STORIES OF SELF AND OTHER IN ALGERIAN PRIMARY EDUCATION: EVALUATING CULTURAL SENSES AND REPRESENTATIONS IN 'MY BOOK OF ENGLISH 5PS'

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Abstract: This study scrutinizes the balance in cultural representations within the cultural content of the Algerian primary school English textbook *My Book of English 5PS* and examines its contribution to fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among young learners. Drawing on Adaskou et al.'s (1990) framework of cultural senses—semantic, aesthetic, sociological, and pragmatic—and Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) classification of cultural types—source, target, and international cultures—the research adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings reveal a dominant focus on aesthetic and sociological elements, with source culture being the most frequently represented, followed by target and international cultures. While the textbook reinforces national identity, it provides limited opportunities for learners to engage with global and English-speaking cultures. This imbalance may hinder the development of a comprehensive intercultural outlook. The study emphasizes the need for a more diverse and balanced cultural representation in future textbooks to better prepare learners for global citizenship and effective intercultural communication.

Keywords: Cultural senses, intercultural citizenship, intercultural communicative competence, international culture, primary school, source culture, target culture, textbook analysis

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1. Introduction

Language is more than just a tool for communication; it is a reflection of culture, a vessel that embodies the values, beliefs, and worldviews of the people who speak it. To truly engage with a language, learners need to fathom the cultural peculiarities that shape its use. In the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), recent studies bring to the front the importance of weaving cultural content into English language education and urge that textbooks should go beyond teaching grammar and vocabulary to nurturing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural awareness (Faris, 2014; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). When textbooks offer diverse cultural perspectives, they help form learners' views on other cultures, their attitudes toward diversity, and how they see themselves within a global community. Textbooks are regarded as the backbone of language education because they influence explicitly and implicitly both how teachers teach and how learners learn. They often carry the weight of authority in classrooms, affecting how learners perceive both the new culture they are studying and their own cultural identity (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Xiong & Qian, 2012). In this sense, a well-designed textbook balances cultural content from the target culture, the learners' own culture, and international cultures and guides learners through social and cultural contexts so as they build intercultural skills (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Akmal et al., 2023). This kind of cultural balance is pivotal in fostering open-mindedness, cultivating global awareness, and promoting positive intercultural interactions (Nguyen, 2017).

In Algeria, research on the representation of culture in EFL textbooks has predominantly focused on middle and high school materials. A plethora of studies have scrutinized the cultural content of these textbooks, evaluating how effectively they promote intercultural competence and cultural awareness. However, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding primary school EFL textbooks. This gap is particularly critical in light of the recent introduction of English as a foreign language in Algerian primary schools, following a presidential decree in September 2022. The textbook *My Book of English 3PS*, introduced for third-year elementary learners, marked the beginning of a new phase in the Algerian educational system. However, little is known about how this textbook and others in the series address the cultural component of language learning.

Given the crucial role of early education in molding children's view of themselves and the world, it is essential to explore whether these new textbooks are adequately fostering cultural awareness and intercultural competence from the outset. Primary school learners are at a formative stage in developing their identities and perceptions of cultural diversity, which makes it imperative that the materials they are exposed to offer balanced and inclusive representations of different cultures. To elaborate, exposing young learners to a variety of cultural content through textbooks can profoundly influence their development. Such exposure helps children build a positive appreciation for different cultures, strengthens their sense of their own cultural identity, and cultivates a sense of belonging in an increasingly interconnected world.

This study aims to address this gap by evaluating the cultural content and representations in the most recent addition to the *My Book of English* series, *My Book of English 5PS*, released in September 2024 for primary school learners. Particularly, the research seeks to answer the following questions.

1. How are cultural contents and elements represented in *My Book of English 5PS*?
2. To what extent does the textbook provide a balanced representation of local, target, and international cultures?
3. How well does the textbook promote intercultural communicative competence and cultural awareness among young learners?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Culture

Culture is an intricate and dynamic construct that encompasses the collective beliefs, values, practices, and material artifacts that define a social group. It reflects both historical development and the creative expression of human relationships and societal organization. As Makhmudova (2022) highlighted, culture manifests through both material creations, such as art and architecture, and symbolic systems, including shared beliefs and norms, which together shape human activity. Additionally, culture can be understood as a set of shared constructs that influence behaviors and social interactions within a community (Bucurean et al., 2011). Culture is said to be derived from collective representations and societal values, which contribute to group identity and solidarity, as advanced by Billington et al., (1991). However, it is far from monolithic; its definition is highly variable, with over 164 interpretations identified by anthropologists, underscoring its complexity and contextual nature (Lebrón, 2013). Adding to this, Causadias (2020) posited that culture is fluid and adaptable, shifting according to situational needs and contexts. Therefore, understanding culture requires acknowledging both its cohesive qualities and its inherent variability across different fields of study.

2.2. The Inseparability of Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture is deeply intertwined, with each shaping and influencing the other in dynamic ways. Language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a powerful medium for expressing cultural values, beliefs, and social norms. Sociolinguistic theories have long stressed the inseparability of language and culture, where language both reflects and reinforces cultural identity. Jiang (2000) illustrated this by showing how distinct cultural values and practices are embedded in the associations and connotations attached to words across different languages. In this context, Ninsiana (2018) suggested that language and culture can be viewed through subordinate and coordinate frameworks: while culture may often dominate language in shaping human interaction, both systems are essential for meaningful communication. Thus, the nuances of language cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural backdrop that gives them context.

2.2.1. Language as a Cultural Symbol

The mutual influence between language and culture extends beyond linguistic structure to the symbolic role that language plays in the transmission of culture. Language acts as a cultural symbol, serving as a key mechanism through which societies transfer thoughts, traditions, and social norms from one generation to the next. In this regard, Akkari and Loomis (2012) underscored the critical role of educational systems in ensuring cultural continuity by embedding language within both formal and informal modes of cultural transmission. The complexity of linguistic structures, as observed by Sepora et al., (2012), mirrors the diversity of human experiences, with language encapsulating the richness of cultural heritage. Through its embedded meanings, language reveals the assumptions, priorities, and values of a society, which allows it to function as a repository of cultural knowledge.

