectivity of characters: feelings, attitudes, values and perceived problems.

2) *The macro level-social, political and historical matters:* broad social facts about contemporary society, sociopolitical problems, e.g. Unemployment and pollution.

3) *International and intercultural issues:* comparisons between the target culture and the students' own country, or other cultures: mutual representations, images, stereotypes, relations, cultural power and dominance, cooperation and conflict.

4) *Point of view and style of the textbook author(s):* expression of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) towards the country and the people.

Risager (1991) supports her categories on her previous experience with textbooks used mainly in Scandinavia*."* Even though her checklist is similar to Byram's (1994), she adds the categories of 'International and intercultural issues' and 'Point of view and Style of the textbook author', which seem very important for teachers and students so that they can also reflect on comparisons between different cultures and the 'implicit voice' portrayed on the textbook. According to Karvonen (1995: 19-22), "through the textbook, authors reach their own goals. But what are those goals?"

Byram et al. (1994) affirm that students should learn both taken-for granted and conscious knowledge of the target language. Therefore, the two previous criteria presented for evaluating the cultural component of textbooks foster critical thinking and the understanding of the importance of certain key factors when learning about cultures

Cortazzi, M and Jim, L. (1999) propose another framework to analyze the cultural elements in teaching and learning materials. This model classifies cultural components in three different types and seeks to raise intercultural awareness among students.

Source culture Materials: They are materials which present language learners own culture.
Target culture materials: They make reference to the culture where the target language is used as the first language.
International culture materials: they involve a variety of culture in English or non-English-speaking countries around the world, which use English as an international language.

4.2.2 Intercultural dimension in EFL textbooks

It is world-wide known that teaching English as a foreign, second and international language plays an important role in today's society. However, this reality represents a concern about its implications in the processes learning and teaching: what cultural content and which country's or countries' culture should students learn?

Smith (1976) considers that an "international language" implies that people who use it are part of different nations and do not share the same mother tongue to interact. Actually, Brutt-Griffer (2002) identifies some distinctive characteristics of an international language. One feature is that the existing global integration in science, economics, culture and intellectual life has increased the need to learn this language for communication. This also places itself alongside other languages in multilingual contexts and is learned by people independently from their social level. Finally, migration is not the reason for this language's spread. In fact, many people acquiring the language make its demand step up. Thus, English as an international language should allow speakers to share their ideas and culture with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Learners' ability to understand their own and others' culture will help them communicate with people from all over the world successfully, namely Intercultural Communicative Competence. (Savignon, 1997)"Learning different cultures gives people the opportunity to adopt a more open-minded approach towards international understanding, better communication with people from different cultures and understanding one's culture by comparing it with other cultures." (Jing Xiao, 2010).

As it can be appreciated in his work, Byram *et al* (1994) truly believes that the content in textbooks should meet the main objective of *intercultural learning* which consists of providing

students with different interpretations of the world so that learners can compare their own culture with the foreign culture.

"English has long since ceased to be owned by anyone and it is now open to the influence of all who choose it" (Crystal D. 1997). This inevitably requires teaching materials with a multicultural view that considers English as an International Language in a plural, complex and changing reality.

It is the intercultural dimension in language teaching the one that aims to develop learners as intercultural mediators who are able to engage on equal terms with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid perceiving someone through a single identity.

According to both Kramsch (1993:177) and Byram *et al.* (2001) a "formative approach" helps students to acquire an intercultural communicative competence in order to overcome cultural particularity. In this way, learners are able to build common meaning with other individuals who belong to different social identities when they all engage into interactions. In this intercultural encounter, students make use of a plural, heterogeneous and complex competence, by which they can create a "third culture" in its own right (Kramsh 1993: 9).

Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2008: 23), think that "textbooks can be written in an intercultural and critical perspective or in a way that suggests that the materials are authoritative.*"* If there is a choice of a textbook, teachers should avoid those that offer a single perspective. The ones that promote intercultural competence and a critical perspective taking into account different origins with diverse viewpoints are preferred.

This intercultural dimension that Bryam *et.al* (2008) propose aims to develop linguistic and intercultural competence. It works as a semi-neutral space where the social, cultural and linguistic interchanges are possible. It entails multiple skills, such as:

1) *knowledge:* of social groups and their products and practices in one´s own and in one's interlocutor's country and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

2) *attitudes*: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one´s own.

3) *Skills of interpreting and relating:* ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one´s own.

4) *Skills of discovery and interaction:* ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

5) *Critical cultural awareness:* ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one´s own and other cultures and countries.

4.2.2.1 Two models of interculturality

In her article: Enseñanza de las Lenguas e Interculturalidad: ¿estamos hablando todos de lo mismo?" (Language Teaching and Interculturality: are we all talking about the same thing?), Elizabeth Areizaga (2002), describes two different models of interculturality: the *informative* and the *formative* one. In order to understand how these two approaches have emerged, she also gives a complete recount on how the cultural component has evolved in language teaching till the development of the term: "interculturality."

Arezizaga (2002: 6) states that within the intercultural dimension, there are two tendencies which have a clear reflection in teaching and learning languages:

1) *A behaviorist, factual and informative approach:* This perspective is supported by Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2004).

- It holds an essentialist viewpoint on cultures and presents cultures as objective realities in absolute terms through information, with the risk of falling into ethnocentrism.
- It promotes the development of behavioral abilities to avoid misunderstandings and culture shock.
- Tolerance is the expected result of comparing and contrasting. Stereotypes are reinforced and the scheme of "we" and "they" remains.

2). *A constructivist, formative approach for the development of a "third culture":* this is the one sustained by Kramsch (1993), Byram *et al.,* (1994) and Risager (199).

- It does not present an essentialist perspective on cultures. Cultures are read. Then we should learn to look at them and ours from the inside and outside in order to develop cultural sensitivity.

- Information neither changes out perception of others nor develops abilities. Experience and cognitive conflict with previous knowledge transform us.

- It challenges stereotypes and prejudice.

- The scheme of "we" and "they" is not valid since societies are immersed in plural, diverse and changing communities.

4.2.3 Previous studies

Previous studies on the cultural component in EFL textbooks will also give me meaningful insights into the subject and will serve as a guide in the conduction of my research.

In her Master's Thesis *Presentation of the American Culture in EFL Textbooks: An analysis of the cultural component of Finnish EFL textbooks for secondary and upper secondary education*" (2011), Tiina Lappalainen studied the presentation of the American Culture in EFL textbooks. Her study concentrated on analyzing four secondary and upper secondary education Finnish EFL textbooks series: altogether twenty two books. She wanted to find out how the cultural themes in those books supported the principles of intercultural learning and teaching. The method used was a theory-based content analysis.

Lappalainen based the evaluation of the material on the principles of culture learning and teaching developed by Byram *et al.* (1994) and Risager (1991. as cited in Lappalainen, 2011). They are the following:

1) *Social identity and social group*: social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities.
2) *National History:* historical and contemporary events as seen as markers of national identity.
3) *National Geography*: geographical factors seen as being significant by members.
4) *National Cultural heritage:* the cultural artefacts, which are known to the members of the nation.
5) *Belief and behavior*: moral, religious beliefs, daily routine.
6) *Socio-political institutions:* state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government.
7) *Socialization and the life cycle*: families, schools, employment, rites of passage.
8) *Stereotypes and national identity*: what is "typical" symbol of national stereotypes?

9) *Social interaction*: differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider.

10) *International and intercultural issues:* comparisons between the target culture and the students' own country and other countries' culture: mutual representations, images, stereotypes, relations, cultural power and dominance, cooperation and conflict.

11) *Point of view and style of the textbook author (s):* expression of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) towards countries and the people.

Then she compared the newer and older textbooks to each other to find out if there were differences in the cultural component among the secondary and upper secondary education textbooks.

To Lappalainen´s surprise, her study revealed that older books included more American- related cultural content than the newer ones. She was glad to see that even though famous monuments and people were significantly highlighted in the newer course books, they included less American-related stereotypes than older ones.

She also discovered that secondary education textbooks followed Byram *et al*. and Risager's criteria and that those contents promoted intercultural competence. Lappalainen affirmed that those results seemed controversial since the Finnish National Curriculum considered intercultural learning to be more important in upper secondary education than in secondary education.

Another important research to be taken into account is the pilot study carried out in her PhD´s Thesis *Cultural Component, Textbooks and Teaching of English as a Foreign Language* that Martha Elizabeth Varón Páez wrote in 2009. In her paper, she explored, contrasted and analyzed concepts and theories about culture that have practical implications in textbooks for teaching EFL.

The corpus she selected corresponded to five course books used in Colombia by foreign publishers between 1997 and 2005 to teach EFL in primary and secondary school levels. She presented different dichotomies related to culture and briefly intends to analyze the material in relation to them:

Culture with "C" vs. Culture with "c"

Culture with "C" refers to what is visible in a society: cultural institutions; religious, economic, educational, governmental, legal and political systems; architecture; opera; dance; theater; literature; typical food; heroes; popular; culture, etc. (Pusch & La Brack 2003).

According to Kramsch (2012: 65), this type of culture is "synonym with a general knowledge of literature and the arts acquired at school has been instrumental in building nation-state. Because the notions of 'good' and 'proper' way of life dye with moral value, language learners who have grown with other values find it very often difficult to understand foreign languages on their own terms."

Culture with "c" entitles what is hidden and is subjective: people´s behavior; verbal and non-verbal language; symbols; cultural meanings of time and place, life and death; cultural meanings of universal mysteries, myths and legends.

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) affirm that generally textbooks have promoted the transmission of culture with "C" while the portrayal of culture with "c" has been introduced as anecdotic and peripheral information.

Monoculture Awareness vs. Intercultural Awareness

Cultural awareness includes the predominance of information about English speaking countries in textbooks, whereas intercultural awareness widens the spectrum and provides insights into the culture of other countries.

Closed Texts vs. Open Texts.

Luke (1989) believes that the cultural contents of textbooks can be analyzed under two categories: closed or open books.

Closed books: They show cultural groups without problems, confirming or reinforcing learners´ viewpoints and beliefs.

Open books: They open the door to varied interpretations. The student is considered a cultural active subject who reacts to the content.

Varón Paez described the different categories in an interesting way and she also explained the way those three different dichotomies were reflected in the books she analyzed. Her study is clear and it promotes critical thinking.

Soraya Rajabi and Saeedd Ketabi (2012) also contributed to the evaluation of culture in EFL textbooks. Their article titled "Aspects of Cultural Elements in Prominent English Textbooks for EFL Setting" aimed to examine the cultural elements in four EFL textbooks used in Iran in order to depict the cultural contexts and determine which of the following four dimensions was portrayed more prominently: the aesthetic, sociological, semantic or the pragmatic. They analyzed language discourse and expressed in numbers the frequency of occurrence of each of those dimensions. Then, the findings were presented in tables and discussed and justified qualitatively.

These two researchers discovered that "teaching English is becoming much more localized, integrating flavors with those of the target language. The use of the local characters, places and issues as content for textbooks is subtly interspersed with the cultural contexts of the English-speaking countries. The adoption of English as a second language means to a certain point the acceptance of Western culture and values." (Rajabi & Ketabi: 2012: 711)

Another enriching study to comment on is the paper: "A Content Analysis of the Cultural Content in the EFL Textbooks" written by Wu Juan (2010). In his research, he analyzed the cultural component of a textbook following the criteria elaborated by Byram *et al* (1994). He based his analysis on a qualitative and quantitative methodology. He examined the kind of content shown, the features of that cultural content and from that information, he pondered the advantages and disadvantages of that cultural content.

