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The local culture in public high schools' ELT coursebooks: A comparison between Brazil and Syria

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The local culture in public high schools' ELT coursebooks:
A comparison between Brazil and Syria

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Language and Culture in the Postgraduate Program in Language and Culture of the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA).

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To my parents for being the light that has always guided me in the darkest moments of my life, that have always been sacrificing for our best, and for breaking all world's records of altruism;

to my brothers, my wings in this life;

to my life partner, Thais, whose support was essential through my research time and for taking care of our home at my busiest days;

to all my friends and beloveds, I dedicate this work.

لوالدي لكونهما النور الذي لطالما

اهتديت به في أحلك لحظات حياتي، واللذين

لطالما ضحيا في سبيلنا ضاربين أروع الأمثلة

في العطاء وحب الغير والبعد عن الأنانية،

لإخوتي، جناحي في الحياة،

لشريكة حياتي، تاييس، التي كان

دعمها لي أساسياً خلال فترة البحث

ولتحملها مسؤولية المنزل في أيام انشغالي

الكبير.

لكل أصدقائي وأحبتي، أهدي هذا العمل.

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ABSTRACT

Culture in today's English coursebooks is an essential component. It became as important as the linguistic content. Globalization and the revolution of technology made English a lingua franca, and an international language used for communication almost everywhere whenever the two speakers do not share the same language. At the same time, learners came to the center of the class and of the teaching process and made it important to take into consideration the culture that these learners bring with them. Taking the native culture of students into consideration helps both creating a rapport with them which facilitates the teaching process, and equipping these learners with the necessary tools to express themselves in a world where native speakers are not the only linguistic authority anymore.

Using a categorization based on a literature review of the development of the term culture, I analyze in this research the presence, and the representations of the native culture in two series of English language teaching that belong to two different cultures, the Brazilian, and the Arabic. It is a qualitative research that uses content analysis strategies and generates its data using tables created according to cultural categories and subcategories. The research analyzes its generated data seeking similarities and differences in the presenting way and in the cultural choices the books make.

Keywords: Culture, English Teaching Materials, native/local culture, English as a foreign language, High Up, English for Starters.

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RESUMO

Cultura nos livros modernos de inglês é um componente essencial. Tanto importante quanto o conteúdo linguístico. A globalização e a revolução tecnológica fizeram inglês uma língua franca, e uma língua internacional usada para comunicação quase em todo lugar quando os falantes não compartilham outra língua. No mesmo tempo, alunos entraram o centro do processo educacional e tornaram-se mais importante que as suas culturas estejam mais valorizadas. Um processo de valorização que quando aplicada corretamente ajuda criar uma harmonia na sala de aula que facilita ensino e aprendizagem, e que também ajuda alunos se-expressar num mundo onde os falantes nativos não são a única autoridade linguística mais.

Usando uma categorização baseado numa revisão de literatura de desenvolvimento do conceito de cultura, eu, nesse estudo, faço uma análise da presença e representação das culturas locais em dois grupos dos livros de inglês usados em escolas públicas no Brasil e Síria. Essa é uma pesquisa qualitativa que usa estratégias de análise de conteúdo, e que produz seus dados através de tabelas criadas em acordo com categorias e subcategorias culturais. O estudo analisa esses dados procurando similaridades e diferenças na apresentação e nas escolhas culturais os livros fazem.

Palavras-chave: Cultura, materiais de ensino de inglês, cultua local/nativa, inglês como língua estrangeira, High Up, English for Starters.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEA	American Evaluation Association
AQR	Association for Qualitative Research
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
EFS	English for Starters
ELT	English Language Teaching
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
IAQI	International Association of Qualitative Inquiry
IC	Intercultural Competence
MT	Mother Tongue
PPGLINC	Post-graduate Program in Language and Culture
TPR	Total Physical Response
UFBA	Universidade Federal da Bahia

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CHAPTER ONE: STARTING UP THE 'RIHLA'[1]   .الفصل الأول: بداية الرحلة

1.1 BACKGROUND

Starting a research paper, a book, a thesis, a dissertation, or even an article is one of the most difficult tasks for those engaged in academic work. In practically all these situations, the author needs total clarity to be able to define his/her goals and objectives, justify the different choices, in a struggle to show the importance and appropriateness of his/her work to the march of science.

I started studying English much earlier than students did in Syria at my school times. I was a first-grader waiting by the classroom door of fifth-graders where my elder brother was having his English lessons when his teacher noticed me standing and waiting for him, and then invited me to be her guest instead of being out in the cold weather. I was so happy to have classes with older students. I behaved well and even participated in the activities proposed. And that is how I kept that invitation active for two full years. After my brother went to another school, I could not attend more English classes until I was a fifth-grader myself. But during those three years, I always watched cartoons in English on TV, and read whatever came to my hand in English, even though I understood almost nothing.

When I finally reached the fifth grade, I was very happy to start studying English at school again as a formal subject, for the simple and great fact that I was not a guest anymore. Once officially matriculated, since the first class, I had my vocabulary notebook waiting for the new words to be written in with their translation, and I kept training hard so that I would memorize the spelling for each word I inserted there. English was my passion; it was the subject classes I waited for all week, and my English teachers from that time had always been my friends. One funny thing that happened when I was in the eighth grade is that I noticed in the English exam paper a mistake in the way of spelling a specific word. I called out the teacher and then said that that specific word was wrong. He acknowledged I was right, and then asked everyone to correct that misspelled word. Later, when he announced the marks, I got a full mark for that test, and knowing that I did make one mistake on it, I went to the

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[1] 'Journey' in Arabic.

teacher and told him that there was something wrong with my mark as I know I had made a mistake in one question. He answered that he did not take away a mark for the mistake because I noticed his mistake. That was one of the times when I felt so proud and happy about my achievement, and it was one of the milestones in my life I am always going to remember.

Later in high school, when it was the time to start thinking about what major I was going to choose for the university right ahead, I had to make some difficult decisions. I loved English so much, but at the same time, the social level of an English teacher, the salary, and the way of life is not high. As it happens in many countries, it requires a lot of work, dedication, persistence, and time. On the other hand, I had Law as an option. Being a lawyer held a much better and higher social status, in addition to a higher salary, and fewer hours of work. Stuck in that conflict, I spent almost a month thinking of what I would like to do for the rest of my life, who I would like to be and why.

After too much thinking and consideration, the love for English triumphed. Later, the happiness I felt when a student learned something new, when I would decipher rules of grammar into students' easy language, when I could change the way students would look at English from a very difficult subject into an interesting and very useful tool that could help them almost with everything in their lives, was worthy of my choice. I thought about the possibility of all that, and such happiness easily overcame that yearning to higher social status and even changed my feeling of modesty for being a teacher into very strong pride. A feeling inside me that has always screamed: Yes, I am the 'simplificator', I am the eyes' and minds' opener, and I am the one who empowers learners to become stronger and reach what they want for their lives.

So, as a side effect of being an English teacher, I have always been fascinated by the incredible way we learn languages, and more than that, the ways languages invite or motivate us to learn and use them. Apart from our mother tongue, each new language learner has his/her reasons to learn that language, its potential roles in his/her life, the reasons this language is more interesting or important than others, its uses, benefits, or even possible profits for this learner. Each learner has a different story, motifs, expectations that are sometimes a hundred and eighty degrees different from the others. This is a situation that teachers meet each time they start teaching a new learner in the first ice-breaking activity. Still, teaching/learning materials are not as multiple as the learners, and, as a teacher, I can say that sometimes it is impossible

in different groups to find two learners with the same goals and expectations of the language course, although all of them (in this supposed group) share the same studying materials. How does that happen? How can very different needs, personalities, and tastes be all satisfied with the same teaching syllabus or program? And maybe more importantly, how can some students excel in the same materials while all other variables for them show great differences?

These questions have always wandered my mind, making me study teaching materials, or at least try to get to their core values. This has indeed become one of my biggest interests as a teacher and a linguist. To achieve goals, we all know that different teaching materials, English language teaching (ELT) materials included, use a great deal of strategies, being one of the most common strategies to look, sound, and appear interesting for the students, getting their attention, convincing them subconsciously of the benefits these ubiquitous instructional resources can offer. In order to succeed, such goals need to create a strong connection with students' real life, which is not imperatively individual, but, and at the same time, not totally universal. In many ways, we could say that this connection has to do with exposing and discussing local cultural content in contrast with, for instance, the target culture and others from around the world. ELT coursebooks, for instance, designed for global audiences usually leave such a strategy aside, as their goal is basically to reach a global audience, placing local cultural content in a secondary position. This is usually "repaired" in the so-called "domestic" materials, which, potentially, try to fill up such a gap.