2.3 The Importance of Teaching and Learning Culture

The teaching and learning of culture are critical components of education, as they foster an understanding of the values, beliefs, customs, and practices that define different societies. Through cultural education, learners gain insights into the ways in which various groups construct their social realities, interact with others, and express their identities. In today's interconnected world, it is crucial to acknowledge that culture is paramount for promoting

315

tolerance, empathy, and global citizenship. When learning about different cultures, individuals can navigate diverse social landscapes, communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, and participate meaningfully in a globalized society (Yuliantari & Huda, 2023). As a result, the integration of culture into education is not only about knowledge acquisition but also about preparing learners for a multicultural world where cross-cultural communication is key.

2.3.1 *Culture and Language Education*

The transmission of culture is often done through language education, as language is a primary medium for expressing and reflecting cultural values and social norms (Brown, 2000; Yuen, 1995; Kramsch, 1995). The link between language and culture is inseparable; language both embodies and communicates the worldview of a community. It is through language that learners come to understand the cultural particularities of how people think, behave, and interact. In the context of language learning, understanding culture is essential for learners to achieve communicative competence. In fact, without knowledge of cultural norms—such as how to express politeness, how to navigate social hierarchies, and how to engage in everyday conversations—learners may struggle to use the language in real-life situations. Therefore, teaching culture is a vital part of language education, as it helps learners grasp not just the mechanics of the language but also the cultural context in which that language operates. In light of this, it is worth stressing that cultural instruction should not be delayed until learners have reached a certain proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to Liddicoat et al., (1997), culture must be incorporated into language teaching from the outset. Doing so enables learners to grasp culturally appropriate communication behaviors while simultaneously improving their language skills.

2.4. *Culture in the EFL Context*

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, culture plays an essential role in language mastery and use. EFL learners are not only learning a new language but are also entering into a new cultural space where English serves as a global lingua franca. Cultural knowledge, therefore, becomes pivotal for learners to engage effectively with English in a variety of social and professional contexts. Ergo, EFL teachers are tasked with introducing learners to the diverse cultures of English-speaking countries, as well as preparing them for intercultural communication in global contexts where English serves as a bridge between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Boudghene Stambouli & Sarnou, 2022). To illustrate, understanding culture helps learners grasp the underlying meanings, customs, and conversational norms embedded in the English language. It ensures that learners both speak English fluently and use it appropriately and sensitively across a variety of cultural contexts.

2.4.1. *Culture Integration in EFL Textbooks*

The integration of culture in EFL textbooks is one of the most important ways in which cultural education is brought into the language classrooms (Sihombing and Nguyen, 2022). Textbooks serve as the primary resource for learners, and the content they contain shapes how learners perceive both the target language and the cultures associated with it. According to Hosseinzadeh et al., (2021),

> Textbooks play a prominent role in the challenging process of English language teaching and learning. Today, both printed and digital formats are inseparable parts of any language learning curriculum. In fact, they act like a roadmap via which a pedagogical program can be pursued, or a course can be taught. (p.110)

In this token, it is crucial to recognize that textbooks are essential tools in language education, for they provide structured content that guides both teachers and learners through the process of language learning. In the EFL context, they play a significant role in shaping the learner understanding of the target language; they get learners exposed not only to grammatical rules and vocabulary but also to the ways how the language functions within its cultural framework. This implies that textbooks have the potential to help learners grasp cultural norms and develop intercultural communicative competence by presenting realistic language use in social and professional contexts. In congruence with this line of thought, there is a consensus in the existing literature that well-designed textbooks integrate cultural themes in a way that engages learners and make them aware of the social conventions, values, and norms that influence how English is used in different cultural settings (Haerazi & Nuñez, 2022; Boribayev et al., 2023). As such, textbooks are critical for cultivating learners who are both proficient language users and culturally competent communicators.

In practical terms, textbooks in which cultural references are embedded act as cultural mediators that introduce learners to the worldview and social practices of English-speaking communities. These cultural components may include references to holidays, daily routines, historical events, family structures, and forms of social interaction. Textbooks can also help learners understand global cultures by integrating cross-cultural perspectives that go beyond the confines of the traditional target culture, which makes learners more globally aware.

2.4.1.1.Senses of Culture Integrated in EFL Textbooks

EFL textbooks often integrate different senses of culture to provide learners with a well-rounded understanding of how culture and language interact. According to Adaskou et al., (1990), culture can be divided into four main senses:

1. **Aesthetic Sense**: This corresponds to **Big "C" culture**, which refers to the grand and formal aspects of a culture. These include cultural products like art, literature, music, architecture, and other forms of creative expression that reflect the cultural heritage of a society. In EFL textbooks, learners may encounter lessons on famous works of literature, musical traditions, or monuments, which would help them appreciate the cultural richness of English-speaking societies.

2. **Sociological Sense**: This focuses on the social institutions and everyday practices of a culture, including family roles, customs, work routines, and social norms. EFL textbooks often include lessons on topics like daily routines, social etiquette, and family structures; these elements give learners insights into how people in English-speaking cultures , for example, live and interact with each other. As a matter of fact, the sociological sense closely parallels to **Small "c" culture,** which deals with everyday behaviors and societal functions. However, not all small "c" culture falls strictly under sociological aspects, as it may also encapsulate more subtle cultural norms related to language use and pragmatic conventions.

3. **Pragmatic Sense**: This sense deals with the practical use of language in real-world communication. It includes how people use language to perform actions, such as making requests, expressing politeness, or giving advice. EFL textbooks help learners explore how to use English in different social situations by addressing pragmatic concerns such as greetings, apologies, or requests.

4. **Semantic Sense**: This involves the cultural meanings embedded in language, including idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and culturally specific terms. Through this sense, learners explore how language conveys deeper cultural values and concepts that may not be immediately apparent through direct translation.

The interplay between cultural senses, specifically aesthetic, sociological, pragmatic, and semantic, shapes individuals' perceptions of culture in various contexts. That said, it is important to realize that while the aesthetic and sociological senses dominate discussions of culture, the pragmatic and semantic aspects are equally vital, as they inform how cultural meanings are constructed and understood across different eras and contexts.

2.4.1.2. Cultural Types and Categories in EFL Textbooks

EFL textbooks also reflect different cultural categories that help learners develop a global perspective. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), the cultural references included in textbooks typically fall into three major categories:

➢ **Source Culture**: This refers to the learner's own culture. Including elements of the source culture makes language learning more relatable and relevant for learners, which in turn encourages engagement and comprehension.