He analyzed the preface of the book, the written texts and footnotes, pre-reading activities and exercises. The results pointed out that the cultural content presented in the textbook had not been carefully designed and organized. He concluded that the reading passages covered cultural background implicitly, whereas cultural details were found explicitly in the pre-reading activities, footnotes and exercises. He suggested that there should be more input about the culture of other speaking communities He also expressed that the book should include opportunities for students to compare and contrast cultures. (Wu Juan 2010)

Maria Silvina Paricio Tato (2005) also explored the evaluation of cultural content in textbooks. In her article: *La dimensión Cultural en los libros de texto de lenguas extranjeras: pautas para su análisis,* (*The Cultural Dimension in FL Textbooks: guidelines for their analysis*) Paricio did

not analyze textbooks, but she described the literature about the study of cultural content in teaching materials. As part of her study, she proposed her teaching trainees a series of questions to analyze textbooks critically from an intercultural view.

Furthermore, Jing Xiao (2010) showed interesting insights into the analysis of the cultural component in teaching materials. In her Master of Arts Thesis *Cultural Contents of an in-use EFL Textbook and English Major Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Culture Leaning at Jiangxi University of Science and Technology, China,* Xiao worked with a listening practice book for college students and after analyzing it in detail, she determined the types (Big "C" or Small "c") and categories of culture (Source, Target or International) illustrated in the material. She also interviewed ninety six second-year-college students in order to find out their perceptions and expectations towards the cultural content present in their in-use textbook. She also wanted to learn about students' attitudes towards cultural learning and their abilities on cultural implementation. Xiao observed that there is a strong preference for target culture contents, especially from the United Kingdom and the United States. She also learned that the textbook focused on the big "C" culture, with close attention to literature and arts, economy, politics and history. Students also showed preference for the presence of the target culture in their textbooks but also expected to find more source culture in them. They seemed aware of the importance of culture and culture learning and pointed out that their culture learning was hindered because teachers did not present their lessons in an appealing way and the textbooks they used lacked cultural content or when present, they were not about current events.

Finally, Antonio R. Roldan and colleagues (2015) also based their research project on the analysis of cultural content in textbooks. In the article named *Analysis of the present of cultural elements in English textbook for primary and secondary schools*, they present a brief summary of the work. They studied four English course books used in fifth year in primary and other four textbooks widely used in second year in high school. The researchers analyzed the origin of the culture portrayed in the material: Target, International and Source culture. They elaborated tables to organize the cultural elements and compare their appearance in the books belonging to the two different school levels.

Among some of their main conclusions, they claimed that textbooks included more examples of characters, people, places, stereotypes and products that represent the target culture rather than the students' own culture.

All things considered, in this chapter the areas of knowledge that frame the project were presented. The role of textbooks in culture teaching and the need to evaluate them were introduced. Furthermore, the intercultural teaching was addressed and explained as well as the criteria for evaluating cultural content in textbooks was discussed. Finally, previous research studies on the cultural dimension in textbooks were mentioned and their contributions were highlighted. In the next section, the focus will be on the research design of the present study.

5. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, firstly, I will describe the corpus for analysis and I will present a justification for its selection. Secondly, I will account for the approach and methodology adopted and I will introduce the criteria to analyze the material. Finally, I will discuss about the instruments of analysis.

5.1 Material selected

For the present work three books used in secondary schools will be studied. These textbooks were selected because they are relatively new books in the market and have had considerable acceptance by teachers and students. The three books correspond to three different publishers. Two of them were entirely written by English authors with the exception of one whose texts have been adapted by an Argentinean specialist in material design.

 Challenges 1 Student's book (Harris and Mower, 2006) is the first of a widely-used series of EFL textbook published by Pearson Longman. This series has five levels in total (starter, 1, 2, 3 and 4) and each of them is composed by a student's book, a workbook, class CDs and a teacher's book. This course is said to use cross-cultural topics to bring the real world into the classroom, making it relevant for your students and encouraging them to think about the world around them."

It is necessary to acknowledge that Pearson has recently launched the *New Challenges* series which has incorporated new material to work with. The new textbooks are similar to the old Challenges but it includes such a Student's e-text, a CD ROM with resources for teachers, activities to use in interactive whiteboards and projectors and tests.

This research paper will analyze *Challenges 1 student's book* instead of *New Challenges 1 student's course book* since it is still used and preferred by many educators. This material has been written by Michael Harris and David Mower, two British authors who have also worked

together on other famous series for adolescents such as *Opportunities, New Opportunities and World Club.*

Challenges 1 which has an elementary level, can work fine with first-year high school teens who attend state schools that stick to the officially assigned schedule: three hours of English per week. It has five units and each one has a theme around. I found the text very interesting for my analysis for it contains topics and pictures appealing to preadolescents. Each unit ends with a special section called "Cross Cultural Corner."

The second book selected is *Access III Student´s book.* This pre-intermediate textbook was written by the British authors Virginia Evans and Jenny Dooley and published by Express Publishing in 2008. Access is a series for teens that contains four levels (1, 2, 3 and 4) and each encompasses a student's book, a grammar book, a workbook, a teacher's book, class CD's, student's CD's, IWS software and a teacher's resource pack.

This kind of textbook can work with junior high school students and suits bilingual high schools best considering the length of its units and the amount of time needed to work with the material. This book contains ten long but complete units. Each of them is subdivided into five sections. It seems an attractive book and as in *Challenges I,* it has a special section in each unit devoted to culture.

The third book for the analysis is *Insights I Student's book.* It was published in 2009 by Macmillan and written by the British author Catherine McBeth; the texts were adapted by the Argentinean consultant Alejandra Ottolina. It is the first of a series of six- level textbooks which include a student's course book, a workbook, class audio, a teacher's book and online extra practice.

Insights I can be used by first-year high school students whose institution's curriculum includes many periods per week devoted to English. Otherwise, if implemented in schools with a limited amount of English instruction, its content can be divided and used in two academic years. The course book contains eighteen units, each of them with appealing topics and a section devoted to culture, too.

The three student's books described above will be analyzed one at the time. The findings and discussions of each will focus mainly on reading passages, pictures and some activities of the three books. The material will be classified into three different types of culture (Target,

International and Source culture materials) and also analyzed in the light of the categories developed by Lappalainen.

5.2 Approach and instrument

The present study is qualitative in nature and the method employed is a theory-based content analysis which adopts an analytical and heuristic approach.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) assert that "content analysis research is one of the basic methods for qualitative research, and with the help of it, it is possible to execute different kinds of studies." According to them, in theory-based content analysis, a theoretical framework is the starting point of analysis. The corpus is selected and then put into categories according to the theoretical background chosen. Then, the material is narrowed only to those contents that will be useful for the criteria chosen and it is included in the analysis.

In this content analysis research paper the material related to the cultural content in three student's books is described qualitatively and the result of this is a general and summarized presentation of the information obtained and discussed.

Moreover, considering the two possible ways of carrying out the study of the field in second language learning at a conceptual level: "synthetic" or "analytical" proposed by Seliger and Shonamy (1989), this piece of work intends adopts an *analytical* approach since it "identifies small parts of the whole for careful and close study in order to fit those pieces into a s coherent picture of the whole at the larger stage" (Seliger and Shonamy, 1989).

The aim of this paper is also "heuristic" in view of the fact that data is collected in an attempt to include as much of the contextual information as possible. The data is then categorized and analyzed and written up descriptively and there is no hypothesis to be proven (Seliger and Shonamy, 1989).

5.4 Criteria

The present research project intends to describe and examine the cultural content that is presented in three secondary school EFL textbooks used in the capital city of Argentina: Challenges I, Access III and New Insights I. The aim is to analyze the corpus taking into account the categories proposed by Cortazzi and Jim (1999) that classify the content according

to the culture they represent: Target or International Culture, and the criteria developed by Tina Lappalainen's (2011) in her research paper: "Presentation of American Culture in EFL Textbooks". She included the nine categories created by Byram *et al.* (1994) and added two from Risager´s model (1991): *International and Intercultural Issues* and *Point of view and style of the textbook author(s).*

In this research paper, a theory-based content analysis on the material will be carried out. The findings will be presented and discussed taking into account the criteria described above and finally, conclusions will be drawn in the light of the results presented.

6. RESULTS

In this chapter the findings of the study are introduced and discussed. The analysis of the categories presented by Tina Lappalainen will be divided into two parts. Each category will include an account of the material collected in each of the textbooks: first the textbook *Challenges I,* then *Access III,* and finally *Insights I.* At the same time, these findings will be classified taking into account the criteria proposed by Jing Xiao, which determines the type of culture the information refers to: Target, International or Source Culture. Then, the description of the data will be followed by a discussion that includes comments and perceptions on the cultural material contained in the course books.

6.1 Social identity and social group

6.1.1 Findings

This section discusses how the social groups in the target, international and/or source culture (social class, subculture identities, way of living, professional identity, ethnic minority) are presented in the books.

When it comes to the depiction of the target culture, the course book *Challenges I* has four English speaking characters that accompany students in all the units covered. Through the pictures and the personal information contained in the dialogues, it can be observed that these four teenagers belong to a well-to-do family which can afford their children's education and recreation. These four teenagers go together to a youth club in London where they take sports lessons after school, such as horse riding and football. Some of them usually spend their summer holidays in a house they own near a lake. They often go to the cinema, go to parties and

they go camping taking with them all the necessary equipment. In addition, they seem to be committed to helping others by doing community service at a local animal centre: they have to exercise the horses, do office work, clean the stable and feed the animals.

By exploring the units in the textbook *Access III,* it can be seen that both parents in the illustrated families work or the father is the breadwinner and the mother is in charge of taking care of the children; kids go to school and they help with the household chores.

There is an interesting reading passage that deals with some differences between living in a city and in the countryside. The pictures that surround the text show beautiful houses in the countryside of Northern Scotland and huge buildings in the city of London. It can be seen that the peaceful and natural farm environment shapes people´s lives. The text says that people appear to be very friendly in the countryside. They get up very early in the morning to work on the farm and travel long distances to send their children to school. In the city, life is described as more exciting, though: people travel by subway to go to big schools where facilities are better. There is also another article that shows that a great number of families are able to keep up with the latest technological devices at home. Actually, the passage talks about "High-Tech Teens." It says that 70% of British teenagers own gadgets worn up to £2,000.

In *Insights I* , there are not specific characters, but some details about people in English speaking countries can be inferred by the information provided in the reading passages: parents are professionals and work every day, and they have one or two kids who go to private schools.

This does not seem to be the situation in other parts of the world. The textbook illustrates economic problems in Africa. According to an article, some children do not have access to school or formal education because of the lack of schools or families with a good financial situation.

A sense of responsibility is also portrayed through some teenagers from Wales and Dublin who work flexi-time before or after school: one is a computer games taster and the other delivers the paper to people's houses.

Native tribes also get some attention in two of the books. In *Access III,* there is a text with information about The Maori, the original inhabitants in New Zealand. They are said to have kept some of their traditions but live the life of the inhabitants of the country: these Polynesian speak English and Maori, and they follow a European life style. This group is said to be friendly and kind, and to have an impressive dance called Haka and tattoos all over their bodies.