Then came my travel to Brazil. This meant leaving behind my homeland, going out of the place where I always lived with my traditions, ways of thinking, values, and social styles to immerse in an almost new place with everything different. In fact, I felt I was losing this unity, these references, for a while. It was a big change in my life, seeing how different ways of thinking that can sometimes be a hundred and eighty degrees different from mine (which I had always idealized), can also work for some people in the same way mine did. That was a kind of a turning and a fortifying point. Here I was, far away from home engaged in a life mission to turn a strange land in my new home. It is a big challenge in anyone's life who ventures out or is forced to migrate in search of a better life.

Now, after five years in Brazil, after absorbing a lot about the culture of the region where I live, I can say that it became very interesting for me to be able to look

at these two different worlds, Brazil and Syria. These two multilingual and multicultural societies, very far from each other in geography, religion, traditions and, at the same time very close with the souls of people, their will to live no matter what, whether their main problem is war or poverty, being a refugee or running away from your hometown searching for a better life in the city, having bad public transportation or not, having enough money to use it at all or not. Too many superficial differences that when looking closer, searching more deeply, we can see that these two "worlds" are not that much different. Of course, they both have their details and differences, but just as clothes, being different from a person to another cannot hide the fact that we are all humans.

Living in Brazil gave me the chance to get in contact with a great and much-diversified culture, and I, even before I became an MA candidate at UFBA, developed a great interest in tracing this culture in ELT materials as I was fortunate enough to make my living here as an English teacher too. One reason for that curiosity is to know how the cultural element is integrated into such materials and how coursebooks usually present it. As Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) would pose, there is a range of possibilities for us to approach culture in language learning and teaching. So, with that in mind, I also wanted to get to know and analyze what aspects are chosen to be included in the materials. Another reason that prompted me into investigating such a topic is that once I compare these answers about Brazilian ELT materials with their equivalent materials in Syria, I would be getting into a very rich and profitable research study with very practical results.

For sure, this comparative work would grant the academic communities with a deeper knowledge of the chosen materials, and would expose both cultures to be better, explained, discussed and understood from an intercultural point of view. This is more or less what I had in mind when I decided to apply for an opening for UFBA's Post-graduate Program in Language and Culture (PPGLINC). And I am glad I succeeded.

In my view, the cultural component in ELT textbooks has always been overshadowed by the linguistic element. As "learning languages involves the developed of intercultural competence that facilitates mediation" (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013: 23), I believe this is a too important an element to be neglected in ELT. A comparison of the kind I have envisioned in this MA research work does not aim to be the biggest or the most important in the world, of course. But, again, I believe it is to be taken as a first step for us to be looking more intensely at different foreign language

educational realities analyzing them and searching for what can be done to improve practices on both sides. I also believe that I can contribute to unveil different insights from both "worlds," holding on to a humble expectation that my work can be beneficial for colleagues from both places. As ELT professionals, departing from studies like this, we can see what can be done to improve our classroom routines and potentially work together to create a network for sharing experiences and discussing solutions collectively. This is a globalized world, and despite our cultural differences, as previously mentioned, several ideas, themes, issues, among other aspects, for sure, connect us. Once the work is done, it travels, and then we can look at it closely, and, departing from it, choose what features to use, what details to take as improvement, theoretical grounds to step on together, etc. This is exactly the most important reason for my research, building a bridge between these two different worlds.

1.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main issue I intend to bring to light with my research is the degree of similarity and difference between two distant countries concerning the way a couple of ELT coursebooks officially adopted in their public education systems present aspects of the local cultures. English is taught both in Brazil and Syria as a foreign language (EFL), and as we know, some materials are created especially for these two countries as opposed to international series, which are intended to a global audience. This now common and sometimes risky strategy, since it defies a huge and powerful transnational industry, has made room for the production of coursebooks and extra materials bearing a local flavor, as they are conceived with a specific learner in mind, that is, a learner that belongs to a specific culture, the so-called "native culture" diverse from the famous and usually aspired "target culture." On one hand, this facilitates personalizing the content as it goes directly to that learner, mixes with his/her existence, offers him/her real-life situations, exercises, and generally familiar information. These features bring certain benefits to the classroom and are considered very important by educationalists advocating the importance of native culture for the teaching process.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to highlight that this research places its interest in ELT materials from more or less the same instructional context in Syria and Brazil, that is, two textbook series used in public high schools around the national

territory of each country. The focus is on a comparison between the series selected. After an overall exploration of all volumes, the intention is to go deeper into the cultural content and try to identify and discuss the principles behind the choices made, the orientations towards culture in each series, the benefits they may bring to the educational process, and whether or not the books indeed materialize what the theoretical assumptions behind them preach and promise to do to all stakeholders.

The difficulty in covering all the possibilities related to cultural aspects in both series is usually around, and the interpretations I arrived at are my own and, for sure, they are not intended to be taken as a general truth. I was born in Syria under a fraction of the country's cultures and subcultures as much as upon arriving in Brazil, I immersed in cultures and subcultures which cannot be taken as fully representative of both societies. Culture is a very slippery concept, and working on cultural elements is as slippery, especially when doing comparative work. Because of this, the results of this comparative enterprise are never expected to resonate as general or typical representations of culture in both countries. No matter how detailed the work, my words, my reflections, and my conclusions are to be taken as partial and open to contestation at any time.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research study is to investigate how the native/local culture is introduced in pre-selected ELT coursebooks used in public secondary education in Brazil and Syria.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

As for the specific objectives, this study seeks to:

(1) Find out whether and how two ELT series made in Brazil and Syria approach the native/local culture within their syllabi;

(2) Identify and analyze the nature and types of native/local cultural aspects used in these materials;

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(3) Identify and problematize the similarities and differences related to the use and presentation of cultural aspects within the series;

(4) Point out cultural features which can lead to stereotyping and misunderstanding, and suggest changes and adaptations.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Aligned with the 4 (four) specific objectives, I devised the following questions to be explored by the study:

(1) How are local/native cultural aspects presented and approached in two ELT textbooks' series made in Syria and Brazil and used in their corresponding public-school systems?

(2) What are the nature and types of native/local cultural aspects used in the materials sorted out?

(3) What are the similarities and differences related to the use and presentation of cultural aspects within both textbooks' series?

(4) Which cultural features in the series investigated can lead to stereotyping and misunderstanding, and what changes and adaptations can be made?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Throughout the last three or four decades, discussion and reflections about language teaching materials have been receiving more importance and raised more interest by researchers, teachers and other stakeholders. Within such a process, components of didactic resources are always being scrutinized and closely examined to continuously evaluate the appropriateness of each and the importance or benefits of others. Culture is one of those aspects that has required a lot of attention because it was a very big and difficult jump when it came into the theater of teaching additional languages.

As it will be discussed throughout this work, culture in language teaching became a crucial issue of investigation due to many reasons. Culture is a vital part of the language, which directly connects learners with language, bringing linguistic uses out of cold grammatical sentences into the warm colorful life of the real world. The

overt presence of culture in the classroom has always made language learning much more appealing to students, as it is an important bridge to their lives.

In my research, the focus is no more on the target language culture, and this has different reasons, especially when it comes to teaching English. Earlier, the cultural components used in language learning materials came basically from one of the hegemonic English-speaking countries, Great Britain or the United States mainly, and sometimes from other English-speaking countries with less frequency.

However, the gigantic increase of the number of English speakers around the world, making native speakers a minority when compared to non-native speakers, made a lot of publishing houses reconsider the status of the cultural component used in their coursebooks. The necessity to express the learners' identity became a critical issue because learning English is not a means to talk to native speakers anymore, it is not only a tool to be able to travel to few English-speaking countries and be able to live, work or study there. English, whether we like it or not, became a universal communication tool, a global lingua franca which connects the Brazilian with the Chinese, the Russian with the Indian, and the Arabs with the French for example, in addition to connecting all those non-English users with native English speakers. Along with this plurithic scenario, came the need to make ELT materials represent the learners' cultures, to bring English closer to them, and to make it easy for them to express themselves in English without the need to always feel indebted to the English culture, and without feeling inferior as a result of not being represented in the materials at all.

The significance of the study then comes from the opportunity created with the objective of its looking inside a couple of locally-made coursebooks to search for aspects that would speak to the learners: their identity, idols, foods, families, money, literature, and many other components we need to have in these instructional elements. In other words, its relevance lies in the attempt to get to know how specially prepared ELT materials take into consideration the culture of their learners, how these are treating such an important mercurially-shaped limitless item.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

My research revolves around the idea of culture, a concept that was immensely studied in the last few decades in different fields of knowledge due to its importance

for us as human beings in general, and to our current period of globalization and technology revolution specifically. Culture influences how people act and think, what do they like, hate accept and aspire to be. It can connect them and tear them apart. Culture has the power to create bridges between strangers, improve relationships, inspire artists and keep societies together. Still, in the same way, not knowing the others' culture can lead to misunderstanding, disrespect and hatred. All those benefits and dangers have been getting amplified by the world getting smaller, by the easiness of connection between people from different countries, contents and of course, cultures. New waves of immigration coming from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America going everywhere created the necessity of being better-equipped with cultural knowledge whether you are a traveler or a receiver. Ignorance is not an excuse anymore. The lack of understanding the other is resulting in all kinds of troubles from ungrateful behavior between neighbors to hate crimes where innocents are killed for no reason other than unnecessary and unjustified hatred.