➢ **Target Culture**: The culture associated with the target language, usually that of English-speaking countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, or Australia. Understanding the target culture is essential for learners to become proficient and culturally competent in the use of English.

➢ **International Culture**: This pertains to a broader understanding of global cultures, not necessarily tied to any one English-speaking country. It includes cross-cultural references that focus on English as an international language, used in diverse settings across the globe. Embracing international cultural perspectives in EFL textbooks prepares learners for real-world communication in multicultural environments where English serves as a bridge language.

Incorporating these cultural categories into textbooks fosters a more inclusive and globally aware approach to language education. It ensures that learners are not only equipped with the linguistic tools to communicate but are also prepared to navigate the complexities of cultural diversity in a globalized world. To this end, it is worth noting that in the existing literature, another category of content has been identified, known as "culture-free content." This entails material that lacks any direct cultural references or specific socio-cultural contexts, such as generic language exercises, grammar rules, or topics that are universally applicable across cultures, like scientific facts or mathematical principles. While culture-free content is valuable in developing core language skills, it does not engage with the cultural or intercultural aspects essential for promoting intercultural communicative competence (ICC) or intercultural citizenship.

2.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence and its Developmental Levels

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is a foundational concept in language education that refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It extends the traditional notion of communicative competence to include intercultural awareness, critical reflection, and the capacity to mediate between cultures. Byram (1997) defines ICC as the set of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and values that enable individuals to engage in meaningful intercultural exchanges, fostering mutual understanding and respect. This model positions language learners not merely as communicators, but as intercultural speakers who interpret, relate, and act across cultural boundaries.

Byram's model is structured around five interconnected components, widely known as the five savoirs:

- **Savoir être (Attitudes)**: The disposition to suspend disbelief about other cultures and to be open, curious, and willing to relativize one's own values, assumptions, and behaviors.

- **Savoirs (Knowledge)**: Understanding of social groups and their products and practices, both in one's own culture and in the target culture, including the knowledge of how these elements relate to one another.

- **Savoir comprendre (Skills of interpreting and relating)**: The ability to interpret cultural practices or documents from another culture and relate them to one's own cultural context.

- **Savoir apprendre/faire (Skills of discovery and interaction)**: The ability to acquire new cultural knowledge and behaviors in real-time interactions and adapt one's communicative behavior accordingly.

- **Savoir s'engager (Critical cultural awareness and political education)**: The capacity to evaluate critically the perspectives, practices, and products of both one's own and others' cultures based on explicit criteria such as human rights, democracy, and social justice.

These components are not static; they develop progressively over time and through guided exposure to cultural learning experiences. For instance, young learners may begin by acquiring basic attitudes of openness and factual knowledge (savoir être and savoirs), while older or more advanced learners may develop the ability to critically compare cultures, adapt behavior in interactions, and evaluate cultural phenomena (savoir comprendre, apprendre/faire, s'engager). This progressive nature highlights that ICC is developmental, requiring age-appropriate, scaffolded materials that match learners' cognitive and emotional readiness.

In this respect, understanding the levels of ICC development is essential when evaluating teaching materials, particularly textbooks. Materials intended for younger learners should aim to cultivate foundational components, such as curiosity, openness, and simple comparisons between cultures, whereas materials for older learners might include more complex intercultural tasks involving critical analysis or social engagement. Therefore, alignment between textbook content and the developmental stage of learners is critical to fostering meaningful intercultural learning. Textbooks that neglect ICC or fail to address it at an appropriate level may miss the opportunity to support learners' progression toward becoming intercultural speakers and global citizens.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context

This study adopted a systematic approach to analyze the cultural content of an Algerian 5th-grade primary school English textbook, dubbed "My Book of English". The focus of the present study is placed on cultural senses (aesthetic, sociological, pragmatic, and semantic) and cultural types (source, target, and international cultures). The purpose is to identify the frequency and nature of cultural references and to assess how the textbook promotes ICC. The methodology involved both quantitative and qualitative content analysis to ensure thorough examination of the textbook's cultural elements.

3.2. Procedures
3.2.1. Research Design

This study employed a content analysis methodology to examine the cultural senses embedded in the selected textbook. The framework is grounded in Adaskou et al.'s (1990) model, which classifies cultural content into four senses: aesthetic, sociological, pragmatic, and semantic. Within this framework, two of these senses are closely aligned with the Big "C" and small "c" culture dichotomy: the aesthetic sense corresponds to Big "C" culture (high culture, art, and institutions), while the sociological sense pertains to small "c" culture (daily routines, social norms). However, it is crucial to recognize that there is significant overlap between elements of the aesthetic and sociological senses and aspects of both Big "C" and small "c" culture. For instance, elements commonly classified under small "c" culture, such as greetings, actually fall under the pragmatic sense. This overlap can lead to inaccuracies if all small "c" elements are indiscriminately categorized as sociological. To ensure precise analysis and avoid conflating different cultural dimensions, it was necessary for the researcher to distinguish and address these elements separately. Moreover, the analysis is further divided into three cultural types: source culture (Algerian), target culture (English-speaking countries), and international culture (global references). To comprehensively address these complexities, the research used a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative content analysis to count and categorize cultural references, and qualitative analysis to explore the meanings and contexts of these references.

3.2.2. Sampling and Methodological Approach to Textbook Analysis

The data for this study was drawn from the entire 5th-grade Algerian primary school English textbook, "My Book of English". Every page of the textbook was examined, including textual elements (dialogues, instructions, reading passages) and visual elements (illustrations, images, diagrams). The analysis included:

➢ Words and phrases: to identify semantic meanings, idiomatic expressions, and language use.
➢ Images and illustrations: to capture visual cultural representations.
➢ Dialogues and scenarios: to observe sociolinguistic elements like greetings, social norms, and communication strategies.

Each cultural reference was categorized according to its sense (aesthetic, sociological, pragmatic, and semantic) and type (source, target, international).

The target learners of the textbook are 5th-grade primary school students, typically aged 10–11. At this developmental stage, learners are in the early phases of cognitive abstraction and metacognitive strategy use, which necessitates the integration of scaffolded cultural content suited to their age, interests, and cognitive readiness.