In *Insights I*, a very brief reading passage says that three things are important for The Maori: the river, the tribe and the mountain. It is stated that they are famous for their wooden carvings since each of them tells a story only some people can read. Native Americans are also mentioned in another section of the book. There is an article with data about two famous tribes (Cherokee, Sioux) whose country considered them American citizens in 1924. These tribes´ war skills, strength and hunting abilities are emphasized and some insights into the way these civilizations were organized are provided: Sioux men haunted and fought in war and women stayed in the tepees. They were nomads and spiritual people. The Cherokee lived in villages near the river and they fished and hunted.

Some evidence of *Ethnic minorities* in UK is presented in *Challenges I*. The textbook introduces a reading a passage with a survey made to immigrant children in order to know about their life in the UK and what they miss about their own countries. Ada, from the Czech Republic has been living in England for a year. She says that she had a hard time at school since she did not how to speak a word in English, but her teachers were nice and she liked the sea. She misses her friends and her mum's cooking.

Daniel, from Colombia thinks England is a fantastic city but it's always cold and rainy. He added he missed Colombian TV programs and that he would prefer to live in Spain since people speak Spanish there and it's a warm country.

Rodjin compares her country Iran with England. Even though she thought English people did not like her, she proved it wrong and says that in England kids are friendly: they go to parties and to one school, which is impossible in Iran where students never go to parties and study in different schools. She misses her family a lot, especially her grandparents and Iranian food.

As for International Cultures, there is not explicit information about social groups. Only one text in *Challenges I* seems to elicit some data about a boy from Madrid. The starter unit introduces the task of writing a letter to a pen friend: Pedro from Spain writes to Steve. By reading the information in this letter, it can be seen that his mother is a doctor and his father a police officer. He assumes his school work with responsibility and has free time to practice sports or go to the cinema.

6.1.2 Discussion

All in all, the account of cultural information found in the three textbooks related to this category of "Social Identity and Social Group" can give us with some interesting insights.

As it can be appreciated in the descriptions mentioned above, the three books favor the portrayal of the target culture rather than the international or the learners' source culture.

Most of the reading passages and the characters presented in the textbooks seem to narrow the scope of *social classes* to English speaking middle class families consisting of professionals. Nevertheless, according to the largest study carried out in Great Britain by the BBC in 2013, people in the UK fit now into seven social classes: elite, established middle class, middle class, new affluent workers, traditional working class, emergent service workers, and precarious proletariat. In this way, learners are not allowed to obtain a complete picture of social classes in modern Britain. There is only one allusion to financially disfavored people. *Insights I* illustrates the situation of many teenagers in Africa who have problems to study because of the lack of near educational institutions or families who can support their education.

As it can be seen, two of the three course books depict some ethnic minorities in the UK, USA and Australia. *Challenges I* presents a brief interview to four immigrant kids studying in the UK. Even though no statistics or further information about the number of ethnic minorities coexisting in the UK is mentioned, some inferences regarding these students' impressions can be made. By paying close attention to the information made available by these kids, it is clear that feeling part of the target language speech community has not been easy for them. Actually, most of them agree that it has been difficult to get used to the English culture and they have not felt confident enough when speaking English. They also describe how factors, which are not under our control, affect their well- being as they are not used to them. In fact, they comment on how cold, rainy and humid weather conditions have a negative impact in their mood. In addition, this sense of homesickness seems to sharpen when they say they really miss their friends, family and home country's typical food.

As for aboriginal people, the information portrayed in two of the books does not describe these groups in a variety of topics and issues. The Natives' lives are reduced to a limited set of facts related to their traditions. No details are given about their internal organization, their encounter with the conquerors and the way this event shaped and changed their way of living.

6.2 National History

5.2.1 Findings

Now historical periods and events in different cultures found in the books are introduced.

In the textbook *Challenges I,* there is one unit devoted to "explorers." It is through this unit that learners read information about the America's third Moon landing mission, Apollo XIII, whose start was on the 11th of April, 1970. According to the text, it was a very important event in the World's History. Apollo XIII intended to get to the moon but the mission was aborted once one of the oxygen tanks exploded and the crew's supporting systems were out of commission. This mission became a "successful failure" because even though the goal was not accomplished, the astronauts were considered real survivors by Americans, and NASA's Mission Control Center worked tirelessly to bring the crew back safely.

In this same unit named "Explorers", there is a brief reading passage about Marco Polo, which contains general information about him. In this article, we get to know that he was from Venice and that he travelled to China with his father and uncle carrying letters to the emperor, Kublai Khan. Marco is said to have lived in China for seventeen years and traveled around India, Burma and China on special missions for the emperor. In a separate section there is a list of interesting facts related to Marco Polo's visit to China such as the possibility he had to see paper for the first time in China, a country where canals roads and a big wall had been built. The fact that Marco wrote a book about his journeys but that people thought they were only stories is also mentioned.

Access III portrays only one historical event. An article mentions that in Victorian Times (1837-1901), poor and orphan children used to work hard in coal mines, cotton factories and chimneys under unhealthy conditions. "Lord Shaftesbury" is said to have stopped adults from using children at work by starting free schools for poor kids. According to the text, all children went to school by the end of Victorian Times.

In *Insights I,* there is a short section related to facts about the United States. The historical event highlighted here is the American Independence Day. A time line shows representative dates in the way to Independence. There are pictures of the Statue of the Liberty and George Washington and a brief paragraph that describes how the Independence Day is celebrated in the United States. At the top of the page, a chart mentions the capital of the country, the number of stars in the American flag and the population. At the bottom of the page, there is a picture of Martin Luther King next to a questionnaire about him. Students are asked to look for information on their own and answer those questions.

6.2.2 Discussion

All things considered, the three books include important historical events. However, their scope is rather limited. The three of them include sections that highlight Historical facts that are part of the target culture and only *Challenges I* incorporates a significant event that fits into the international culture: Marco Polo's travels. None of the books makes reference to historical facts concerning the learners' source culture.

Challenges I describes the launch of Apollo XIII as a relevant happening. The astronauts are considered explorers who survived after an explosion on board. The relevance of this mission of survival is obvious. However, there is very important historical information the course book fails to provide students with. It would have been interesting to place Apollo XIII in the context of the Cold War. By incorporating this important historical allusion, students might understand that from the beginning of the 1950s, space became a potential area of ambitious competition between the United States and The Soviet Union, and that the framework of this ideological war, each side continuously had to prove their technological, military firepower and political economical superiority.

The textbook also includes Marco Polo's travels as a relevant historical event. The article dealing with this topic includes a series of happenings in the life of Marco Polo but it does not highlight the real significance of his travels and its impact on the occidental world: he brought the print from the East to the West and snapshots of different cultures and peoples; he inspired Christopher Columbus and even influenced the introduction of true cartography.

When it comes to *Access III,* it tackles the topic of children's work in Victorian Times. This event can be of interest for teenagers studying the target culture. However, this sad happening is not discussed in depth. The reading passage does not set Victorian Times in context: Great Britain´s world super power and its industrialization which in some cases improved and in other cases depressed living standards. For many historians Britain was considered "the country with two nations." Rich families became significantly wealthy, while entire poor families and orphan kids were doomed to work hard in bad conditions. In those times, poverty was actually regarded as "the natural condition of the laboring poor." The article in textbook *Access III* says that poor kids had to work in Victorian Times but it chooses to highlight that despite that situation, by the end of this period, all children went to school.

As regards the course book *Insights I,* including a historical event such as the American Independence Day seems to be pertinent. However, showing a time line with happenings and

dates without explanation seems to be very vague. The inclusion of questions about Martin Luther King at the end of the article seems out of context and disconnected from the description of how people celebrate the Independence Day in USA.

6.3 National Geography

6.3.1 Findings

This part will concentrate on the sections in the textbooks related to geographical factors of the Target, International or Source culture and their significance for the members of the culture and the outsiders.

The textbook *Challenges I* introduces geographical information about the target and international cultures. This data is presented embedded in units as a context for communicative purposes or in separate sections with maps or reading passages especially related to the geography of certain countries or regions. In a module called "Going out", the book illustrates the topic of giving and asking for directions together with vocabulary connected to the places in town by using the map of the city of Birmingham as a guide. There is another module called "The Weather". In this case, a map shows in general terms the limits and the name of the different countries in Great Britain, with an emphasis on the most important regions of England (South East, South West, Midlands, North East and North West). The North of Ireland is marked but without any name on it. Through a listening comprehension exercise, students are invited to match the countries and regions with vocabulary about the correct typical weather conditions in each place. In the same unit, there is a reading comprehension interview on tornadoes in Ohio, USA. It has a chart with true or false sentences on general information about this natural phenomenon and then an interview made by a news reporter to a civilian who was in the eye of a tornado in Snake River Ohio.

There is a reading comprehension text about the typical weather in different places in the world (Polar Regions, deserts and rainforests), and how, in general terms, weather conditions determine the kind of animals and plants that coexists there. Polar Regions, the Arctic and Antarctica are mentioned. The article states that as in those places it snows a lot and there is ice all year, there are not land animals or plants but birds and sea animals. Besides, the Gobi Desert in Central Asia is introduced as an example of deserted areas. The extreme hot and dry temperatures favor the living and growth of plants and animals that do not need much water to live such as the cactus and reptiles. For the description of rainforests, the book does not make

reference to any country or place in particular. These areas are depicted as hot and wet every day, with thousands of species, strange animals and plants.

In addition, there is a module on "Animals in Danger", which is related to the natural life in different geographic areas. An article includes a map of the illustrative world pictures inserted in it and descriptions of the origin and characteristics of some endangered animals in certain parts of the world like USA, South America, Australia, China, Indonesia and oceans.

The course book *Access III* also contains maps of important English speaking countries, and also includes geographical facts about Latin American ones. In a unit that is devoted to giving and asking for directions, a map of London is employed. Students need to use this map to get to different tourist places in the city such as Westminster. Next to this section, there is a reading passage that provides the learners with geographical information about Mexico, such as the capital of the country, the official language, population figures and currency. Mexico is described as one of the largest cities in the world with beautiful tourist attractions, a fantastic metro network and food options but with serious traffic and pollution problems. Once students read the text, they are encouraged to look for information about New Delhi and write a description similar to the one of Mexico but with facts about this place of India. Moreover, there is a special section related to Scotland's Natural World. Three of its seventy one Natural Reserves (St Kilda, Loch Lomond and Insh Marshes) are described and are said to include and protect thousand of rare species and habitats.

The textbook *Insights I* also presents geographical information about some parts of the world but it focuses on English speaking countries. Alike in the other two textbooks, there is a map of the city of London for students to get to know important attractions in the city and to identify vocabulary on places already covered.

There are also special sections assigned to show curiosities and touristic attractions about the USA, Canada, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Dublin and Wales. In this way, learners get to know interesting information about traditions and famous places. Through a brief chart, students also learn general geographic facts and figures about those places such as capital city, population, currency and official language.

The natural world is also presented in *Insights I*. It contains very interesting reading passages with information and lovely pictures of typical wild animals from Australia and New Zealand: gliders, anteaters, platypus, emus, white sharks, kangaroos and wallabies. In addition, there is a short passage on puffins which are typical birds of Scotland. Besides, a special section is

devoted to highlight the natural beauties of Canada such as the Niagara Falls, the Great Lakes, its national parks and The Rocky Mountains.