These reasons, in addition to many more, made studying culture very important nowadays maybe more than any time in history, and this was one of the important reasons for my choice.

Such an idea became more viable for the fact of my being an Arab who has lived in Brazil for a while, five years till now, and Brazilian by nationality, love and choice. Being an English teacher with direct and continuous contact with teaching materials even facilitated the task in addition to my experience in Syria as an English teacher for more than five years there. My being, somehow, a foreigner in Brazil showed me a lot about the importance of knowing the other; I came to Brazil without knowing a lot about real life here. Almost all my ideas were based on media information, totally canned ideas such as everyone in Brazil, a country with more than two hundred million people, likes football and coffee is the only drink for everyone. I could also see how Arabs who count almost three hundred million and belong to more than twenty different countries from two continents, with different religions and sects are all seen as one.

Dealing with culture is no easy task, mainly because it is very difficult to decide on one definition to lead the research. Too many definitions are available and each has its strengths and weaknesses. This is the main reason that my research is based on different definitions and conceptualizations of culture proposed by different anthropologists and used by different pedagogists. As Chapter three shows, different

aspects are chosen from a plethora of ideas that started with Edward Burnett Tylor (1871) and did not stop with Byram`s many works connecting culture to education, Byram (1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997) among too many others.

The theme is directly relevant to different current societal issues and changes such as the arrival of refugees in different countries around the world as well as Brazil, the rise of the right-wing parties with all the package of nationalism, extremism, and intolerance and consequently the emergence of hate crimes and terrorist acts.

The research consults a wide array of references for theoretical information both about culture and teaching materials and methods, its two main components. Many dictionaries, handbooks, books, articles, and websites were consulted to build a theoretical and methodological framework of the research. However, data sources are less varied as the type of research and its duration require. I choose two series of English teaching books that are currently being used in public high schools in Brazil and Syria as they can, even partially, represent the tendency in these two countries towards teaching English in the public education sector towards culture and its use in curricular items. The research tries to describe the presence and use of different cultural components in these books focusing on local or native culture instead of the target one. It ends comparing and contrasting the used aspects, and the way of presenting them as well as drawing some conclusions about possible reasons for such use and ways of improvement if possible. This focus is mainly a result of different reasons mentioned in the justification, and the methodology parts, which are mainly dictated by higher priority and necessity in our current political and educational situations.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As a qualitative study, it is important to note that the main goal of this study is not, by any means, to offer a full statistical report of all possible cultural aspects that comprise the two series of books analyzed. This statistical limitation is due to mainly the comparative nature of the research and to its overarching general goal. In addition, the nature of culture, its multiple definitions, its various ways of categorization, its conceptualizations, etc., all that makes it almost impossible to be able to catch all possibly cultural aspects that exist in the books because each categorization can result in a different way of analysis which can include and exclude different components.

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Besides, the size of a work of this kind cannot include too many categorizations, and that is why it focuses on widely accepted cultural items as is to be discussed later on in the methodology chapter.

It is also worth mentioning here that, being a documental analysis, this research cannot include, analyze or theorize about the real teacher-student interactions that take place in schools, as this is not the focus of the thesis. These interactions may be very rich in local culture aspects and representations, and they still can vary between states, schools, and teachers. According to my experience, the dynamic can also be different when a lesson is given by the same teacher to different groups of students or even at different times of the year, as each context and each question raised may require another way of tackling issues from the textbooks, and, consequently, distinct explanations and examples.

A third limitation of this research has to do with bias. It is well known that bias is one of the most important limitations of any study, especially those that treat differences between one's way of thinking and another. In the case of this research, this limitation is minimized by avoiding any kind of judgment or evaluation for the aspects of culture introduced in the material. The research mentions these aspects, compares their presentation, frequency, and their uses with their equivalents in one coursebook series with another series. No judgment and no opinions about their content. In other words, being originally Syrian, a person that absorbed and got exposed to one culture, one way of thinking, one set of values and customs…etc. I may have my biases against different ways of thinking or sets of values. Such bias is not always explicit, and it can easily pass unnoticed while carrying on any kind of cultural analysis. Being Brazilian and having got exposed to a part of the Brazilian culture does not vaccinate me against such bias, even after five years in Brazil I still cannot agree with some sets of values here. For example, I still cannot agree with anyone preparing a birthday party for a dear family member arguing that all those huge expenses are merely justified because of the closeness of the person, I've seen people happily spending the salary of one month for a few-hour party and feeling very happy about it. However, to avoid any, the safest is to keep away from any judgment. The study tries to track possible reasons for some aspects as a clarifying non-judging act. It is possible, as a bringing-the-two-worlds-closer step to justify some cultural choices so that they are easily understood by the other culture's audience, in a way that

decreases stereotypes and strengthens understanding as this is one of my basic motifs for carrying on such research.

1.8 A GLIMPSE ABOUT SYRIA AND ITS CULTURE

Speaking about Syria after I have been abroad for more than five years is no easy task, as facts come to my mind just like ships full of all kinds of nostalgia and homesickness. Syria is a very small and big country.

Variation existed in Syria thousands of years ago when many kingdoms and people saw that land as the best place to settle and build their life in it. Discoveries as old as 10,000 B.C. were found in different places in Syria from the pre-pottery age. Cities that belong to 3,500 B.C. can still be visited until now where you can look at the shape of the houses from that era. Some myths even tell the stories of Phoenicians visiting Latin America and telling the ancestors of the Inca about building pyramids.

Syria has a mosaic of nationalities, religions, and sects. These were essential in creating today's reality of that country. The majority of people in Syria are Arab Muslims, however, minorities include other nationalities such as Kurds, and Turkmens, and other religions such as Christians with many sects such as Catholics, Protestants, Armenians, and Maronites.

Being an area with such a long history created a rich diversity of subcultures in Syria, different lifestyles, religions, sects, ways of thinking…etc. All this prepared the soil for these subcultures to exist and live together in harmony for a very long time.

This great variation, however, can make my task more difficult as to trace local culture aspects in the selected materials. Yet, I spent three years in Syria as a newly assigned English teacher in almost a place which is the opposite of my hometown. I was born in Latakia, a small Mediterranean city, that contains a mix of religions and even subcultures. Then, after graduating and getting assigned as an English teacher, I needed to go to a very small rural town that had only one primary school and one high school where I was the only English teacher. Being there for almost three years gave me a good look at the way people lived there and their way of life and thinking. Living in two extreme places, my hometown and that little town, gave me in addition to the knowledge about a totally different vision into people's ability to be different, the ability to adapt to different climate, food, jobs, beliefs, values, and customs, and I think this was one of the most important experiences that prepared me to come to Brazil.

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1.9 THESIS ORGANIZATION

The thesis is divided basically into six chapters which I find to be a suitable division for my theme and methodology. The first chapter introduces my topic and lays the bases about reasons for which I chose such a topic. Why was it important for me to go in such a way in addition to some information about my history and experience as an English teacher. In the second chapter, I explain the methodology I follow along with the research, and I also justify the reasons I make certain methodological decisions. Chapters three and four are the theoretical part of the study, they talk about the concept of culture and teaching materials development respectively. In the fifth chapter, I analyze the two series using my research tools explained in chapter two. Chapter five also includes the results of the analysis as it compares and contrasts the results discussing each category and subcategory presented in the two books and compares and contrasts the two books. Chapter six makes use of the results to highlight some important results the research yielded and shows possible recommended changes based on a mix of the analysis results and my personal opinions.

As for all the different reasons I mentioned here, the task of analyzing some English teaching materials shows its importance in the whole teaching process. This requires a well-planned methodology that can achieve such complex and significant goal. The next chapter discusses extensively details about the research qualities, in addition to the research process steps making it easier to have a look from afar at the methodological procedures and the theorical premises on which the research methodology was built.

CHAPTER TWO:	الفصل الثاني:
THE METHODOLOGICAL 'TAREEQ'²	الطريق المنهجي

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is explaining the methodology I used to carry out this research study. On my way to do so, I explain the steps taken along this journey, justify the choices I made, and clarify about theories behind such choices. My choice of the theme came as a result of different reasons, being some of them already mentioned in Chapter One. However, I see that it serves better to include them in this chapter too for here is the part that defines and explains better the path of the research work and its methodology since when the idea was a little seed till it became a full and mature tree.

2.2 A TEACHER IS BORN

My journey as an English teacher started in 2004, as a second-year English literature student when I began teaching English to a little nine-year-old relative of mine. She was a fourth-grader with an aspiring mom, my cousin, who wanted her to get the best marks at school and that was the reason she wanted me to give her some extra English classes. At that time, I had already decided I wanted to be an English teacher, but that start with real classes made a great difference in my life.