3.2.3. Analytical Framework
➢ **Cultural Senses:**
The following definitions, based on Adaskou et al. (1990), guided the coding of cultural content:
  ✓ **Aesthetic Sense:** Cultural elements reflecting art, literature, music, architecture, and other visual or sensory experiences of culture.
  ✓ **Sociological Sense:** Social practices, family structures, institutions, and everyday life that reflect the way people interact and live within their culture.

- ✓ **Pragmatic Sense:** The practical use of language and communication norms in social contexts, such as greetings, politeness strategies, and body language.
- ✓ **Semantic Sense:** Deeper cultural meanings embedded in language, including idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and cultural symbols.

- ➢ **Cultural Types:**
  The study also categorized cultural references according to their origin:
- ✓ **Source Culture:** References to Algerian culture, including geography, traditions, family roles, and local practices.
- ✓ **Target Culture:** Cultural elements from English-speaking countries (e.g., the UK, the USA) that are used in language teaching.
- ✓ **International Culture:** References that relate to global cultures or cultures outside both source and target contexts.

Given that the research is focused on cultural representation and the promotion of ICC, content that did not explicitly address cultural dimensions was considered as culture-free and was deliberately excluded from the analysis. This approach allowed for a more focused evaluation of how textbooks represent and promote cultural understanding. Through the exclusion of culture-free content, the research concentrated on materials that directly contribute to developing learners' cultural awareness and their ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts, to guarantee that the objectives of assessing the effectiveness of the textbooks in fostering intercultural learning and citizenship were rigorously addressed.

3.2.4. Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of this study are rigorously ensured through a robust theoretical and methodological approach. It is anchored in the well-established frameworks of Adaskou et al. (1990), whose model of cultural senses—namely aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic—has been widely validated for analyzing the cultural content of language textbooks. Complementing this is the framework of Cortazzi and Jin (1999), which categorizes culture into source, target, and international culture, and it distinguishes between **Big "C" culture** (e.g., history, politics, art) and **small "c" culture** (e.g., daily routines, gestures, food), offering a comprehensive lens for examining cultural representation in EFL materials. Understandably, both frameworks are recognized in the literature for their methodological soundness and practical applicability.

Further, to enhance the reliability of the coding process, the researcher conducted a pilot analysis on a representative textbook chapter. The pilot study helped in refining the coding scheme and maintaining clarity. Additionally, triangulation of data is employed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative data provides a clear and structured assessment of how cultural elements are represented across the textbook. Meanwhile, the qualitative component involves in-depth analysis of selected textual and visual extracts, which corroborates the quantitative findings and contribute to a more holistic and reliable examination of intercultural content.

3.2.5. Data collection and Analysis
3.2.5.1. Coding Procedure and Data Analysis

A coding scheme was developed to ensure consistent categorization of cultural references. The process involved:

1. *Identifying cultural references:* Each textual or visual element containing cultural information was highlighted and tagged with its corresponding cultural sense and type.

2. *Quantifying references:* The number of occurrences for each cultural sense was recorded and categorized under source, target, or international culture. Then, the results are displayed in tables to show the number and percentage of cultural references across categories. This holistic process aims to assess the balance and diversity of cultural content.

3. *Qualitative contextual analysis:* In the qualitative component of this study, specific cultural references from the textbook were selected for in-depth examination. Rather than conducting a comprehensive contextual analysis for all references, this approach focuses on a curated set of samples to illuminate their educational purposes and cultural meanings.This targeted examination contributes depth to the study by elucidating how specific cultural elements are presented and interpreted within the educational context.

Example of coding process:

➢ A reference to "Algerian clothing" in an image is categorized as "Aesthetic Sense" and "Source Culture".
➢ A dialogue that includes a greeting like "Hello" is coded as "Pragmatic Sense" and "Target Culture".
➢ A discussion of family roles during a traditional Algerian celebration (Eid) is coded as "Sociological Sense" and "Source Culture".
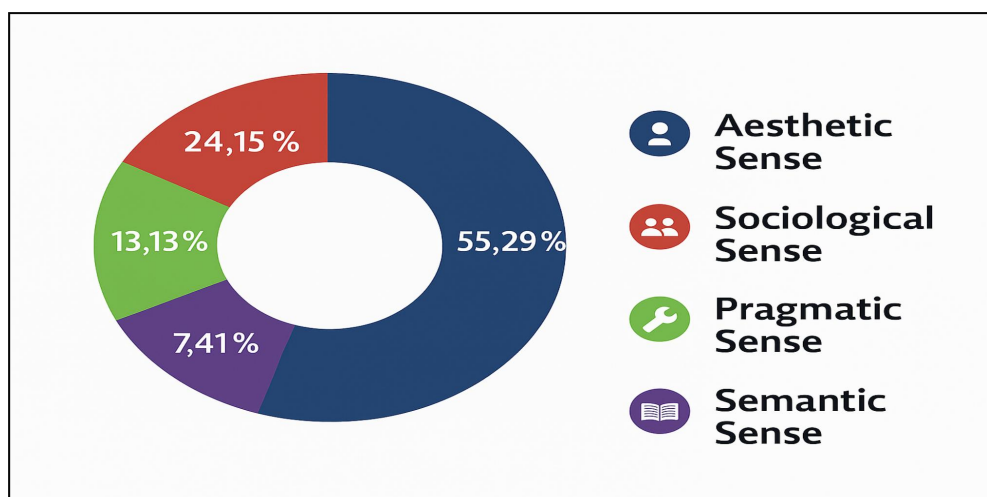
4. Results

4.1. Quantitiave Results

Table 1.

Total Frequency and Percentages of Cultural Senses

Cultural Sense	Total Frequency	Percentage
Aesthetic Sense	261	55.29%
Sociological Sense	114	24.15%
Pragmatic Sense	62	13.13%
Semantic Sense	35	07.41%
Total	**472**	**100%**

Figure 1.