Last but not least, the course book also introduces a part with the globe, pictures and a reading text on the climate around the world. The only countries that are mentioned are Canada, China and Australia, and the general geographic references that appear are the Poles, the Equator, the Tropic of Capricorn, Europe and North America. The text describes the characteristics of dry, tropical, warm and cold climates and their benefits or drawbacks. For instance, warm climates favor the development of agriculture, but tropical temperatures often cause storms and hurricanes.

6.3.2 Discussion

All in all, as it can be observed through the descriptions of the geographical material incorporated in the three textbooks, there is a marked preference for presenting information about the target culture. Geographic content related to the students' source culture is not included and references about the geography of international cultures are scarce. In general terms, the national geography of the countries is portrayed as interesting general facts with important and useful examples for prospect tourists to learn. Most data could perfectly fit a travel brochure or a city's guide books.

6.4. Natural Cultural Heritage

6.4.1 Findings

The cultural artifacts related to different countries are presented in this subdivision.

In the textbook *Challenges I,* most examples represent the popular culture of English Speaking countries. However, there are a few references to elements of International cultures, too. They are generally embodied in movie stars, musicians and sports players.

In order to check how much students know about celebrities, there is a brief film quiz with four multiple choice questions about representative American and British actors like Keira Knightley, Kirsten Dunst, Tobey Maguire and Keanu Reeves. Without making reference to these actors' personal information, the questions test students' general knowledge on these actors' past films. There is also a reading passage with a TV show interview to Orlando Bloom

and Keira Knightley. The questions again, make reference to their participation in famous movies such as the "Pirates of The Caribbean" and "The Lord of the Rings."

The musicians mentioned in the book are The Beatles, a memorable British pop group whose hits became famous in USA and the world rapidly. In a reading passage with a picture in black and white of Paul McCartney, the members are described as the "group of the 20th century". Interestingly, an account of their career and details of each Beatle are presented. The group is referred to as the World's first international pop group and Lennon and McCartney as the best song-writing team of the century.

At the end of the textbook there is a quick music quiz that includes statements about famous artists for students to tick as true or false. The celebrities mentioned are the American singers Elvis Presley, Avril Lavigne, Rod Steward, Phillips and Sonny, and the British singer Paul McCoutney. The song "Yesterday" is mentioned as the most popular one with more than 1,600 versions around the world. In addition, Elvis Presley is the singer whose description stands out from the rest since he is said to be the most popular rock-and roll singer ever in the USA.

Famous sport people are also included in *Challenges I:* the Russian tennis players Maria Shapova and Svetlana Kuznetsova, the Brazilian football player Ronaldiño, and the British football player David Beckham. All of them are described as the "new fashion models". Their physical beauty and hair style are highlighted.

When it comes to the textbook *Access III,* the examples of cultural heritage are represented in several ways.

There is a reading passage on a typical day in the life of OJ Mayo, a famous American basketball player. He talks about his daily routine and is described as self disciplined and hard working. "Keeping motivating and never give up" is said to be his motto.

In a section on storytelling, there is a reference to the significant role that stories play in the cold winter of Ireland. The popular legend of Finn Mac Cumhail and his group of warriors is mentioned as an example of memorable stories with a hero who overcomes obstacles and has incredible adventures. The famous Scottish story teller and ballad singer Stainley Robertson is cited next to a beautiful quote that says "A story should be told eye to eye, mind to mind, heart to heart." In the same part on literature, there is brief reference to Irish writer Oscar Wilde and an abridged fragmented version of his novel *The Canterville Ghost* is included. Oscar Wilde is

described as a popular Irish poet whose famous works include "The Picture of Dorian Grey" and the *Importance of Being Earnest.*

What is more, in a unit that deals with ambitions in life and success, there are two reading passages about two famous people whose life changed significantly for the better when they had a lucky break: J.K. Rowling, the British author of the world famous Harry Potter books, and Brad Pitt, a successful and good looking actor who is also a famous for his charity work. The way their lives changed is described briefly. Both of them pursued college studies and then they worked in ordinary positions such as secretary and deliveryman. However, soon their talent was revealed and they became the famous rich people they are now.

Finally, the Spanish singer Enrique Iglesias is also included in the textbook. In a unit on music, he is described as one the most talented Spanish pop singers in the world. One of his albums is said to have been at the top of the music charts for months.

When it comes to the course book *Insights I,* it contains several examples of the cultural heritage of different countries.

The references to famous people are many. At the end of the textbook there is a communicative section with pictures of the American rock and roll singer Elvis Presley and the King of Pop Michael Jackson, the American actress Marilyn Monroe and the Italian painter and inventor Leonardo da Vinci. Students are asked to make sentences with information such as their place of birth, adjectives that describe their physical appearance, the style of music or films they made, and their most important works.

In that same section that contains communicative activities, there are pictures of the American pop singers Justin Biebier, Miley Cirus and Nick Jhonas, and the actress Kristen Steward. These photos are neither accompanied by the names of the celebrities nor followed by specific information about them. Students have to imagine they are one those artists and describe their daily routines.

The British music bands Feeling and the German group Tokyo Hotel are also included in *New Insights I.* The pictures of these celebrities are followed by a brief description about their place of birth, names, the name of the CDs they have recorded and their official website.

Popular films also have a place in *Insights I.* There are posters with famous American movies such as The Lord of The Rings, Karate Kid, Saving Private Ryan, Indiana Jones and Star Wars.

Students have to classify them into genres and then match the posters with information about their plot. There are also two texts about two very famous fantasy books that turned into movies: The Chronicles of Narnia, and Charlie and the Chocolate factory.

Cartoons are also illustrated in *Insights I.* A reading passage accounts for the history of animation, starting in the 1920s with Felix till the 2000s with references to the Japanese anime. Within the most important highlights mentioned are the American Walt and Roy Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio and their first sound animation –Mickey Mouse; The Flintstones as the first cartoon in colors; the American animator Matt Groening, creator of the world known series The Simpsons; Toy Story as the first computer-animated film; and Pokémon, one popular Japanese anime product.

Last but not least, in a section called English and Art, there is an article about the Impressionist Movement. A picture of the famous painting Moulin de la Galette by Pierre-Aguste Renoir is followed by its explanation and a description of Impressionist works. The text makes reference to the famous French painters Claude Monet, Aguste Renoir and Paul Cézane, and the Danish Camile Pissaro as distinguished representatives of the movement of those times.

6.4.2 Discussion

To conclude, the three textbooks offer students opportunities to get references to artifacts that can be recognized part of the cultural heritage of different countries. As it can be seen in the previous descriptions, there is a preference for favoring the target culture. In most cases, the textbooks display the examples of important singers, actors, sports players and films only with visual representations or with general and incomplete reviews.

As for the book *Challenges I,* it can be seen that the references to cultural heritage are quite relevant. In fact, it includes the Beatles and Elvis Presley as distinguished icons for the American and the British culture. In a similar way, the choice of the films The Pirates of Caribbean and The Lord of the Rings, and the actors, Keira Knightley, Kirsten Dunst, Tobey Maguire, Keanu Reeves and Orlando Bloom seem to be assertive. These two movies and artists are quite famous in the English speaking world and are well known in the rest of the world. However, the information provided about most of them is too general, and in some instances brief and even superficial. This is the case of the Russian tennis players Maria Sharapova and Svetlana Kuznetsova, the Brazilian football player Ronaldiño, and the British football player David Beckham. Even though it is well-known that they are very talented sports people who have achieved remarkable victories in their countries and the world in their field, this

information is not included in the reading passages about them. They only highlight that they are "new models" since they are attractive and fashionable.

When it comes to *Access III,* the cultural examples contained in the textbook are not many but they are quite varied. They make reference to one American sports celebrity; some British books, authors and literature genres; one International musician and one American actor.

The sports player mentioned in the course book is OJ Mayo. He may not be the most famous basketball player in the USA and around the world. However, he is young and his age resembles the students' who use this textbook. The information about is quite educational since it shows a balanced and positive way of living: not only does he devote time to his studies but he also trains very hard and keeps healthy.

The human side of celebrities is also reflected in the life descriptions of the British writer J.K. Rowling and the American actor Brad Pitt. After reading a brief passage on their life experiences and career achievements, the students get the idea that ordinary people who work hard and believe in their talents can have better economic opportunities and, at the same time, do what they like for a living.

Making reference to the significance of storytelling in the British culture also seems very appealing. References to famous books, stories and authors can arouse students' interest in literature and give teachers ideas of further material to read with their classes. Mentioning Oscar Wilde as one of the most representative writers in Great Britain and including an extract of one of his work *The Centerville Ghost* seems relevant but it is rather incomplete. Reading information about this distinguished writer going to prison in Victorian Times because of his sexual condition - he was gay- would have triggered an enriching discussion.

The only one reference to an international artist is Enrique Iglesias. He is certainly a famous Spanish pop singer but not the most representative artist of the Spanish culture. However, he can be considered to have been one of the few singers who is known around the world because he has successfully entered the American and English music market by singing in English and adopting their pop style.

As *Challenges I and Access III, the textbook* Insights *I*, contains several examples of cultural heritage. It includes many pictures of English speaking films, artists -mainly pop stars- and famous international personalities- such as Da Vinci- but the information about them is scarce and sometimes non-existent.

Including Art in the textbook by the presenting information about The Impressionism seems different from the rest of the course books. It is an effective attempt to illustrate the heritage of the international culture with its origins in France. The illustrations are appealing and the names of the painters mentioned are true representatives of the movement. However, the descriptions lack the historical context that would allows students to understand the style of the paintings and the ideas of the time.

Finally, introducing a brief account of the history of cartoons seems to take into account students' interests. The progress of the cartoon industry in USA and Japan is well represented by highlighting the most representative American products, such as Mickey Mouse and The Simpsons, and the Japanese anime creation Pokémon.

6.5. Belief and Behavior

6.5.1 Findings

This category presents and discusses examples of routine and taken-for-granted actions within a social group, the moral and religious beliefs as well as the routines from daily life of different cultures in the textbooks.

Taken-for-granted actions and the routines from daily life are mainly discussed through national holidays, sports and usual habits.

The examples that *Challenges I* contains refer to the target, international and even the students' source culture. The textbook makes reference to sports around the world, British adolescents' habits and free time activities, people's belief of creating a better world and popular festivals around the world, including the celebration of New Year in different cultures.

There is a text that deals with national and popular sports around the world. Ice hockey is said to be the national sport of Canada still famous in Russia and the Czech Republic. Basketball is described as the national sport in Lithuania with great players and many Olympic medals. It is also popular in USA, Serbia and Spain. Football, which is pointed out as the national sport in Italy, Brazil and Argentina, is said to have different origins. The old football is said to come from China but the one that is practiced played now comes from the UK.

British teenagers' habits and free time activities are also introduced in "Challenges I." According to the articles included in the course book, 30% of the 14-year-olds like going to the disco, cinema, or attending concerts every week. However, their favorite free time activity is going to the shopping centre. Even though reading newspapers, books and magazines is considered a popular leisure activity, British teens do not practice sports on a daily basis. It seems that they prefer playing computer games or watching television for almost twenty hours a week. Actually, many adolescents never go to a sports centre since they are not considered to be "cool" places.