I liked being a teacher more than I even thought I would. Catching the sight of that flame of fire in the eyes of a student when learning something new was a great scene for me. Spotting a smile on my students' faces after they absorbed a difficult grammatical rule was too precious. Looking deeply at their faces and seeing that look of satisfaction and watching a student changing his/her mind totally about English from a clueless subject they just need to pass to a tool they can use every day to enrich their lives and to do their tasks better. All this made me happy and proud and since then, I became a teacher and my basic tools have always been books.

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² 'Path' in Arabic.

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In Syria, it is difficult to get many options when it comes to teaching materials. Due to different political issues, Syrians suffer economic sanctions imposed by the United States and different European countries, and that makes it very difficult to import things. Banking systems are also affected by those sanctions and they cannot issue international credit cards which makes it almost impossible to buy things online for example. For these reasons, imported books are rare. Even when you find a bookstore that sells, smuggled, foreign languages teaching materials, books are usually very expensive due to their being uncommon and rarely available. That is why searching for free materials online is the only possibility there; which for many logistic reasons is not feasible for every teacher or student. As a result of all that, the majority of English students at schools use mainly the materials provided by the government as their only source to learn English. This intrigued my curiosity; how come that too many students use the same books and still reach their linguistic goals!

This fact always triggered my interest in teaching books. These books always looked different from each other but were always dealt with in a very similar way by many of my peers. This, to some extent, can be understood because all these books had the same audience in mind, a non-English speaking student who seeks passing an exam or reaching an intermediate level of communication in English. Few similar features but numerous other variables, such as content, educational contexts, and even levels of students were to be considered. All these differences made me interested in knowing for sure how those coursebooks reached their readers and learners, what connections would exist between them to facilitate such a very complex task as learning English as a language to be used to communicate with the world.

Living in Brazil, in many ways, has amplified my curiosity. Here, I could meet newer ways of teaching once I got to join the local working force of ELT professionals. For instance, I was introduced to the "Callan Method[3]" at *Mr. English School*. Then I got in contact with preprogrammed tablets at *FISK*, that contain the audio files of the books in addition to different supporting exercises. I also used international series for teaching conversational English as it happens in many schools all around Brazil. These different "models" of teaching, in addition to being able to reach a much richer content online, made me meet what I have always wanted to, an array of teaching

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[3] A method for teaching English. Invented by Robin Callan from England in the 1960s. It focuses on listening and speaking skills through question-answer interactions between teachers and students. Immediate correction by the teacher is essential.

materials which showed great diversity I could never encounter before. Since my curiosity was finding more fuel in those books and materials, I grew more interested in knowing how these instructional resources, with all their differences, create that kind of connection with students. What I wanted to know was the way these materials reach their audience on one hand, and the kind of difference there is between them and the ones used in Syria on the other hand, taking into consideration that both countries grant English with the same status at school, a foreign language.

After a lot of consideration, I came to discover one of the ways, or let us say, parts, of the included content through which these materials come closer to their readers or learners. This part is the local cultural content as opposed to that of the target language. This content establishes rapport with the learner directly by including the students' culture in the teaching process and allowing them to learn English being represented in the books they study and feeling themselves a respected part of the process. With time, this question became essential for me, to know what is used to make students feel comfortable with these books, how the culture of the students is represented by the materials, and what representations are chosen from that local culture to be included.

I took the chance of doing my thesis here in Brazil to compare and contrast that type of content in two series used by public high schools in both countries, Brazil and Syria. I analyzed these two series through qualitative research that uses methods such as documental analysis, with instruments like classification tables, and then tried to show similarities and differences between them.

So, what is Qualitative research and what are the reasons I use it?

2.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The term 'qualitative' was first applied to social sciences by the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1989) in the mid-nineteenth century. The word 'qualitative' referred at that time to the person's notes and perspective about a specific experience, history, or society. Then two German sociologists, Max Weber and Georg Simmel, discussed the change of the meaning towards an insider mode of registering experiences. They emphasized that notes taken from an insider's point of view are different and more precise than ones taken from an outsider's point of view. In other words, notes of experiences written based on the researcher's information outside that

context cannot show with clarity and precision all possible information and justification. This is basically because the look of the participant towards events is very different from that of the external assistant. (Lapan et al. 2012).

Consequently, in the twentieth century, different endeavors paved the way in front of qualitative research. One of these important attempts was carried on by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, at the beginning of the 20th century, that sought to reach a research method which can imitate how we humans come to recognize and understand the world. Another try was by sociologists of Chicago University that recorded "the views of those underrepresented in society, including immigrants, criminals, and the impoverished" (Lapan et al. 2012:6). Such efforts continued until the 1970s when qualitative research reached a relatively advanced level, and since then until now tens of publications fortified this type of research with journals, magazines, handbooks, and even organizations that have the same goal. Examples of these include for instance: *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *International Review of Qualitative Research* and *Qualitative Report* as journals, International Association of Qualitative Inquiry (IAQI), American Evaluation Association (AEA), and Association for Qualitative Research (AQR), as associations, in addition to an innumerous number of books, handbooks, and articles. All these draw a well-detailed picture of the qualitative research, its methods and tools.

In the case of my research study, the situation is no different from other qualitative research ones. Instead of looking at books of foreign countries that I have no relation to, a choice that could make interpreting a much difficult task because I would be an outsider, I use two series of books to analyze: a Syrian group which belongs to my native culture, and a Brazilian one; the books of my second country and culture by choice and love. In both contexts, I consider myself an insider. Five years of living in Brazil could break many barriers of cultural difference between my Arab and Brazilian sides, could also take away many shocks and create a better and deeper understanding of the Brazilian way of thinking and behaving.

Some important features of the qualitative research that are essential to my type of study can be seen in Creswell (2009), in my opinion, one of the best books about research that enables the reader to compare and contrast the three approaches to research; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. It takes the reader on a journey from the beginning with the main philosophic assumptions about each

approach in an easy-to-read way. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research, for example, saying:

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. Data typically collected in the participant's setting. Data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning. and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. Creswell (2009:37)

Creswell also explains important qualitative research features that I find especially interesting to mention here, such as:

a) Qualitative research takes place in natural settings where human behavior occurs in contrast to controlled settings where quantitative one does;

b) theories or hypotheses in quantitative research are prepared before the research contrary to the situation in the qualitative one where, in many cases, the researchers start working without a fully determined question or theory in their minds a priori;

c) the essential tool in qualitative research is the researcher, while in quantitative research, tools, instruments, mechanisms have the most importance;

d) output data type differs totally between qualitative and quantitative research. While results are shown in descriptions in the former, they are mostly shown in numbers in the latter;

e) while quantitative studies try to quantify or draw in numbers the realities they study, qualitative ones seek describing those realities, understanding how they are perceived by participants instead of just showing them in numbers. That way, qualitative studies have a special interest in the processes happening, while quantitative ones focus more on results. As a result, focusing on processes results in more details and fewer generalizations as opposed to the quantitative ones.

It is important to mention here that, in most cases, being a detail-seeking type of research, qualitative research bases its interpretation on the 'tacit' knowledge of the researcher rather than on seen differences in numbers. This is why results are rarely quantified, and even when they can be, it is not the main point of the research. The

most sensitive part of qualitative research, in my opinion, is its reliability, because, in qualitative research, the researcher needs much more than mathematical preciseness to be taken seriously. In other words, the study needs to be very much coherent and well-organized. As we can see throughout this chapter and the whole research area, such features apply to this thesis, and this is why I chose qualitative research.

In his book, *How to Elaborate Research Projects (2002), (Como Elaborar Projetos de Pesquisa)*, Antonio Carlos Gil offers a very interesting categorization for types of research projects based on either their objectives or technical proceedings. Based on their objectives, research projects can be divided into:

A) *Exploratory* that tries to describe problems and/or create a hypothesis about them. They usually have a flexible way of organization, and these types of projects usually include consulting the related literature, interviewing people who have experiences related to the problem and analyzing examples of the problem to facilitate its understanding.

B) *Descriptive* with their main objective describing different characteristics of a phenomenon or an event to create or discover relationships between different variables. They usually use questionnaires and systematic observation. The fact that these projects sometimes try to describe existing relationships between variables makes them appear as exploratory sometimes.

C) *Explicative* which try to identify the main factors that result in a specific phenomenon. They explain why and how a specific phenomenon happens and this is the reason they may be the projects that go the deepest.

Applying this classification to my research shows that it is mainly a descriptive one, even though sometimes it may show additionally other less important objectives.