Total Frequency and Percentages of Cultural Senses

The table and the pie chart above illustrate that the **Aesthetic Sense** is the most predominant cultural reference, constituting **55.29%** of the total. This suggests a significant focus on cultural artifacts, such as landmarks, cities, and artistic elements, which play a central role in the cultural content provided in the textbook. The **Sociological Sense**, representing **24.15%** of the references, underscores the emphasis on social norms, customs, and everyday practices, reflecting the importance of familiarizing learners with the social structures and behaviors of the target culture, as well as the source and international cultures. The **Pragmatic Sense** accounts for **13.13%** of the total references, highlighting the attention given to practical language use in everyday communication—such as greetings, common expressions, and functional language skills—which are crucial for effective communication. Finally, the **Semantic Sense**, comprising **7.41%** of the cultural references, suggests that the textbook provides relatively limited focus on deeper cultural meanings embedded in language, such as idiomatic expressions and nuances of intonation. This distribution reflects the textbook's prioritization of aesthetic and sociological elements; it offers a strong visual and contextual representation of culture, with comparatively less emphasis on the pragmatic and semantic aspects of language that involve deeper cultural and communicative intricacies.

Table 2.

Distribution of Small "c" Cultural Content across Source, Target, and International Cultures in My Book of English 5PS

Small "c" Cultural Content	Source Culture		Target Culture		International Culture	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Lifestyle/ Daily Routines	03	1.65%	01	0.55%	00	0.00%
Greetings	00	0.00%	27	14.91%	00	0.00%
Food Customs	02	1.10%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Clothing Styles	19	10.49%	00	0.00%	04	02.20%
Body Language	01	0.55%	00	0.00%	01	0.55%
Festivals and Celebrations	00	0.00%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Hobbies and Leisure Activities	12	6.62%	01	0.55%	00	0.00%
Personal Beliefs and Values	12	6.62%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Family Practices	85	46.96%	10	05.52%	03	01.65%
Social Etiquette	00	0.00%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Total	**134**	**74.03%**	**39**	**21.54%**	**08**	**4.41%**

This table provides an analysis of small "c" cultural elements in the textbook. Source culture overwhelmingly dominates at 74.03%, with family practices being the most frequently depicted aspect. Target culture contributes 21.54%, primarily through greetings and sporadic depictions of daily routines. International culture is sparsely represented at 4.41%, offering limited insights into global diversity.

Table 3.

Distribution of Big"C" Cultural Content across Source, Target, and International Cultures in My Book of English 5PS

Big "C" Cultural Content	Source Culture		Target Culture		International Culture	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Historical Events	00	0.00 %	00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%
Political Aspects	04	01.53%	00	0.00%	01	0.38%
Geography	105	40.50%	15	05.74%	18	06.89%
Music	00	0.00%	11	04.21%	00	0.00%
Education	03	01.14%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Architecture	34	13.02%	26	9.96%	22	08.42%
Sports	02	0.76%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Family Structure	16	06.13%	00	0.00%	01	0.38%
Art and Literature (Famous Works)	00	0.00%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Social norms	03	01.14%	00	0.00%	00	0.00%
Total	**167**	**63.98%**	**52**	**19.92**	**42**	**15.70**

This table showcases the prevalence of Big "C" cultural elements, such as geography and architecture. Source culture leads at 63.98%, with notable focus on Algerian landmarks and family structures. Target culture accounts for 19.92%, predominantly through British and American architecture. International culture, at 15.70%, includes features like global landmarks but lacks broader representation of historical or literary contributions.

4.2. Qualitative Results

While the quantitative data provides a comprehensive overview of the distribution of cultural content in *My Book of English 5PS*, a deeper understanding can be gained by examining specific examples from the textbook. This qualitative analysis will help to contextualize how these cultural elements are presented to young learners.

4.2.1. Source culture

Figure 2:
Example of Source Culture Big "C" Cultural Content (Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p.39)

The extract "I read and discover", as shown in Fig.2, presents a glimpse into Algeria's diverse geographical and cultural landscape through the descriptions of four cities—Oran, Cherchell, Biskra, and Khenchla. Each child provides a unique perspective on their hometown: Oran is characterized as a large city situated in the west of Algeria, while Cherchell is depicted as a picturesque seaside town. Biskra is described as an oasis town located in the northeastern part of the country, and Khenchla is noted for its position near the Aurès Mountains. These descriptions collectively offer a rich overview of Algeria's varied regions, for they mirror the nation's intricate geographical and cultural tapestry. In fact, incorporating source culture content supports the development of cultural identity by allowing learners to see themselves and their backgrounds represented in educational materials. This representation is vital for forming a positive self-concept and connecting with their homeland and heritage. It also helps learners understand their place within a larger geographical, cultural, and even historical context, which hence promotes a more nuanced view of their own culture and its significance. Ultimately, it is worth noting that this extract is representative of the broader content in the textbook, which is primarily focused on Algerian culture.

Figure 3:

Example of Source Culture Small "c" Cultural Content (Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p. 26)
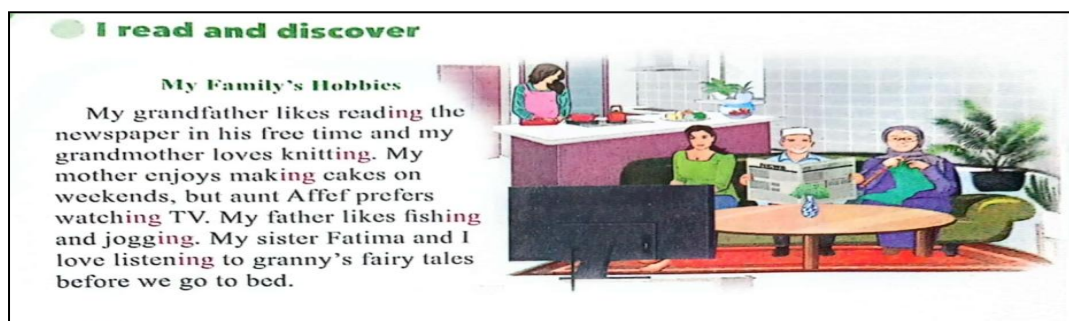
This extract in Fig 3 provides a snapshot of everyday family life, depicting small "c" culture within an Algerian context. It highlights various hobbies and leisure activities that are culturally important and representative of different generations. The grandfather's love for reading the newspaper emphasizes a traditional, intellectual pastime; it likely echoes an interest in staying informed about local and global events. The grandmother's passion for knitting illustrates a common domestic craft, which is often associated with nurturing and care, passed down through generations. The mother's enjoyment of baking cakes on weekends brings to the front the cultural importance of hospitality and traditional family meals, which are central to Algerian family life. Besides, aunt "Affef's" preference for watching television introduces a more modern activity that radiates the influence of media and technology on leisure, while the father's interests in fishing and jogging blend outdoor activity with a focus on health and relaxation. Finally, the mention of "Fatima" and the speaker listening to their grandmother's fairy tales before bed points to the significance of oral tradition in Algerian culture. Storytelling is a key aspect of transmitting values, history, and cultural knowledge across generations. The overall extract illustrates the strong family connections valued in Algerian culture and exhibits how shared activities bring family members closer, blending tradition with modernity.