In the readings, British teens also show the need to keep communicated constantly. There are some pages on texting and the particular abbreviations they use when they send messages. This way, the learners are exposed to everyday language used by people of their same age. In addition, a survey asks British adolescents about their summer holiday plans. In this text, students get to know that Alan, who is from Macclesfield, will go to a campsite in Spain with his family some days and then he will stay at home looking after a friend's hamster while his sister is going to get a holiday job. Sarah, from Swindom, is going to stay with her uncle and aunt in Scotland and they will do outdoor activities there. Finally, Tim, from Bristol, will go to a summer camp while his mum does a Language course to get a job and his father paints the house.

Another topic explored in the course book is the need to build a better world. In fact, in some reading passages learners are invited to talk about problems such as vandalism and graffiti and British adolescents show how they introduced changes to improve their own living environments. For instance, Claire, a victim of bulling in primary school, is said to fight against this phenomenon in her current secondary school. She usually puts "bullying boxes" at school for students to write notes and ask for help. This way, once they read the notes, they debate the problems and even ask their teachers for help. Another example is Wayne who is a skateboarder. As there was not a safe place to practice this activity in his area, he and his friends made a skateboard park, which is cleaner and safer than the street. Moreover, another teenager called Adam decided to collect litter in his neighborhood and report the broken street lights and phone boxes to the local council. Now, he works with old people to keep his neighborhood clean.

The idea of improving the world is also reinforced through the importance of doing community labor and helping others. In one section, the characters of *Challenges I* volunteer in an animal centre and perform tasks such as doing administrative work, feeding and looking after the animals and cleaning the stables. Besides, famous British and American celebrities such as Liv

Tyler and Robbie Williams help UNICEF. This organization is said to raise money to help millions of young people around the world. At the moment it is said to be carrying out the following projects: they provide children under five with healthy food, a good home, and a good school; they try to prevent children from dropping school and work; they encourage more girls to go to school; they give vaccinations to 40% of the world's children, mainly in Africa and Asia. The reading passage intends to raise awareness and encourages learners to collect money with their friends in their local areas to help UNICEF.

Another theme mentioned in the textbook is festivals. Actually, there is one unit that describes the most popular wacky festivals in the world. For instance, every January many people are said to watch fourteen cockroach races in a small town near Brisbane in Australia and the winner gets a "Cockroach Gold Cup." After the competition people hold a party and celebrate with music and dancing.

Another example is a festival that takes place every last Monday of May in England. People are used to rolling big, round pieces of cheese down cooper's hills. These races are said to be fun but also dangerous. The winners get big pieces of cheese as prize. What is more, every 10th July, at Key West in Florida, five hundred musicians wearing diving suits play their instruments under the water. Every year they choose a selection of songs.

The last example of an unusual festival takes place yearly on the last Wednesday of August in Spain. Hundreds of people celebrate "The Tomatina." Many Lorries arrive in the main square of a small town, and people fight with tomato for about an hour. After the event square they have to clean the square and they take a shower.

The other festival portrayed in the textbook is New Year celebration around the world. People belonging to different cultures commemorate the start of the New Year in varied ways and times according to their different calendars.

For instance, many years ago Romans were said to celebrate New Year on March 1st and then it moved to January 1st when Julius Cesar changed the lunar calendar to the solar one. People used to put up decorations and give each other presents. Slaves were said to eat with their masters on this special occasion.

The Chinese also celebrate New Year but in January or February according to their lunar calendar. There are big parades with big paper dragons and fireworks, and families get together, have special meal and give each other presents.

The Hindus are said to be part of The New Year Festival of Lights after the end of the monsoons in October or November. People usually light small lamps and put them in their windows. They visit their friends and have special meals.

The Japanese also commemorate New Year on January 1st. They prepare special meals, and put decorations on their doors and windows for good luck. At midnight once Buddhist priests ring bells eight hundred and eight times, the Japanese laugh, which brings them good luck.

The way the Spanish celebrate New Year is also included. They are said to do it December 30th at midnight. This night people usually eat twelve grapes, one grape for every month of the year.

When it comes to the textbook *Access III,* there is only one specific reference to a particular culture's belief and behavior. This is the case of the Glastonbury festival, which takes place over three days every year in Somerset, England. It is considered to be the largest Greenfield music and performing art festival in the world. There is a great variety of music, live performances by some top bands, comedy, circus and theatre plays. There are also stalls that sell typical food and a special field for kids to do fun activities. Then money is collected and donated to NGOs such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and Water Aid.

Even though the course book does not display more culture-specific taken for granted actions, routines and beliefs than the festival already described, there are also broad but familiar themes that are part of the reality of many countries around the world. For instance, there are reading passages that discuss the problem of global warming and the need of using renewable energy; adolescents' problems such us bullying and the misuse of internet; and the importance of keeping healthy eating habits and the need to buy smart.

In *Insights I,* the examples of culture's belief and behavior presented include festivals, shows, and teenagers' habits in English speaking countries and popular sports in different parts of the world.

The first festival that the book introduces is called The Red Earth Festival. It is a Native American festival that is celebrated every June in Oklahoma. On this special occasion, many tribes gather and share their traditions. They wear special costumes and play their music instruments; mothers and daughters also take part in a dance competition. As it was mentioned in the section of National History, this textbook also includes how Americans celebrate their Independence Day every year. According to the textbook, on July 4th every town and city

organizes parades, fireworks, barbecues and picnics. There are usually concerts, sporting events and other celebrations, in which people sing the American national anthem.

 Insights I also presents two typical Irish festivals: The Fleadh Festival and Saint Patrick´s Day. The first one is said to be an annual music and culture celebration that holds a competition for junior bands which play ceili: a type of Celtic music and dance. The second is a celebration on March 17th and lasts five days. It honors Saint Patrick, the patron of Ireland, who was an English Catholic priest who lived at the end of the fourth century. He was said to use traditional Irish culture and language when he preached and he also introduced a sun on the Christian cross to create the Celtic cross. This same reading passage presents the Leprechaus, a short, cleaver and rich mythological character, who is sad to live in the countryside, wear green clothes, carry a pot of gold and work as a shoe maker.

In a section called "Cultural Identity", there is an article about different summer shows in England. According to the text, every year there are many villages that organize interesting festivals of different sorts for all the family. Some of those events include competitions for flowers, vegetables and other food. There are also festivals with rallies of classic cars, vintage tractors and bicycles. In addition, some shows include competitions for animals such as "sheepdog trials", in which dogs move the sheep from the field into an enclosure.

Popular sports are also included in this course book. In brief descriptions on how to practice them and the material needed, students get to know in what countries they are popular. For instance, Cricket is played in England, Australia, Pakistan, India and West Indies; Polo is popular in Argentina, the UK and USA; and baseball is famous in USA, Japan, Australia and Canada. Then, there is a part that presents the sports that can be practiced in New Zealand. According to the text, New Zealanders are mad about sports. Rugby, with the well-known national team called All Blacks, is New Zealand's top sport. However, people also like playing other sports such as golf, horse riding, cricket skiing and bungee jumping.

Last but least, some British teenagers' habits are also depicted. In a unit entitled "Learning for Life", students read an extract from a webpage called "Brightzone." This website interviews a fourteen-year-old boy from Brighton who has an active life. He gets up very early in the morning, takes the newspaper to people´s houses and once he finishes working, he takes a shower and then goes to school. He says he likes school very much and that by working one hour every day, he can use the little money earns to buy books or CDs.

In this same unit, there is another interesting interview to an adolescent who describes what it is like to go to school on a small Scottish Island. According to the boy, as the island Skerries is very small, his school is very special. It has just six students and only one teacher stays in the area. For other classes, teachers fly to the island every day. He says he is very happy because classes are small, teachers always help students and the subjects are very appealing.

6.5.2 Discussion

This section introduced how taken-for-granted actions and daily routines of different specific cultures were presented in the textbooks. According to the material analyzed, the daily routines were mainly discussed through national holidays and festivals -some with slight references to religious convictions-, national and popular sports and some teenagers' habits and interests. Some textbooks also portray moral beliefs by introducing reading passages that describe the importance of people's sense of responsibility, initiative and commitment in their everyday life. There is no direct or concrete evidence of eating and shopping habits, which can be considered significant markers of the identity of a specific group of people.

As for the textbook *Challenges I,* it offers a varied range of examples that invoke the target culture, a few that allude to the international culture and only one that casually refers to learners' source culture.

Mentioning popular and national sports in different cultures seems to be quite interesting but brief, sometimes incorrect. This is the case of Argentina, whose national sport is not the one that the course book mentions. According to *Challenges I,* this country's national sport is football. However, the correct one is Pato. Anyway, this inaccurate information truly describes what most Argentineans think. Actually, very few people know what Pato is about. Football is very popular in this country and many people practice and enjoy this sport with a lot of passion.
Referring to British teenagers' likes and habits is also relevant. By reading the information in the articles, it is possible to infer that some of these adolescents' daily activities are framed by the need of socializing and belonging to a group. For instance, it is common for teens to use cell phones, go shopping and play video games with friends. However, as they do not consider going to the gym a trendy activity, they do not practice sports on a regular basis. This is quite surprising since most sports are played in teams, what promotes peer-sharing.

It also seems quite stirring to notice that people from UK and USA believe that responsibility and active commitment are important to improve their own and other people's lives. This can be seen in the reading passages in many ways: teenagers and celebrities' conviction for doing

community service and adolescents' initiative to deal problems that affect their own immediate environment such as bullying and the difficulty to keep their neighborhoods safe and clean.

Even though there are many important celebrations in different parts of the world, the textbook does not include the most representative ones. It actually intends to call teenagers' attention presenting curious festivals such as the Cockroach festival in Australia and showing how the same holiday is celebrated in different ways according to people's traditions and religious beliefs. This is the case of New Year.

When it comes to the course book *Access III,* the allusions to beliefs and behavior illustrative of particular cultures are rather scarce. Actually, it only makes reference to the "Glastonbury" festival as representative of English people. The rest of the themes discussed are so broad that they can fit into any country in the world independently of its culture.

Regarding the textbook *Insights I,* it can be seen that it incorporates references to some festivals and shows of three countries that are part the target culture: Ireland, England and USA. In the case of Ireland, including Saint Patrick's Day confirms the background knowledge most people have about this country. However, the textbook does not provide information about the way this day is celebrated. Actually, the descriptions reflect how St. Patrick added Celtic elements to the Catholic religion. The importance of keeping the Celtic traditions alive is also evident in the depiction of the celebration of The Fleadh, a festival of bands that play popular music.

When referring to England, the choice of shows that connected to this country emphasize the rural life in the region. In textbooks people tend to see England as cosmopolitan in all aspects. However, the portrayal of festivals that include competitions of vegetables and sheep trials, for instance, reinforces the importance of traditions in the country side.

In connection with USA, the textbook incorporates two examples of festivals with an enriching description of each. The first one is The Red Earth Festival which is celebrated by Native Americans every year. It is interesting to see how in this occasion different tribes gather to share their traditions and beliefs. However, it seems this is a very exclusive celebration because there is no information about the participation of Non-Native Americans or tourists as part of the audience. The second American holiday introduced in *Insights I* embraces the commemoration of the Independence Day, which gives students brief and general insights into the importance that this celebration has for Americans.