Later on, Gil (2002) continues to classify the projects based on their technical procedures. This classification includes bibliographic, documental, experimental, ex-post-facto which tries to verify the existence of a relation between the phenomenon and something that happens after it, field study, case study, action research and participating research. Even a small explanation for each type would result in a huge volume of writing which has no place here due to limits of space and time. Again, based on the procedures' categorization, this research is bibliographic research, which, according to Gil (2002), has as its main aim of analysis bibliographic sources, teaching materials that Gil calls informative reference books (livros de referência informativa). Gil (2002:44) describes bibliographic research as follows:

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[Bibliographic research] is developed out of already studied materials, it consists mainly of scientific books and articles. Even though almost all studies require a work of this kind, there are studies based exclusively on bibliographic sources, just as a certain number of studies is developed based on the technique of content analysis.[4]

Having cleared a bit about the type of the research, it is important to explain a little about the techniques, and methods I use along this path. According to Sevilla et al. (1992), descriptive research has different types, such as case studies, surveys, developmental studies, follow-up studies, documentary analysis, trend analyses and correlational studies. We need to be aware that different categorizations may sometimes result in a different classification of a certain study. However, the added explanation may serve to keep any confusion minimized. Sevilla (1992:108) states explaining documentary analysis: "If your study involves gathering information by examining records and documents, the method that you may use is the *documentary analysis technique*. This method is often referred to as *content analysis*." The book uses documentary analysis and content analysis almost interchangeably, while Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) call content analysis a methodology. Content analysis, (or documentary analysis), as Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) advocate, systematically transforms large amounts of data into a "highly organized and concise summary of key results." Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017:94). So, in my case, having six books to be analyzed, my research type is documentary analysis too, and the technique I use is content analysis since it suits my objective best, which is converting six English teaching books into more organized and more to the point chunks of data.

Document analysis according to Bowen (2009) starts with skimming the materials, reading them more thoroughly, and then interpreting them. These steps are exactly the ones I used during my study. This process includes both content and thematic analysis. Content analysis is a form of organizing the content of the document into more defined categories, while thematic analysis, which I also use here, is a form of pattern recognition where instead of describing and classifying whatever is in the books, the researcher seeks specific themes in the documents, Bowen (2009). Content analysis and thematic analysis usually work together and form two important

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[4] Original in Portuguese *[Pesquisa bibliográfica] é desenvolvida a partir de material já elaborado, constituído principalmente de livros e artigos científicos. Embora em quase todos os estudos seja exigido algum tipo de trabalho desta natureza, há pesquisas desenvolvidas exclusivamente a partir de fontes bibliográficas, assim como certo número de pesquisas desenvolvidas a partir da técnica de análise de conteúdo.*

techniques of document analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to remember here that, document analysis is not only textual, and that is why my study sought cultural items in pictures used in the books as well. All these phases take place after defining the criteria of analysis hand in hand with the literature review in the next two chapters.

Consequently, comes the next part where, based on the findings, I offer possible comparisons, explanations, then conclusions and recommendations. The way certain aspects of culture appear in the book may have its reasons which can be clarified. Some assumptions are made about the status quo of local culture in the books, and finally ideas and suggestions for possible improvements that can benefit the educational process.

2.4 THE STUDIED MATERIALS

It is essential to bring here some information about the materials I took as the corpus of this research. As previously mentioned, my main interest was exactly to compare aspects of both native or local cultures in the selected coursebooks. The Brazilian series chosen is called *High Up*, by Reinildes Dias, Leina Jucá and Raquel Faria. The series was published in 2013 by Macmillan Brazil, and it was approved to be part of the collections available to public schools through the National Textbook Program[5] within the component Foreign Language (English/Spanish) in 2015.

High Up presents itself as a collection of English that is elaborated following the national curricular parameters in Brazil. It tries to attend the needs Brazilian high school student. The collection prepares students to understand different writing genres by offering up-to-date content. It also gives tips for students on how it is possible to expand their English outside the language classroom, besides, it offers reflecting spaces about personal and vocational habits.

The series contains three books, High Up 1, 2 and 3, figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Each book is divided into eight units. The series follows Brazil's National Curricular Parameters (PCN/1998) and is directed to Brazilian students at high schools (Ensino Médio), which comprises the last three years of basic education before the student is ready to proceed to the university.

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[5] In Portuguese: Programa Nacional do Livro Didático (PNLD), componente Língua Estrangeira (Inglês e Espanhol).

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On the other side, the Syrian series I chose is called *English for Starters.* I analyze the books English for Starters 10, English for Starters 11, and English for Starters 12 as shown in figures 4, 5, 6 respectively. It was made on the request of the Syrian Ministry of Education as a way towards improving the English teaching materials in the country in the middle of the 2000s.

The series introduces itself as a communicative course in English that takes into account the most modern methodology of teaching. It aims at stimulating the students' interest in English and developing their confidence through different activities that focus equally on all linguistic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. These materials are based on the General Framework and Outcomes of English Curricula in Syria, where English is regarded a foreign language. The introduction of the series refers clearly to culture as an important component of the thematic input of the series that builds students knowledge of national and international culture with strong emphasis on the Syrian one.

The previous series that used Grammar-translation method had been in use until *English for Starters* came to replace it gradually in 2005, Khoja and Mohapatra (2017). The chosen series is based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT), an approach to language teaching that has interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of studying the language. The series is written by Simon Haines, a member of the English Department in the School of Humanities at the Australian National University, Australia, while the adaptation to the Syrian culture was realized by a team of Syrian authors and teachers that include Nibal Hanna, Leena al Thiab, Samar al Shishakli, Soror Shalash and Rasha Bayzid. The publisher is the famous British publishing house York Press in London as for the original edition, and publishing and distribution in Syria are carried on by Maktabat el Nashr el Tarbawi el Souri (Syrian Educational Publishers). The first edition was released in 2010, and a reprint was launched in 2014. The books are chosen because they are the equivalent of the Brazilian ones. In other words, similarities are there on different levels, for example, both series of books are taught in the public-school context in an educational system that considers and teaches English as a foreign language. Besides, both groups of books were created for a specific country with a certain cultural context in mind. Finally, both groups are taught for the same age groups and classes, which are students between fifteen to eighteen years old that are students of the tenth to the twelfth grade, or the first secondary to the third secondary grade.

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2.5 The National Program of Books and Courseware (PNLD)

A Brazilian educational program as a partnership between the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the National Fund of Developing Education. The main goal is to buy and distribute books and courseware for public schools' students. According to MEC, the function of PNLD is to evaluate and offer pedagogic didactic and literary materials for different types of schools free of charge in a systematic non-profit form.

PNLD maintains its functions through complex processes that include publishing notices about required rules to be followed while creating the needed didactic materials, accepting publishing houses to participate in the publishing process, evaluating the works of these publishers, offering teaching guides, choosing, acquiring and producing the materials, then distributing these materials in the benefitting schools.

High Up, the selected series in this study, was approved by PNLD in 2015, with its objectives including developing the literacy of students to use English language in social practices of communication in oral, written, printed and digital modalities. In addition to reflect about the language and culture as components of citizenship in addition to eliminating stereotypes and prejudices. ("High Up,"2019)