The image accompanying the second extract portrays a family involved in various activities, each reflecting key aspects of Algerian small "c" culture. The elderly woman is depicted wearing a hijab while knitting, and the elderly man is shown wearing a Muslim praying cap and reading a newspaper. Both figures serve as representations of traditional cultural markers. The hijab, as a clothing style that symbolizes Islamic modesty, reflects

deeply rooted religious and cultural values, while the praying cap is emblematic of Algerian religious practices, often worn during prayers. Together, these elements highlight the integration of Islamic customs and Algerian traditions into the fabric of daily life as they emphasize the role of religion and culture in shaping everyday family routines. Additionally, the scene mirrors core Algerian values such as family love and warmth, as it portrays a close-knit family involved in daily activities that promote connection and togetherness. The names mentioned in the extract, such as "Fatima" and "Affef ", further shed light on Algerian cultural traditions, with "Fatima" in particular holding noteworthy cultural and religious importance. These details reinforce the strong sense of cultural identity within the family, crystallizing out the role of tradition and familial bonds in Algerian society.

4.2.2. Target Culture

Figure 4.

Example of Target Culture Big "C" Cultural Content (Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p.85)
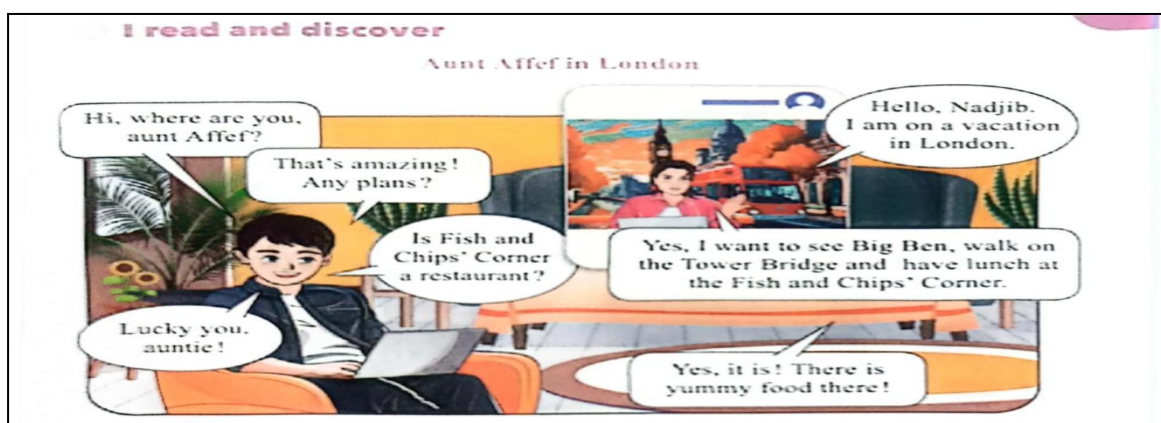
In this extract, titled "Aunt Affef in London", a conversation is held between a boy named "Nadjib" and his aunt, "Affef", who is on vacation in "London*". They are communicating through what appears to be a social media or messaging platform. The visual representation of "Aunt Affef" includes a famous London red double-decker bus and Big Ben in the background, which clearly signals the location as a recognizable part of London's iconic landmarks. The conversation touches on popular tourist activities in London, such as seeing Big Ben, walking on the Tower Bridge, and eating at a place called "Fish and Chips Corner", which introduces a common British food, fish and chips. Nadjib expresses excitement about his aunt's experience and asks if Fish and Chips' Corner is a restaurant, to which Aunt Affef enthusiastically responds, confirming its popularity.

This extract exemplifies the Big "C" target culture by highlighting formal and iconic aspects of British culture, specifically those related to tourism and landmarks. In cultural education, Big "C" often focuses on well-known and recognized cultural elements that are easily identified on the global stage, such as famous places (geography) and historical landmarks (architecture). In this case, the target culture is the British culture, and the emphasis is placed on its major cultural symbols, like "Big Ben" and "Tower Bridge", both of which are emblematic of London and British culture at large. Indeed, for the reader, this provides a window into how people from different cultures (in this case, Algerians like Nadjib and Aunt Affef) might engage with and appreciate British cultural landmarks during their travels.

Figure 5:

Example of Target Culture Small "c" Cultural Content(Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p.46)

The extract in Fig 5 showcases a conversation between two children, "Dianna" and an unnamed peer, discussing "Dianna's" vacation plans to visit her "Uncle Bob" on a farm in Marfa, Texas. The conversation revolves around rural life, featuring descriptions of "green lands" and "cute animals," painting an idyllic picture of the American countryside. Accompanied by an image of a tranquil landscape with farm animals, mountains, and a red truck, this scene introduces learners to the small "c" culture of rural America. This extract, through its setting, names, and conversational tone, offers a window into the lifestyle, speech patterns, and social relationships characteristic of rural American life, while also providing opportunities for learners to engage with relatable, everyday experiences in the target culture.

One prominent aspect of small "c" culture evident in this extract is the lifestyle and setting of rural America. Dianna's description of her uncle's farm in Marfa, Texas, is steeped in the agricultural way of life that is common in many rural parts of the United States. The mention of "green lands" and the depiction of farm animals like horses, ducks, and chickens evoke a pastoral image that is quintessentially American. This reflects the lived experience of those in rural areas, where open spaces and interactions with animals are part of daily life. Particularly, by introducing this specific environment, the extract gives learners an idea about the cultural diversity within the U.S., contrasting rural life with urban or suburban settings they may be more familiar with. In doing so, it broadens their understanding of how lifestyle and environment shape culture on a local, everyday level.