The depiction of popular sports is the sole allusion that the textbook makes to countries that are part of the international culture and the learner's source culture. However, those countries and sports are mentioned without much detail. New Zealand, which is an example of the target culture, is the only country whose popular sports are covered more extensively. In fact, the description of rituals that the national rugby team performs allows students to grasp the extent to which the Maori's traditions have been integrated in New Zealand's society.

Finally, it is possible to infer that as in *Challenges I, Insights I* tries to show that many British teenagers feel a strong sense of responsibility and passion for their daily activities. Such is the case of a boy who makes a big effort to get up early to work and study. Although he does not earn much money delivering newspapers, this job allows him to buy some material he needs for his studies, acknowledging this is important to be in charge of his own expenses.

6.6. Socio-political Institutions

6.6.1 Findings

This section attempts to introduce the institutions of the state (e.g. health-care) their meanings and values in different cultures.

Challenges I does not include any allusions to institutions which characterize the state and the citizens of any culture.

In *Access III,* there is a reference to the Royal Canadian Mounted police. In fact, a reading passage describes this institution as Canada´s best known symbol and states that Canadians feel very proud of it. The article also highlights that police officers wear a special uniform in civil ceremonies, festivals and memorials. Besides, it says that they work in pairs on their horses patrolling streets and parks apart from controlling traffic and crows.

When it comes to *Insights I*, the only two socio-political references that appear are in connection to the target culture and are only mentioned by name. In a section that provides an account of famous castles in Wales, students are the ones who are asked to look for information about the Prince of Wales: his family, his role in the monarchy and the charities. The same happens in a unit with facts about USA. At the end of a time line that includes important events and people that led to the declaration of the American Independence such as Thomas Jefferson, there is a

picture of Martin Luther King with a set of questions about him. Learners are supposed to collect data about him on their own and share it with their classmates.

6.6.2 Discussion

As it can be seen, the three books lack references to socio-political institutions that describe international cultures and the students' source culture. However, the few ones that represent target cultures such as the Welsh and the American are only mentioned by name and the meaning and values that citizens embrace in connection to them are not fully discussed. Actually, the figures of the Prince of Wales and Martin Luther King are pointed out in units that do not even present any context for students to see the link of these two important people with the culture they represent.

Besides, the brief description about the Mounted Police in Canada seems to reflect a society which is largely subordinated to the authority. Canadians are depicted as pleased with the role the Police play and value the auto-discipline they hold as citizens.

6.7. Socialization and the life-cycle

This category presents the examples of socialization of different cultures (families, schools, employment offices and military service) that can be found in the textbooks.

6.7.1 Findings

The examples of families portrayed in *Challenges I* are always about English speaking cultures. The very few allusions found mirror small, traditional and nuclear family institutions. Parents tend to be professionals and they have one or two children. For instance, in a section about families, there is a genealogic tree of a traditional type of family followed by an explanation of it. According to these brief descriptions, Mark has only one sister and one cousin. His parents also have one sibling each and Mark's grandparents have only two children. Even though pets do not appear in the tree, they are mentioned as members of the family.

By exploring the textbook in depth, it is also possible to learn that parents are usually professionals who work a lot. For instance in a unit in which students have to describe pictures, one of the characters shows a photo of his mum and says that she is a doctor. Another adolescent says that his father works in a hospital and arrives home at six thirty every day. In addition, it seems that families go through a good economic situation. The pictures in the

textbook and the dialogues show adolescents who go to school, can go on holidays, dress fine clothes and do extra activities such as going to the club, making trips, and riding horses.

A close analysis of the textbook also drops allusions to schools and education. The characters hold some of their conversations in a school environment. There are not specific references to the type of school they go to, but it is possible to infer that it plays an important role for their socialization. The same group of classmates that attend classes together and work in teams at school, meet outside and share many activities such as going sightseeing, doing to parties, going expeditions and volunteering for community service.

In a section about school days, there is an interesting article about three adolescents from different countries who talk about their typical school days. This article shows three distinct realities and reflects the effort students and families make to receive formal education. For instance, Margarite Lauren, from Cameroon gets up at five thirty and walks two kilometers to attend six lessons, eight hours a day. She studies ten subjects and three languages at school. When Margarite gets home, she helps her mum and does her homework. The second teenager who describes his school day is Jonathan Fonseca from Mexico. He says that in his school, some students attend subjects in the morning and other students have classes in the afternoon. He goes to school in the afternoon and takes seven subjects six hours a day. He adds that he arrives home very late at night every day. Carol Simons from Australia, her situation is different. She does not attend school. As she lives on a farm far from the city so she has access to formal education in a different way. She usually has radio and video lessons and e-mails her homework to her teacher who sometimes visits her on the farm to check her progress. From time to time, Carol also travels to the city for classes or to do gymnastics in a sports camp.

The textbook also reflects the multicultural side of British schools with students who come from different countries. For instance, there is a section with brief comments on the experience of three international students in the UK. They are from different parts of the world such as The Czech Republic, Mexico and Iran.

When it comes to *Access III,* there are some hints of families belonging to the target and the international culture. In both cases, families are small and parents work all day. For instance, Pedro from Spain lives with his mum, who is a doctor, and his father, who is a police officer. He says that they work long hours every day and that he gets along well with her older sister, who is seventeen. Sarah from Scotland is another example. She is an only child and lives with her parents on a farm far from the city. Every day her mum prepares her breakfast and then, they start their work in the farmyard. Sarah helps her parents to milk the cows in the barn and to feed

the animals. Also, John from Wales talks a little about his family. As Sarah, he is an only child. He lives in a small house close to the beach with his parents. John highlights that they work long hours but that they do not care about it. His mum is a nurse at the local hospital and his dad works with children with special needs.

There are also some references to schools and education in the textbook. The descriptions depict British schools differing fundamentally according to their location, infrastructure and size. For example, it is said that a girl called Sarah attends a very small school in Scotland. It is five miles away from the farm where she lives and she gets there by bus. Annabel's situation is flaunted in a different way. She goes to a huge school in the city of London. She gets there quite fast by subway. She adds that her school has more than 1,500 students and very good facilities such as a modern computer lab and a big swimming pool.

It is also possible to notice that once students finish the school year, they start their summer holidays. Some of them go to different kinds of summer camps such as Sport, Art, Tech or Adventure Camps. It is possible to notice that this type of experience gives teenagers the opportunity to keep on learning while they enjoy their free time. This is the case of Sam from USA, whose parents booked him a week at Campbell's Adventure Camp. He is very excited due to the fact that he will spend one week in Redwood National Park in California.

In most of the examples found in reading passages and dialogues, the characters say they enjoy most school subjects and that their classmates are very friendly. The issue of overloading teenagers with extra work is also exhibited in the textbook. They usually do extra activities after school such as a sport. However, they devote part of their extra time to do their homework and study. This is the case of Pedro, the Spanish adolescent mentioned before. Once he goes back home from school, he does school work for an hour or two every afternoon, and then he takes karate lessons.

It is also important to remark that the textbook also displays the presence of bullying as a recurrent problem that worries teenagers in some secondary British schools. This is the case of Clare a fifteen-year old who used to be a victim of bullying in primary school. She says that now that she is in secondary school and that the problematic of bullying at this school level is generally worse, she wants to help. Therefore, she has joined other students and put boxes for victims of bullying to express in notes what their situation is. Clare and her friends read the papers and try to discuss the problems. When they cannot find solutions they ask teachers for help.

As for *Insights I,* the families tend to be nuclear and small, too. In the first unit, there is a genealogic tree with a family with three children and two cousins. There are also instances in which some characters say that they have one or two siblings and that their parents are professionals.

Nevertheless, there is also a reading passage about a family whose way of life has distinctive features. The Boehmers are a large American family with eleven children. All of them including the parents are cirque jugglers. They make tours around the USA but they have a big house in Illinois and a special vehicle for the thirteen members of the family.

The textbook also includes the example of international families who have economic problems to make ends meet and send their children to school. This is the case of a teenager from Uganda, who stays at home helping in the house and does not go to school because her family cannot afford her studies.

Insights I also contains information about schools. It illustrates the idea of ethnic diversity in educational institutions. Actually, there is a short passage in which Emma from USA introduces herself. She says she has classmates from Mexico and Japan and that her teacher of Spanish is from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

There are also some allusions to different types of schools. For example, in an interview Duncan Gray, who is from a very small Scottish Island called Out Skerries, describes his unusual school. He says that it is small and that there are only six students and teachers who fly to the island every day. Another example includes a letter of a Japanese student who writes a letter to her mum telling her about the boarding school in UK she attends. According to her description, she is pleased with her room which is big and whose windows face the park. She adds she has many teachers and a lot of homework to do. In her school they learn traditional English and the history of English music.

In an article called Global Campaign for Education, there is a call to educational institutions to help children around the world who do not have access to education or who attend very big classes. The reading passage portrays the situation of two adolescents from Africa. In Eduardo's village there is only one school. That is why he usually has classes with his friends under a tree. He studies only two subjects: Maths and Language and he says that he would like to be a teacher when he grows up. In the case of Nabirye's, she is blind and she does not go to school because her parents do not have money. She has to remain at home to help her mum with the household chores.

6.7.2 Discussion

Along this section many references to familiar and educational institutions and situations in different cultures were presented. Allusions to employment offices and military service were not found in any of the textbooks.

According to the descriptions, there are no signs of very differing types of family institutions. In the textbooks, families from diverse parts of the world tend to be nuclear and small with financially supportive parents. There are some exceptions, though. *Insights I* illustrates the unusual life of one American large family whose members are cirque artists. What is more, the same course book depicts small but economically deprived familiar institutions, too. In this case, the only one example found makes reference to an international culture: some parts of Africa are depicted as undergoing an unfavorable financial situation.

The textbooks also provide information about schools and education. Even though most examples refer to English speaking countries, significant data about the educational situation in international countries can also be noticed.

In most descriptions, American and British schools tend to incorporate students from different countries. There are examples of big schools with modern infrastructure in the city and boarding schools in the open air. There are also allusions to small educational institutions in rural areas and islands and even instances in which students receive education through distance learning. In most cases, students are said to do their homework willingly on a regular basis and enjoy several school subjects. Many of them also point out they like their school and their friendly classmates.

Some unpleasant education realities are given some attention, though. One is the problem of bullying in British schools. In *Challenges I*, students are said to be worried about this serious issue. Therefore, they work in teams, take action and find ways to face the situation. However, there are no references to how the school authorities and professionals, other than teachers, help and support these teenagers to deal with the problem of bullying.

Last but not least, the other unfortunate reality illustrated has to do with people's problems to get education. *Insights I* shows the serious difficulties some African children and adolescents encounter to have access to formal education. The main reasons stated are reduced to the lack of schools and parents' poor economic situation.

6.8 Stereotypes and national identity

This section will present the stereotypes and symbols of national identity reflected in the textbooks.

6.8.1 Findings

Challenges I presents a few common stereotypes about USA, UK and Japan. In some filling exercises students have to do, all Americans think that Los Angeles is well-known for being polluted and dangerous. There are also some examples that highlight the generosity of the British and Americans, especially celebrities. They are depicted as people who are charitable and volunteer. In addition, the UK, particularly England, is seen as the ideal place to study English. International students are said to be welcomed by the British's friendliness. In the case of the Japanese, there are pictures that illustrate them posing for photos, which can be associated to the idea that they like taking many pictures when they travel.