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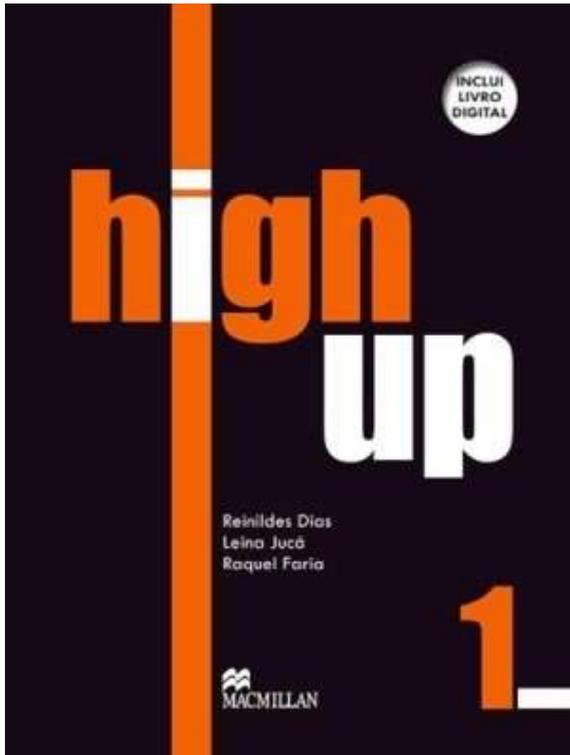
Figure.1 High Up 1
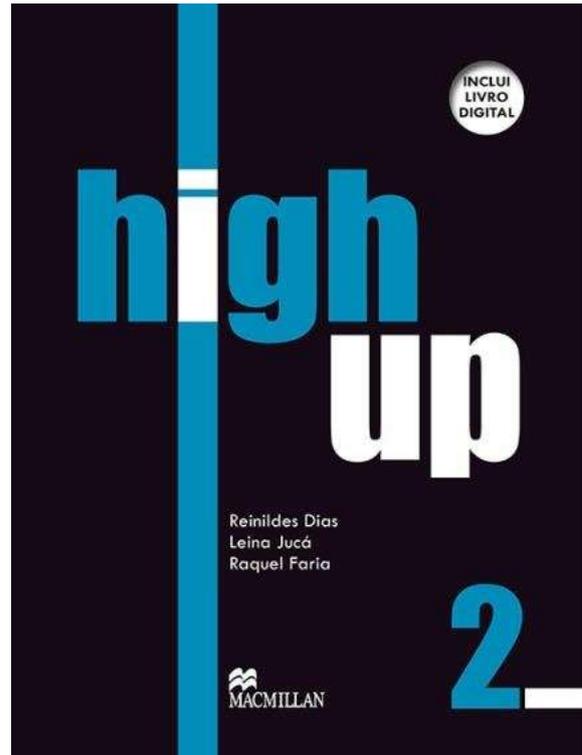
Figure.2 High Up 2
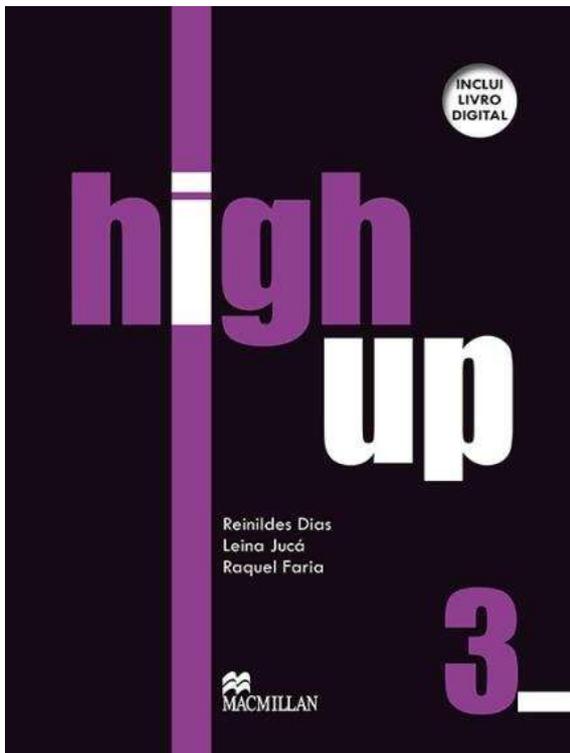
Figure.3 High Up 3
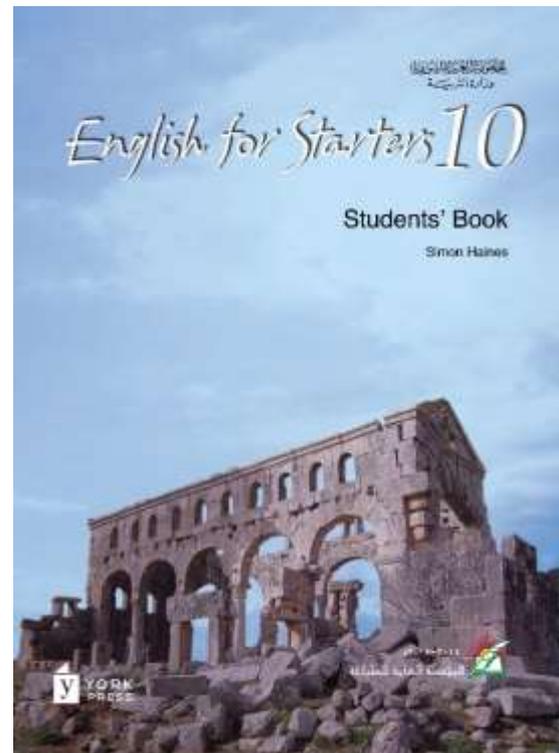
Figure.4 English for Starters 10

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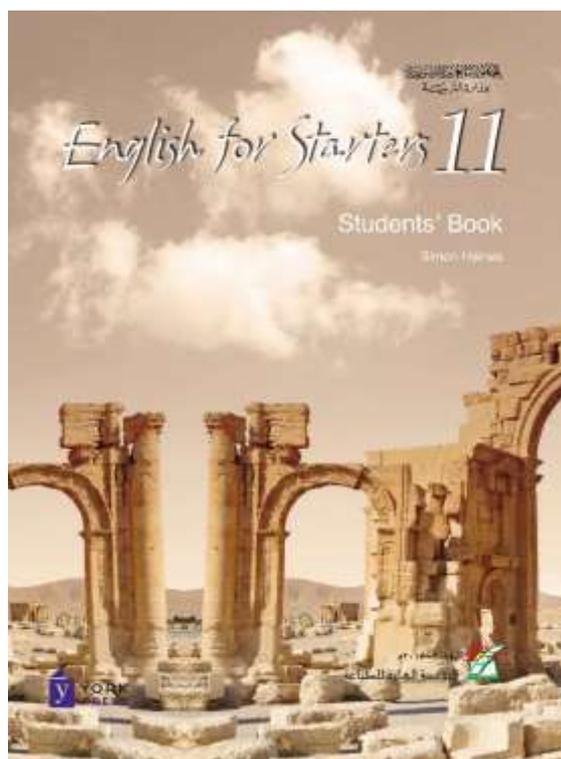
Figure.5 English for Starters 11
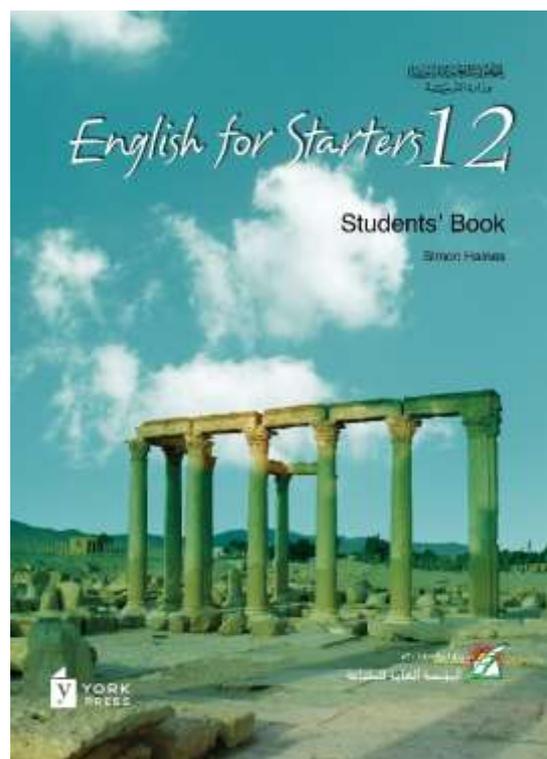
Figure.6 English for Starters 12

2.6 ANALYSIS CRITERIA

Different criteria were used in content analysis, the choices I made are based on a literature review of culture definitions and concepts shown in a detailed way in Chapter Three. The categories I chose are 1- lifestyles, 2- works and practices of art, intellectual activity and entertainment, 3- human development factor. I chose these categories because, first: they are shared between different definitions and categorizations of important conceptualizations of culture, Tylor (2016), Arnolds (1867), and Sapir (1949). Second: they are wide and aspects related to them are easy to find when available, this results in being less vague when treating such a hard-to-catch term like culture. Third, these broad categories include a great range of smaller aspects, representations, and items that we can virtually fit all encountered items.

Examples of items that belong to each category include and are not exclusive to the following; category one includes language, habits, customs, values, beliefs, traditional clothes, stereotypes, food, national events and holidays, family and religion-related concepts, items and people, category two includes arts, literature, fun activities, scientific activities, people, and items related to these in addition to any

product of mentioned or related activities, and finally, the third category is related to all items directed to improving living conditions of the cultural group, giving them better opportunities or making their life easier, such as; environment preservation, world improvement, legal and governmental system, money and related items, newspapers, and inventions. Table. 1, Cultural Representations, is the tool I use for generating and organizing data. It contains fields to mention the book, page number, place and type of the representation, the broad category it belongs to, and the narrower type of the item.

The function of this table is to facilitate generating data, showing them, and making it easier to compare and contrast the two series. It is important to mention here that the same table design will be used different times depending on the necessities of the research without any change in its main fields.

However, it is essential to remind that with all the importance this table has for the research, as it facilitates both generating and organizing data, it is unnecessary to include the full content of the analysis in the research text. Instead, smaller parts of the table are used every time comparison or a sample is needed. The full table, filled with the complete results of the analysis, is kept in the drafts of the research, and available on-demand if necessary.

On the other hand, table.2, one-category comparison, the smaller version, is meant to compare data that belong to the same category, taken from one or more books.