The depiction of family relationships and cultural significance of names in this extract enriches its exploration of small "c" culture by stressing the importance of familial and social connections in American life. "Dianna's" trip to visit her "Uncle Bob" during the holidays underscores the cultural practice of spending time with extended family, specifically in rural settings, a tradition that emphasizes the value of family ties in American society. This focus on family dynamics resonates across cultures, as many place similar importance on family gatherings, especially during holidays. At the same time, the names "Dianna" and "Bob" add authenticity to the characters since they reflect common naming conventions in English-speaking cultures. "Dianna", with its classical roots and modern spelling, and "Bob", a down-to-earth, informal name, evoke a sense of tradition and warmth. These names, especially in the context of a close-knit family setting, reinforce the extract's portrayal of ordinary, everyday American life to allow learners to engage with both the linguistic and cultural aspects of family relationships in the target culture.

Finally, the extract's speech maneuvers, such as questions and interjections, further illustrate small "c" cultural elements. The casual tone of the conversation, starting with "What do you do on your holidays, Dianna?" exhibits the informal style of communication common among children and peers in English-speaking cultures. The use of first names without titles

emphasizes the friendly, informal nature of the interaction. Additionally, interjections like "Wow! Where is it?" and "Lucky you!" are typical expressions of surprise and admiration in everyday English conversations. These speech features are important cultural markers, as they show learners how emotions and reactions are expressed in casual, everyday conversations in the target language. Understanding how greetings, interjections, and other conversational elements are used helps learners develop more natural, culturally appropriate communication skills in English.

4.2.3. International Culture

Figure 6.

Example of International Culture Big "C" Cultural Content (Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p.79)

The extract depicts a conversation between two children, "Nadjib" from Algeria and "Latiff" from Malaysia, who are connecting through social media. As they introduce themselves, "Latiff" mentions living near the iconic Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur. This revelation excites "Nadjib", who promptly requests a video of the landmark. Accompanying their dialogue is an image showcasing Malaysian architecture, which enriches the cultural context of their interaction. This excerpt exemplifies the international dimensions of culture, moving beyond the confines of specific national cultures, whether English-speaking or Algerian. It serves as a clear representation of Big "C" culture, bringing into light globally recognized symbols, landmarks, and cultural markers. The Petronas Twin Towers, celebrated as a symbol of Malaysia's economic progress and modern identity, are central to their exchange. By presenting this renowned structure, the excerpt brings attention to how architecture embodies national identity on a global stage. This, in fact, gives learners the latitude to engage with global cultural elements and understand how such landmarks contribute to defining a country's place in the world. Further, not only do the Petronas Twin Towers stand as an architectural marvel, but they also function as a cultural bridge that connects people across different countries. To illuminate, "Nadjib's" fascination with the towers and his eagerness to see them illustrate how global symbols can facilitate intercultural exchange. The interaction between "Nadjib" and "Latiff" transcends national boundaries; it demonstrates the role of such symbols in fostering connections across cultures. For learners, this dialogue proves that culture is woven into a larger global tapestry, especially because it encompasses international symbols and experiences that extend beyond any single national or linguistic context.

Figure 7.

Example of Target Culture Small "c" Cultural Content (Charit & Bounihi, 2024, p.53)

In this extract, learners are introduced to "Yacine", a young boy from Yemen, who offers a glimpse into his daily life and surroundings. "Yacine" describes his residence in Yarim, Yemen, highlighting his comfortable living conditions in a large flat within a high yellow building. This portrayal not only provides learners with an opportunity to explore another Arab culture, but it also enriches their understanding of cultural diversity within the Arab world. In other terms, the depiction of "Yacine's" life in Yemen introduces learners to a distinct facet of the Arab world, which reveals the richness of regional diversity. Although Yemen and Algeria share cultural proximity, Yemen possesses its own unique traditions and customs. By setting the narrative in Yemen, the extract emphasizes the variety within the Arab world, implying that even cultures with similar linguistic and religious backgrounds can have diverse everyday practices and environments. This broader perspective enhances learners' appreciation of how regional differences contribute to the rich tapestry of global cultures.

In particular, the extract tackles the small "c" culture of daily life and personal experiences. "Yacine's" traditional attire offers a vivid portrayal of Yemeni culture. He wears a white *thobe*, a classic garment that reflects Yemeni heritage and is central to everyday dress. Complementing this, he dons a Yemeni turban, a traditional headpiece that further signifies his cultural background. Around his waist, Yacine carries an *al-jnbya*, a sophisticated dagger with a short curved blade; it is traditionally worn during celebrations and dance performances. This accessory is not merely ornamental; it represents a key aspect of Yemeni heritage, clothing style, and festive customs. Through the manifestation of these small "c" culture elements, the extract illuminates how traditional attire and accessories play a crucial role in conveying cultural values and practices. This approach helps learners grasp the diversity within the Arab world and fosters a deeper understanding of how cultural identity is expressed through everyday choices.

5. Discussion

The findings from the analysis of cultural content in "*My Book of English 5PS*" indicate a clear predominance of aesthetic and sociological elements. The aesthetic sense emerges as the most frequently represented, with a focus on tangible and visible cultural products such as cities, landmarks, and artistic works. This suggests that the textbook prioritizes the depiction of culture through visually rich and easily identifiable elements, which aligns with the broader trend in textbook development where culturally "laden" themes are favored due to their clarity and relatability (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2014). Besides, it has become a common trend in educational materials to convey cultural representation through visually appealing elements, as these are often more accessible and engaging for learners (Purwaningtyas, 2020).

The sociological sense, which constitutes 24.15% of the cultural references, focuses on daily life, social norms, and values. Examples such as the depiction of Algerian women wearing the hijab or references to values like patriotism and hospitality highlight the textbook's aim to familiarize learners with socially embedded practices and behaviors. This is consistent with the findings of previous research (Tajeddin & Bahrebar, 2017), where sociological elements were often highlighted in localized textbooks. However, while sociological content is well-represented, it remains secondary to the aesthetic focus, which contradicts some studies that found a stronger emphasis on sociological elements in local contexts (Gheitasi et al., 2020; Rashidi & Meihami, 2016).

In contrast, pragmatic (13.13%) and semantic (7.41%) senses receive significantly less attention compared to the aesthetic and sociological elements. This suggests a gap in the textbook's ability to equip learners with the necessary functional language for real-world communication. Similarly, the semantic sense—focused on deeper cultural meanings such as idiomatic expressions and intonation patterns is minimally addressed. This lack of emphasis on pragmatic and semantic content points to a limitation in preparing learners for more complex intercultural communication.