When it comes to the symbols of national identity, the textbook includes a few examples. The famous British people shown are Williams Shakespeare, whose name is shortly mentioned, and The Beatles, whose career is highlighted in a reading passage. There are also pictures without any description of magnificent constructions such as the Eiffel Tower, which is representative of France, and the Great Wall of China. The flags of different countries such as France, Greece, Italy, Argentina, Japan, Poland, Spain and Turkey are shown in a brief exercise in which students learn the name of countries and their nationalities.

As for *Access III,* it seems to display only three notorious stereotypes. First, England tends to be represented as the most modern country of the UK. For example, some descriptions highlight the urban areas of London but only the rural regions of Scotland, without paying special attention to its capital city. Secondly, there are also references to the consumerist spirit in the UK. It is said that seven out of ten British adolescents have expensive high-tech gadgets they get as Christmas and birthday presents every year. Thirdly, Mexico is said to have very serious traffic and pollution problems.

The textbook also contains some representative symbols of national identity of different cultures. For instance, the quick references to the USA are the Niagara Falls and the Capitol. The UK is represented by allusions to The Big Ben, The Tower of London, Westminster and Edinburgh's ghosts and castles while in Canada the Mounted Police is said to be considered a symbol of their culture. Besides, there are photos of some architecture beauties that signify three

different countries: the Cristo Redentor, which is a monument of Rio in Brazil; The Acropolis in Greece and the Great Sphinx in Egypt.

When it comes to *Insights I,* some stereotypes can also be identified. UK kids are considered to be very involved in helping kids from other countries. And Africa is portrayed as the continent whose serious economic problems affect people's opportunities to improve in life, such as children's lack educational opportunities.

In this book, it is also possible to distinguish several symbols of national identity of different countries. As for USA, the Statue of the Liberty is the only one monument addressed. There are allusions to the American anthem "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the American Flag: the number of stars it has and what each of them represents. The figures of Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Martin Luther King are also included.

As for the United Kingdom, there is a description of the Union Jack which has the representation of three out of the four countries that are part of it. A text explains that the flag is a symbol of unity and adds that it is a combination of the flags of different Saint Patrons: Saint George for England, Saint Andrew for Scotland and Saint Patrick for Northern Ireland. It is also said that Wales is not represented on the flag but no information accounts for its reasons. There is, then, a section in which students see the Welsh flag and learn that Saint David is its Patron and that on his day, people usually wear daffodils. The reading passage also states that the national flower of England is the rose and that the thistle is the emblem of Scotland.

The illustrative British monuments included are the Buckingham Palace, The Stonehenge, the Trafalgar Square, The Globe and The British Museum in England; the beauty of the famous Welsh castles, such as Beaumaris, Caldicot and Cardiff; and Dublin castle in Ireland. References to famous figures like the King Arthur and the Prince of Wales can also be found. In addition, the bagpipes and kilts are also mentioned as representative of Scotland.

It is also possible to see a picture of the flags of Australia and Canada in reading passages that give some information about those countries. The importance of the maple tree in Canada and the appearance of a maple leaf in the Canadian national flag are highlighted.

Last but not least, the references to National symbols belonging to international and the learners' source culture are very casual in the textbook. In exercises in which students have to complete with nationalities, there are pictures of the flags of Argentina, Spain, Brazil and

France. Tutankhamen of Egypt, the Parthenon of Athens, Pythagoras, Socrates and Julius Cesar are also named.

6.8.2 Discussion

This section introduced the representations of national identity and stereotypes of different cultures that were found in the three textbooks.

Most of the images and descriptions of symbols such as flags, significant monuments, and famous people refer to English speaking countries. The UK and the USA represent the two cultures whose emblems are emphasized the most. It is also worth remarking that the learning material tends to show each of UK countries as having their own particular representations.

The illustrations about the students' source and international cultures are very limited. They are mainly embodied in their national flags and meaningful monuments. Very scarce information is provided about them. Actually, illustrative pictures of these cultures only appear incidentally in grammar and vocabulary exercises.

Moreover, much evidence of strong stereotypes does not seem to be included in most textbooks. However, there is a tendency to display more positive image of English speaking countries compared to the rest. Clear examples can be found in *Insights I and Challenges I,* with allusions to British and American's helpfulness towards the economically deprived Africans.

6.9 Social Interaction

This section presents references to the appearance or lack of conventions and non-verbal behavior in social interaction, situations of social communication and the subjectivity (feelings, values, attitudes and perceived problems) found in the three textbooks.

6.9.1 Findings

In the course books all the examples found connected to this category make reference to the language used by the target culture.

In the textbooks, it seems there are no very clear examples of specific conventions of verbal and non-verbal behavior. However, in the wide variety of situations for interaction presented,

students can learn that in English there are certain ways of asking and answering questions, and that they need to use definite fixed expression for particular communicative purposes. In addition, the degree of formality students must use in different kinds of interactions is not explicitly explained but it can be inferred.

As for the textbook *Challenges I,* the social interactions included tend to be more informal if the people involved in the conversation know each other. Some examples include modeling dialogues in which the characters make invitations and suggestions, and ask and answer questions about their interests and abilities. For instance, in an exchange that takes place during a party, some friends use informal language, like the discourse marker "by the way" and the verb "to text." In addition, most of the conversations in the course book have set phrases students need to practice according to their communicative intention. For example, in English, suggestions can be introduced by "Let's" and "What about." Once the learners read the dialogues, they have practice them and, then, with some given prompts, they have to use the new language to interact with their classmates.

There is also a tendency of presenting most of the many exchanges with full answers and questions and without pauses, hesitations and misunderstandings. Actually, very few informal dialogues include some sort of interruption or pause. This is the case of a boy who hesitates when he asks his friend to go with him to the cinema (…"By the way, do you…do you want to go to the cinema on Saturday?"…). The same happens in another dialogue when a boy cannot finish explaining his point because a friend interrupts him (Tom: Well, I —   Rajiv: Don´t be scared, Tom!).

Another example of informal verbal interaction can be found in a unit that deals with text messaging. Students learn there are certain abbreviations adolescents use when they send messages to each other. This shortening of words creates new and particular conventions that are shared by people of the same age.

Regarding semi-formal interactions, they take place in dialogues in which the characters exchange information with people they do not feel very close to. Like in the informal dialogues described above, these more formal ones are displayed as models for students to imitate. The dialogues include making a phone call, shopping, asking for permission, making requests and asking and giving directions. An instance that illustrates the use of semi-formal language can be found in an exchange between a traveler and a tourist information assistant. The employee begins the conversation in a very kind way by saying "Good morning, Birmingham tourist

information. How can I help you?" The tourist is very polite when he answers "Yes, please. I´d like some information about the Thinktank at Millennium Park, please."

The perceived need to provide students with models to be followed can also be seen in many other exchanges. For instance, in dialogues in which students get to know each other, they are supposed to stick to a sequence of questions and answers. The same happens when the learners are asked to talk about their daily routine or about their last holidays.

With regard to textbook *Access III,* while conversations between friends usually use some informal language, dialogues with strangers include more a more formal one. Most sample dialogues lack fillers and pauses. They are quite polished and next to the conversations, there is a box with phrases to express certain linguistic functions. For instance, invitations are generally introduced by "Would you like to…" One way to accept the invitation can be "That sounds great" and one form of refusing it is "Thanks, but I'm afraid I can´t." This chart is usually followed by a small section with everyday English phrases that intend to complement what is said and to make speech more natural. For instance, in a dialogue in which a boy is giving instructions to a friend on how to send an e-mail, it is common to find expressions such as "Done it!" and "It's a piece of cake."

Some examples of informal social interactions encompass expressing sympathy, making suggestions, inviting, refusing and accepting invitations, giving directions, and giving and reacting to news. Some semi formal language is used in exchanges in which participants simulate buying tickets to go to the cinema or taking a bus, giving and asking for directions, and getting a job. For instance, in the context of a job interview, greetings are formal and questions and answers very polite. An employer can start the conversation by saying "Good morning" and inviting the job applicant to have a seat. The prospect employee answers in full by saying "Good Morning, Thank you." The students learn that polite requests using "Could" and "please" are expected to be found in this context.

When it comes to *Insights I,* the possibilities for students to see people use the language in different contexts is minimum. There are only some very short modeling dialogues between friends and with strangers but, in most cases, students are asked to talk about a topic by answering a set of given questions or to ask a classmate questions from a text. For instance, after reading an article about a Native American festival the learners have to talk about a celebration in their own country. The questions that will guide their answers are provided.

The instances of social interaction that can be found in this textbook include friends talking about past events, speaking on the phone and interviewing each other about their daily routines. Other exchanges involve a customer and shop assistant in a coffee shop and a gift shop and a phone conversation between a receptionist and an adolescent who wants to participate in a TV program.

The interactions among the friends could be considered informal because of the relationship the participants have. However, there are no clear signs of informal language usage in those situations. Actually, there are no pauses and the dialogues keep the same friendly and polite tone that is reflected in conversations between people who do not know each other.

6.9.2 Discussion

The three textbooks include different types of verbal social interactions and there are no references to non-verbal ones.

In general terms, the degree of formality of the conversations is determined mainly by the closeness of the participants. Still, instances of very formal or completely informal language were not clearly found. Actually, the nature of most of the interactions tends to be semi-formal and the tone is quite polite.

The modeling dialogues seem to show interactions among people who succeed in communicating their ideas. In fact, in most of them, there are no misunderstandings. Besides, there are no fillers, pauses and hesitations: elements which can be considered part of spontaneous speech.

It is also possible to point out that the majority of conversations thought to be practiced by students generally have conventional fixed phrases that the learners are expected to use when they want to express specific communicative purposes. This creates a certain degree of security for students due to the fact that they have a model to emulate. However, it narrows the scope of their creativity if they do not want to follow a certain pattern.

6.10 International and Intercultural Issues

This category introduces the comparisons among cultures found in the textbooks.

6.10.1 Findings

There are surprisingly few examples of clear intercultural comparison in the course books.

As for *Challenges I,* even though comparisons are not explicitly presented as similarities and differences between cultures, students can make inferences and draw conclusions by the information introduced. For instance, there is a reading passage in which three adolescents from different countries talk about their typical school days. They are Marguerite from Cameroon, Jonathan from Mexico and Carol from Australia. The three teenagers study an average of seven subjects six hours a day. They all seem very involved on their studies and make a big effort to study. The main difference is that Marguerite and Jonathan attend school but Carol does not do it on a regular basis because she lives far away from school. Therefore, she generally has audio and video lessons.

More differences are remarked by international students in the UK. One boy from Colombia states that he prefers the weather in his country rather than in London because it is always rainy and cold there. He also says that he would like to study in Spain due to the fact that people speak Spanish there. Besides, a girl from Iran highlights that in UK schools are mixed but that in her country they are single-sex. There is also an article that portrays how the same holiday is celebrated in different countries such as China, Japan, India and Spain. This comparison allows students to notice some of these cultures' traditions. After working with that article, students are asked to create their own contributions and make a poster talking about a festival that is celebrated in their own country.