The way I used the two tables is the following: at first, I analyzed the whole content of the chosen materials using table.1. This step is essential to transfer the huge amount of data I have into a smaller and better-organized material with only the necessary information. Then, having data ready to any further analysis, I can retrieve the needed parts from table.1 and use them while discussing the content with table.2, because table.2 is easier for readers, and because there is no intrinsic necessity to bring together all three broad categories to discuss together. Let's say that I am discussing the representation of art and artists, then all my examples from the text would be from category 2, easily fit in table.2. Later, I can draw any comparisons after having cited the needed examples to prove a specific point.

After comparison and discussion, comes the last part of the research which is conclusions, and recommendations. Possible insights which can result in better results for the educational process and increasing the intercultural competence of learners.

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Following the logic of the content analysis work throughout the research, I only analyze the content in the books. In other words, I do not interview teachers, students, material designers or other ELT educationalists. I do not attend classes or analyze recorded ones either. Reasons for my data generation method include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The type of research.

Being a master's degree thesis places different limits on time, size, and quantity of issues that can be researched. As an MA student, I had to carry on different tasks during the course time such as studying theoretical and applied subjects and participating in extracurricular activities and events…etc. All this resulted in having less time dedicated to the actual research paper.

- The nature of the research.

We can see from Chapter One how this research compares educational cultural materials from Brazil and Syria, still, the process of analysis is, fortunately, not limited to a geographical place. Analysis can be done anywhere and this facilitates the research and requires less effort. This is one of the essential reasons for choosing documental analysis research. The current situation in Syria, that is, lack of electricity for long periods during the day, being short on gas, gasoline, and even water sometimes, the terribly slow internet, in addition to the difficult daily life there would make it totally impossible to choose any other form of research that requires me to travel there or even to ask for the help of peer teachers to record classes for example.

These reasons made my choices concerning the type of research, the techniques, and methods used, the most adequate ones for the time being.

All in all, having explained that much about the methodology I followed during the research, theorized enough about the type of the research and techniques used, and justified my decisions along this methodological road, I think now is the right time to move to Chapter Three, the one that deals with the issue of culture, its definitions and aspects. A chapter that will not be that easy, due to the complexity of the term, however, it is essential before we can analyze any cultural content. This is because

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without its insights and elaboration the term culture would keep us in the land of nowhere forever.

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BOOK	PAGE NUMBER	PLACE & TYPE OF THE REPRESENTATION	CATEGORY 1: LIFESTYLES	CATEGORY 2: ART, INTELLECTUALITY & ENTERTAINMENT.	CATEGORY 3: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	THE NARROWER TYPE OF THE ITEM.

Table.1 Cultural Representations

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CULTURAL CATEGORY	THE SUBCATEGORY	BOOK	PAGE NUMBER	PLACE & TYPE OF THE REPRESENTATION

Table.2 One-category comparison

CHAPTER THREE – CULTURE AND ELT: CATCHING THE 'HAWAA'[6]

الفصل الثالث: الثقافة وتدريس الإنكليزية: الإمساك بالهواء

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. (Williams, 2015: 49)

Nothing is more indeterminate than this word (culture), and nothing more deceptive than its application to all nations and periods. (Herder, 1784-9 1)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

What is 'Culture'? A common starting point for many authors in books and articles that deal with studies about culture is stating different perspectives, explaining the nature and the historical development of such a term. Even though this research is relatively limited in its scope, I find it inevitable to start in that way, shedding some light on that 'difficult-to-catch' term, and explaining more about certain aspects I am going to base my comparison between the materials on.

The term 'Culture' has been around for a long time, but still, this does not make it easier to be defined or understood. Apte (1994: 2001) considers the problem of defining culture stating that "despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature."

Cuche (1999) and Williams (2015) describe the 18th and 19th centuries as the time of consolidation of the term culture in different fields of knowledge. The difficult task of defining culture comes from its being a multidisciplinary-discussed term. Fields such as sociology, anthropology, history, communication, administration, economy, among others, all include significant and robust literature trying to describe, discuss, and problematize the concept. Each field almost does the job in itself, leading to always having new perspectives, looking at the term on one hand, and enriching its theoretical and practical inheritance on the other.

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[6] 'Air' in Arabic.

3.2 GOING DEEPER INTO THE TERM

The notion of culture, as many in the field of social sciences, has been repeatedly analyzed, defined and redefined. Such a term has been attributed to so many meanings and definitions that they, at times, even look contradictory. Values, traditions, group identities, rules of dealing, and even thinking and behaving standards can all be included under the umbrella of culture.

Laraia (2001) justifies culture's diverse meanings by its belonging to adaptive, cognitive and symbolic systems. Cuche (1999) emphasizes that the term culture accepts such a variety due to its interdisciplinarity, and that's why it has different social and scientific uses that can be decided based on the perspective of the researcher. Mendes (2015) offers a literature review for the origin, development and use of the term culture, starting with its first use in the 13th century until the contemporary one. Due to the importance of knowing a bit about such a rich development, I would mention here some of the important milestones the term passed through.

The use of the term goes back to the thirteenth century when it was figuratively used to refer to the culture of the spirit or to developing a specific faculty. But it was not until the eighteenth century when the term was welcomed in the academic and intellectual fields when it started to appear in expressions like 'the culture of arts', 'the culture of literature,' and 'the culture of science'.

After that, culture started to be used on its own without the need to be attached to another word; it referred to the formation and education of the spirit. Later, the term started to refer to the state of the educated or cultivated spirit, and to the 'state of the individual that has culture'. It is worth noticing here that this use paved the way to the appearance of the concept of the 'spirit without culture' and created a kind of opposition between 'nature' and 'culture'. It is important to mention here that its use at that time was merely descriptive, i.e., it only described a situation of having or not a culture. Nothing was mentioned about the necessity or preference of changing the situation of not having a culture to that of having one.

Then, with the changes in the scientific society towards studying communities more deeply, came the necessity and will to build the concept of culture. Some theories

at that time justified the great variation between human groups by two factors: biological characters and geographic space. The first factor helped theories propose the idea that some races are supposedly better equipped than others to have a 'better', 'higher' or 'more civilized' cultures. The second factor explained that variations and differences in the living environment can improve or give way a specific culture.

Then came one of the most important and notorious definitions of culture by Edward Tylor (1871:1) who affirms that "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." That definition and the work of Tylor, in general, were on the one hand very important because of Tylor's methodology and his dedication to describe and analyze different sides of culture. However, criticism was heavily directed to them due to their 'evolutionist' nature. His work ordered different cultures as if on an evolution scale, meaning that some cultures are potentially less developed and that others are supposedly more civilized. Although highly criticized, Tylor's work gave the engine start for many researchers to start their expedition to find more limited definitions and improve all about they could in his work.

Following more recent changes, we could see that the term itself has been used in basically three different ways since the beginning of the 19th century, as Avruch (1998) explains them. The first is stated in Matthew Arnolds (1867) which attributes culture to specific artistic and intellectual products. These products differentiate a small social group inside a bigger one, which does not share these products. Showing the smaller group as a source of culture, and the bigger group as a potential source of anarchy. This way of defining culture is rather an aesthetical than a social one.

The second way was introduced by Edward Tylor (1871) by which he refers to the quality of being in a social group who could be arrayed on an evolutionary continuum that starts by "savagery" all along to reach "civilization". Tylor (1871) in his early-mentioned definition of culture contrasts that of Arnolds (1867), which limits culture to a few members of society.

This definition by Tylor was later heavily criticized and widely rejected for his 'evolutionism' because it evaluates culture in terms of savage and civilized. In his second chapter, named 'The Development of Culture', Tylor states that development of culture is

the movement from a savage, to barbaric then civilized culture. The use of terms such as 'the educated world', 'savages' and 'barbarians' is a prevalent feature of that work which could be described as highly discriminatory.

German-American Franz Boas, the so-called "Father of American anthropology," virtually against Tylor, believed that studying a culture's customs and traditions should be conducted in its cultural context, the origin, and the history of that community. This idea specifically is one of the important ones in my research as looking at the cultural aspects of the books is to be done mainly in the local cultural context.

However, Tylor's work is accredited for his use of the "complex whole", the term, which changed the way of looking at culture from separated products to fully integrated systems, and this, for sure, facilitated understanding the concept. The third way of defining culture was introduced by the aforementioned Franz Boas and his students. Their work has its base in the earlier works of the German philosopher Johann von Herder. Boas was totally against "evolutionism" because, in his view, it categorized cultures as 'high' and 'low', 'savage' and 'civilized'. He rather he defended looking at different cultures without any judgment.