The overrepresentation of aesthetic content and the underrepresentation of pragmatic and semantic elements have important implications. While the aesthetic focus can engage learners visually and culturally, the lack of attention to pragmatic and semantic content suggests that the textbook may not fully equip learners with the functional and deeper cultural knowledge needed for effective communication. To address this gap, future textbook revisions should aim for a more balanced representation of cultural elements; textbook developers need to incorporate a stronger emphasis on pragmatic language use and the subtleties of cultural meanings embedded in communication.

In addition to the findings about the cultural senses, the analysis of cultural content in "*My Book of English 5PS*" answers the research question regarding the extent to which cultural categories are presented. It reveals a strong emphasis on source culture, which constitutes approximately (68.09%) of the total content. While this resonates with the goals of fostering a strong national identity in Algerian learners, there are important pedagogical implications that need to be critically examined. In fact, it is lucid that the textbook prioritizes promoting national identity rather than cultivating a broader intercultural outlook. Moreover, although (20.54%) of the content introduces aspects of English-speaking countries, the lack of depth in cultural elements such as history and literature limits learners' exposure to meaningful intercultural dialogue. Further, the textbook's minimal inclusion of international culture (11.31%) stresses its inadequate approach to broadening learners' global perspective.

4.3.1. Overemphasis on Source Culture and Missed Opportunities for Intercultural Competence

Despite the fact that the predominance of source culture can help learners connect with their own identity, it can also be limiting in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, where exposure to diverse cultural perspectives is essential for developing ICC. Byram's (1997) framework emphasizes the need for learners to not only understand their own culture but also engage critically with foreign cultures. By disproportionately focusing on Algerian culture, the textbook may fail to provide learners with sufficient exposure to the target and international cultures, which could limit their ability to function as intercultural citizens in an interconnected world. To elucidate, while the emphasis on source culture might be seen as a strategy to resist linguistic imperialism, as noted by Mofidi and Hashemi (2019), or as a way to make learning materials more relatable to learners' daily lives, as Rouaghe and Bouguebs (2023) point out, this approach also risks isolating learners from the global linguistic and cultural context that English language proficiency is intended to open.

Furthermore, the presence of target culture (21.54%) provides some insight into the customs and social practices of English-speaking countries, but the absence of key Big "C" cultural elements, such as historical events, social norms, and family structure, in the target culture raises questions about the depth of learners' exposure to authentic cultural experiences. According to Byram (1997), these are crucial for developing a deep understanding of another culture's values, historical development, and social structure. Put differently, the absence of historical and literary content from target cultures in the textbook undermines learners' opportunities to engage with the rich historical and cultural legacies of English-speaking countries. This aligns with findings by Ashrafi and Ajideh (2018), who observed a similar neglect in other EFL textbooks.

Last but not least, the minimal representation of international cultures, accounting for only (11.31%) of the total content, signals a missed opportunity for fostering intercultural awareness. While international culture serves as a bridge between local and global identities, its absence could hinder learners' ability to develop a broader understanding of diversity, hence reducing their capacity to empathize with and understand perspectives from outside their own cultural framework. In line with this, Rashidi and Meihami (2016) argue that EFL textbooks need to integrate international cultures to prepare learners for real-world intercultural communication. Thus, the limited scope of international culture in "*My Book of English 5PS"* may prevent learners from achieving a more holistic cultural competence.

4.3.2. Practical Implications for Teaching and Learning

The lack of diversity in cultural content has practical implications for teaching and learning in the Algerian context. Learners may become overly familiar with local culture while remaining unaware of the complexities of the target and international cultures. This limits the development of their ICC, as intercultural competence requires learners to critically compare and contrast their own culture with others (Byram, 1997). A broader inclusion of international cultural elements would provide a more balanced approach to ensure that learners can relate their own experiences to global contexts. As a result, this would enrich their cultural literacy and prepare them for effective communication in an increasingly globalized world.

In addition, it is essential to take into account the developmental stage of the target learners when evaluating textbook content. At the age of 10–11, learners are in the early stages of engaging with abstract concepts and benefit more from concrete, relatable materials. As such, it is important to assess whether the textbook aligns with their cognitive and emotional readiness for intercultural exposure. Although *My Book of English 5PS* presents visually rich content, some of its cultural representations may require more deliberate scaffolding to support young learners' progression through the foundational stages of ICC development. Tasks involving simple comparisons, visuals, storytelling, and scaffolded cultural dialogues are more effective than complex analytical content at this stage. The textbook's strong focus on visual and sociological elements is appropriate, yet its lack of deeper interactional or critical tasks limits learners' ability to move beyond surface understanding toward deeper intercultural engagement.

4.3.3. Recommendations for Future Textbook Design

Future textbooks should strive to diversify cultural representations through the incorporation of a broader spectrum of cultural types and perspectives. Alptekin (2002) suggests that instructional materials should provide local, target, and international contexts that are relevant and meaningful to learners' lives. The current textbook falls short in integrating these aspects effectively. Textbook designers can ascertain that learners are exposed to a wider range of cultural experiences if they maximize the representation of both

target and international cultures. It is equally important to note that the balance in cultural representation should not solely address different categories of culture, such as source, target, and international cultures, yet also encompass various cultural senses. A well-rounded approach to cultural inclusion is pivotal to widen learners' lens to enable them see and appreciate their own and others' cultures. This would be consistent with the objectives of multicultural education, which seeks to develop learners' ability to function in diverse cultural systems and contribute to a more inclusive global society (Oktavianti et al., 2017). Ultimately, consideration of learners' developmental profiles is essential in textbook design. For younger learners, intercultural content must be appropriately scaffolded to facilitate the gradual emergence of intercultural dispositions and reflective awareness.

5. Conclusion

While *My Book of English 5PS* provides significant exposure to source culture, the limited representation of target and international cultures reflects an imbalanced approach that could hinder the development of intercultural communicative competence. A more critical examination of the textbook reveals the need for a broader inclusion of diverse cultural elements to foster cultural awareness and prepare learners for intercultural communication in a rapidly changing world. Future textbook design should address these gaps to ensure that learners can engage with a wide array of cultural perspectives, thereby enhancing both language proficiency and intercultural understanding.

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