When it comes to *Access III*, there are many instances of comparison. There is one type of activity that prompts students to relate vocabulary to their source culture. Actually, on many occasions, they are asked to compare expressions in English to their equivalent concepts in the learners' mother tongue.

Moreover, it is possible to find reading passages that compare the life style of different countries that represent the target culture. For instance, the exciting life in the city of London is compared to the quiet life in the Scottish countryside.

There is also information in texts that accentuate the economic differences between target culture countries and other countries. In fact, some statistics would indicate the dissimilar percentages of people who have access to internet in different parts of the world. According to the figures, Africa has more than a billion people, but only 3.6% of its population has Internet

access. It is also pointed out that whereas the least connected regions are Africa, South America, and the Middle East, almost 70% of the people in North America have Internet access.

Regarding *Insights I,* the comparisons found are many, too. For instance, there is an article about some languages spoken around the world which compares statistics. According to the text, English is considered an international language. It is the mother tongue of more than three hundred million people and the second language for six hundred people. It is also said that Spanish is spoken by more than three hundred and thirty two million people in Spain and Latin America. The reading passage also states that more than nine hundred million people speak Chinese as their first language; however, it is considered to be very difficult for Europeans.

There is also another instance that emphasizes the critical economic situation of counties in Africa. This difference is depicted in an article about a UK schools' campaign. British children want to help and talk about the difficulties many African kids have to access education.

Finally, on limited occasions, once the textbook covers a cultural topic, students are asked to think and talk about their own culture. For example, in a unit that deals with an American festival, the learners are invited to talk about a special celebration in their home country

6.10.2 Discussion

All things considered, the exemplified instances of comparison between different cultures can lead to some points of discussion.

The comparisons between countries that belong to the target culture are very limited and do not highlight unfavorable differences. The same happens in the very few opportunities in which students are invited to provide examples of their own culture in connection to some target or international cultural themes discussed in a unit.

However, it is also possible to observe that some of the differences tend to favor the target culture. English is considered the only international language without taking into consideration the significant growth that other languages- like Spanish and Chinese- are achieving in this area. In fact, highlighting that Europeans think that Chinese is difficult to learn accentuates worldwide people's choice of English for international communication, which reaffirms the predominance of this language.

Even though there is also a tendency to show Latin American and African countries as economically disadvantaged, there are some signs that English speaking countries are aware of the problematic and show initiative to cooperate to improve this situation.

6.11 Point of view and style of the textbooks author(s)

Expressions of attitudes (positive, negative, critical) of the textbooks authors towards different countries and their people are displayed in this section.

6.11.1 Findings

When it comes to *Challenges I,* most of the texts are not genuine and appear as reading passages without specifying their authors and sources. It can be perceived that the course book's authors have quite a neutral attitude to the cultures illustrated. They tend to favor the portrayal of the target culture but also show features of the international ones. In most these cases, the allusions to different countries are too discrete and they usually present bits of what seems to be tourist information about a culture such as places to visit, ways to express effective communicative functions and famous people.

However, there is a more critical and subjective perspective if some data is read between the lines. For instance, in a reading passage that describes British teenagers´ habits, inverted commas are used to emphasize a word in an ironic way. This is the case of the idea that young people do not go to sports centers because they are not "cool" places. In this example the choice of punctuation marks around the world *cool* is made to discredit in a subtle way these adolescents' opinions. Apart from that, the experience of studying abroad is shown as having both positive and negative aspects. In a text that includes some international students' comments on their stay in the UK, the teenagers agree that they like the place where they study but they also express they feel homesick. Some say English is difficult and that they miss many things back home: their friends and families, the food they are used to eating, and the possibility to speak their first language. Furthermore, the authors seem to show concern for worldwide problems such as pollution, vandalism, and the increasing phenomenon of bullying in British secondary schools.

As for *Access III,* most of the texts are adapted but their authors are not acknowledged. There are only a few reading passages in which the name of their writer and sources are cited. This is the case of an extract from the story *The Canterville Ghost* written by Oscar Wilde and some texts that appear to have been taken from webpages. In general terms, a considerable part of the

material presented contains unbiased information. In fact, the majority of the reading passages present an overview on cultural particularities of different countries. For example, in articles about historical events, festivals and theme parks the descriptions are so plain that an impartial view towards them can be detected.

However, it seems to be a denouncing and informative tone in many texts that deal with more general issues. For example, there is an article that describes the huge gap that technological advances create among people. The text states that education is the key to reduce this gap and encourages governments, educational institutions and IT industries to work together in the education of people in order to bridge the digital division. In addition, there is a text called "Safety in the Street" which aims to raise awareness among teenagers about avoidable situations that can put them at risk. The article admits that crime is a serious problem and that the number of thieves increases at the same time their stealing methods change.

There is also another reading passage that taking for granted many people's consumerist attitudes, tries to promote buying smart. Consequently, there are references to companies' burning need to make money at the expense of creating dangerous and deceitful advertisements. This attitude is reinforced in another text about high tech British adolescents. It implicitly criticizes the huge amount of money families spend every year on giving their children technological gadgets. According to the passage, many parents would be shocked if they knew exactly how much money they have spent in their kids' presents.

Regarding *Insights I,* its texts do not clarify its authors. In general terms, most of the reading passages show an objective and positive viewpoint on cultural aspects. Actually, many reading passages provide students with informative descriptions about different cultures, belonging mainly to English speaking countries. Nevertheless, the illustrations could perfectly fit the format of a tourist brochure.

6.11.2 Discussion

All in all, in the three textbooks most reading passages are not authentic material but adapted to the understanding and language level of the students. In most cases, the authors of the texts are left unknown.

As a whole, it can be assumed that the course books authors' viewpoints tend to hide through the voice of the adolescents or anonymous characters that speak in the texts. Another way of expressing their attitudes toward a particular type of culture lies in the selection of the reading

material that will be included, the cultures that will be depicted and also what aspects of those cultures will be illustrated and how.

In the three course books, the implicit authors' opinions tend to be quite objective and to present cultural information as mere facts. However, some hints in the texts that imply more judging perspectives with a wide array of subjective messages can be found, too.

7. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research project was to examine in detail the cultural content depicted in three EFL course books used in high schools in Buenos Aires *(Challenges I, Access III and Insights I)* so as to point out if they promote the intercultural communicative competence. In order to achieve this objective, a theory-based content analysis was adopted. The textbooks were analyzed taking into account the types of culture proposed by Cortazzi and Jim L.'s (Target, Source and International) and the principles developed by Lappalainen based on Byram's and Risager's categories of analysis.

From the analysis of the textbooks, some general impressions on Cortazzi and Jim L.'s culture typology were made.

As in Xiao's study (2010) on the cultural content in textbooks, three student's books analyzed in this paper include more cultural components of the target rather than the international or the learner's own culture, with preference of the British and American cultures. In most cases, the descriptions provided contain information that could be perfectly found in tourist guides, which coincides with Lappalainen´s perception in her Master's Thesis (2011).

In the material examined, clear allusions to the students' source culture in reading passages are minimum and incidental in grammar or vocabulary exercises. Besides, the opportunities for students to compare their own culture to others are also scarce.

In the case of references to international cultures, something similar happens. Generally, the examples that abound in the three textbooks are related to tourist attractions. These are portrayed with illustrative pictures or very brief and incomplete descriptions. There are also implications that some of these countries endure problems that postpone their growth. As it was already mentioned, the instances that illustrate the target culture are many and the cultures that are explored the most are the British and the American. However, New Zealand, Australia and Canada are also mentioned, which gives students access to some information of a wider variety

of English speaking counties. In contrast to Wu Juan's perception (2010), in most textbooks analyzed in this paper, the reading passages tend to cover the cultural background and details quite explicitly.

Similarly, based on the results Wu Juan (2010) obtained in his research, he claimed that textbooks should depict more cultural references to different speaking communities who not necessarily speak English as their first language and also give students the possibility of comparing and contrasting cultures with their own.

The detailed exploration of the material taking into consideration the categories developed by Lappalainen led to some meaningful conclusions.

The same as Lappaleinen's observations, in the textbooks examined in this paper, the target culture societies are presented as harmonious without social conflicts. Their citizens are depicted as self-disciplined when not willingly subordinated to the authority. Besides, students cannot get a whole and clear picture of social classes in different parts of the world. Actually, the books tend to limit the scope of social classes to English speaking middle-class families of professionals.

There are no signs of family diversity, either. Target culture families are generally portrayed as nuclear and small with apparent financial supportive parents. Still, economic deprived familiar institutions are found in Africa, where many teenagers do not have access to education because their parents cannot afford it. Poverty seems to be circumscribed just to this continent.

Furthermore, the allusions to immigrants and some other ethnic minorities living in target culture countries exhibit some negative feelings: difficulties to integrate in the target culture language community, lack of confidence to communicate in English and a constant sense of homesickness. In addition, the references to other ethnic minorities, like the American and New Zealand's aboriginal peoples, are reduced to a limited set of facts connected to their traditions. There are no further details about their internal organization and how their acculturation process changed their way of living.

It can be seen that social interactions in English speaking contexts tend to be semi formal and the tone is very polite. As it was pointed out in Lappaleinen's work (2011), most exchanges in English are polished and do not display any misunderstandings or elements of spontaneous speech such as fillers, pauses and hesitations.

Educational institutions in the target culture are in many cases portrayed as international, personalized and modern. Students seem to be ideal: they like school, they do their homework and they enjoy their school subjects. This idyllic scenario gets blurred when the problematic of bullying in high school is tackled in one of the books. Still, there are no references to school authorities or professionals taking action to help adolescents to prevent and overcome this situation.

The scope of historical events included is rather limited. As most passages do not set historical happenings in context, they appear to be disconnected and are difficult for students to understand.

In general, the examples of national cultural heritage tend to embody relevant singers, actors, sports players and films quite representative of their cultures. However, the books favor quantity instead of quality. The references are very numerous, but many lack descriptions that account for their important careers. In fact, in several cases, famous people are not mentioned because they have achieved remarkable success in their country and the world in their field. Only banal aspects of their lives are included.

It is also possible to notice that the category of socio-political institutions is the section that less examples has. In this way, the books implicitly portray an attitude of unwillingness to introduce political references that can question the status quo.

The books include significant national symbols of the target culture, but they do not seem to portray strong stereotypes. Still, there is always a tendency to show a positive image of target language countries compared to the rest. The role of English as an international language and the charitable attitude of English speaking people are remarked.
In the three textbooks most reading passages are not genuine and do not explicit their real writers. In general terms, the authors hidden in the characters' voice and in the texts adopt a neutral perspective and show cultural information as facts. However, there are also some hints that imply a more judging viewpoint with subjective messages.

On the whole, it can be pointed out that the cultural content in these three textbooks partially promotes the intercultural communicative competence. Most of them include elements of varied cultures. However, the selection and the form to illustrate the cultural content do not always allow the students to get different interpretations of the world so that they can develop their critical thinking as well as abilities to compare their own culture with others.

It seems important to highlight that the theory-based content analysis used this research paper was an appropriate method since it answered the questions formulated for this analysis. The criteria selected were also clear and broad enough in order to explore different cultural components and draw interesting conclusions from their analysis.

Further research could be carried out on the impact these books have in students' perceptions and more textbooks could be analyzed. It would be interesting to classify the cultural content into those which belong to the big "C" and those which represent the small "c".

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