Edward Sapir (1949) is another scholar who offers his categorization of the definitions of culture dividing its various definitions into three main ones. The first, rather used by historians and ethnologists, refers to any "socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual" (1949:309). Thus, it includes all that is made by man from habits to work tools. For instance, North Indians' belief in medicine is as much a cultural element as the electric dynamo of modern industry, that is, all are equal cultural elements. From that perspective, all human beings are cultured no matter how complex or simple their culture would look. Cultures, in this sense, may have an infinite number of cultural elements, but yet, have no order as higher or lower as well as better or worse, and no moral scale of any kind. This same perspective is referred to as 'civilization' by Sapir (1949). The second way of defining culture has a strong relation to the idea of individual refinement built upon experiences and knowledge. This could result, in its worst forms, in a degenerate way of dealing with the manners and taste of the common. The third one is the most indefinite and ambiguous one which mixes some senses of the former two in addition to getting away from exclusiveness. It includes the general attitudes, lifestyles,

and some cultural manifestations that differentiate a particular cultural group from another. This vague way of defining culture brings it closest to be looked at as the "spirit" of people.

For the sake of passing a wider perspective of different culture definitions, but without further theorizing about the issue, I cite different points of view towards this concept as collected by Spencer-Oatey (2012: 2):

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other, as conditional elements of future action. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952: 181 as cited in Adler 1997: 14);

> Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves. (Schwartz 1992 as cited in Avruch 1998: 17);

> [Culture] is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede 1994: 5);

> [Culture is] the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next. (Matsumoto 1996: 16);

> Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior. (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 3).

For sure, we could spend pages and pages with quotes from different authors at different moments in time that come up with definitions of the term culture. The ones

above are just a quick sample, and I am sure each one of us would be able to explain the way we see culture in our contexts. That is what makes studying and working with such a concept a fascinating endeavor as we get caught by many interesting possibilities and exciting paths to follow.

As of my personal understanding of culture to be shared with the reader after all these concepts have been included and referenced, I believe that what matters for defining culture is not what it is, but rather what it includes. Those smaller concepts that together create our cultural identity and differentiate each cultural group of people from others are what matter for me. Starting with a basic identity that tells a person where he or she belongs, passing to the certain habits of living, in addition to these deep values that live well behind the conscious thinking in the subconscious, ruling our judgment and appreciation internal system. All these mixed with all the forms of entertainment and leisure that we as a whole appreciate and the activities that we do for being our customs and traditions, plus even the specific commercial activities that come from our cultural inheritance. Culture for me is all these items and more that cannot even be counted easily but are there in our mind and life all the time.

3.3 THE FUNCTIONALIST ANALYSIS OF CULTURE

It is inevitable to theorize about culture without mentioning Malinowski and his functionalist analysis of culture. As mentioned earlier, Franz Boas' work came as a reaction to Tylor's evolutionist nature of definitions and theorizations about culture. Boas' work looks at cultures descriptively and without giving them places on an evolutionist continuum, and this led to his way of registering even oral activities of studied cultural groups excessively. So, here we can see the reaction of Malinowski emphasizing that cultures should be analyzed directly, not through the writings of someone else and without going back to the origin.

As Cuche (1999) clearly states, Malinowski's justification for the no writing-way of cultural activity. For Malinowski, it does not matter if a specific activity exists here or there, what matters is what function such activity does in the context of a specific culture

because each culture is a system of interfering elements that none of them can be studied separately. In his words,

> [In each culture], each custom, each object, each idea and each belief exercise a specific vital function, has a specific task to achieve, represent a noninterchangeable part of the totality of the organic.[7] (Cuche, 1999: 71).

For Malinowski, cultures should be studied synchronically, without 'evolutionistly' looking to the future, or 'difusionistly' looking to the past. He argues that it is only the present who has the keys to understanding cultures. For him, all elements of culture work together as a whole system to preserve that identity and way of life. Malinowski in his book *Scientific Theory of Culture* (1961) elaborates about the functional character of cultures. A very controversial theory in which he explains that different elements of culture have the task of meeting the needs of the individual (being a kind of a special animal) such as food, reproduction, and protection.

Culture, in that sense, is the functional way through which the individual can satisfy these natural needs, but collectively for all the members of the cultural group. Malinowski (1961) continues defining the concrete elements of the culture as those institutions which include the culture members and that any cultural aspect should be directly related to those institutions. In light of this theory, the object of the anthropological study is the institutions whether economic, educational, juridical, among others, and the relations between them, Cuche (1999). Although this theory is not essential for this research, however, it played a great role in guiding the anthropological studies at its time and enriched the cultural discussion in general.

3.4 THE NATURE OF CULTURE

Even though the term possesses different conceptualizations, we still may trace some of its qualities and analyze them no matter which definition we believe suits our orientations more. Spencer-Oatey (2012) states some of these conceptualizations such

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[7] Original in Portuguese: *[em toda cultura] cada costume, cada objeto, cada ideia e cada crença exercem uma certa função vital, têm uma certa tarefa a realizar, representam uma parte insubstituível da totalidade orgânica.*

as the "multi-layered nature of culture." Within the same line of thought, Schein (1990) argues that there are three levels we may distinguish analyzing culture that are strongly connected. The first layer is the surface or the 'observable artifacts' of a culture. This layer contains the physical/observable cultural products that belong to a specific culture. This includes, for instance, dress code, ways of greeting people, and all apparent behavior of a certain cultural group. This level is easy to be seen, but explaining it, we certainly need to know the next deeper layer, which is the one that refers to 'values.'

Espoused values, on the other hand, compose the second layer of culture. A difficult to be seen deeper set of beliefs or values that govern a group's cultural behavior. This second layer justifies the apparent choices members of the cultural group make and makes them reasonable.

Assumptions, the third layer, are the deepest base and reasons for the values. Many times, the individual memory can miss assumptions, and not even recognize them perfectly due to the lack of the direct use of them. This is a kind of almost a secret layer and reaching it requires knowing what questions to ask and how to search for it.

The following example hopefully explains better these layers. The word *Turkish* in Portuguese means 'Turco'. In some Brazilian societies, the referent includes Arabs too, as they were part of the Ottoman Empire until the beginnings of the 20th century. The word 'Turco' became attached to a cultural behavior of arrivals in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century running away from war and poverty in the Arab world that resulted from the Ottoman Empire's participation in WWI. These newcomers had the behavior of being too economic with money and resources they found when they came to Brazil. As for Brazilians who seldom suffered such situations of need, such behavior was not accepted, and the word 'Turco' became a synonym for stingy. Applying the layers of culture on this example may result in the following explanation:

The newcomers, Arabs or Turks, had a specific behavior that is living economically and not wasting money for complementary things in life such as restaurants, parties, and expensive products. This is the first layer, the observable behavior. The second layer or the espoused value behind this behavior is that wasting money is a bad habit and essentials are the priority when it comes to spending money. The deepest layer or the assumptions in this specific example can be related to different religious and cultural

sources. A religious source is from different Islamic teachings that prompt the preservation of graces such as food, water, money…etc. The cultural source comes from the difficult economic situations which these newcomers suffered before coming to Brazil, which in turn created the habit of economizing and saving whenever possible for emergencies and the bad days. These two assumptions are not easy to reach; sometimes even the cultural group members forget the assumptions there behind their actions, and that is why reaching these assumptions requires making the correct questions. It is important to note here that, assumptions are undebatable unlike values, and sometimes they are even unthinkable about. They are always taken for granted, and they have a value-strengthening effect.

We move on and then talk about the cultural effect on behavior and its interpretation. As explained earlier, each culture has its values whether obvious or embedded, easily seen or deeply hidden. Such values differ greatly between cultures to the extent that they can even contradict each other sometimes. This contradiction may lead to misunderstandings and strange situations many times due to our subconscious use of our cultural values not only to govern our behavior but also to interpret others' behavior. This interpretation takes place even when the interpreted behavior belongs to society members who do not share our cultural values as in the situations of travel, immigration, international studies, etc. Peterson (2004) describes a situation where misunderstanding occurs due to different cultural values. According to this author, at American schools, students are always encouraged to voice their opinions, their participation is highly appreciated, their acts and differentiation are seen as an asset. For him, the American culture embodies this perspective in the proverb "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

On the other hand, Japanese students are more encouraged to act in unison, as a group, instead of making individual or personal decisions. They are taught to work in cohesion, take decisions in groups, act together, and always work and cooperate as a team. For Peterson (2004), the Japanese culture preaches such value through the proverb "The goose that honks gets shot."

Based on such an explanation, an American student in a Japanese school could be considered arrogant, egoist, and even disrespectful, and for the same reasons, a

Japanese student in an American school can be considered shy, with low self-esteem and low self-confidence, and even lower educational level than others. Such a misunderstanding in both situations is a result of the use of our culture, not only to behave, but also to judge others, even though in many situations, this judgment tends to be incorrect.

Culture is different from both unique individual personality and universal human nature. It sometimes happens to misunderstand cultural values as a specific individual or general human ones. That is why it is important to clarify what each of these means. Human nature is common for all human beings, it is universal, inherited, and exists in everyone's mind. It explains the way our body and mind work. The way we feel emotions and pain, and the way we perceive the world around us with our senses. Then, receiving these senses in the same way, how we react, express and deal with these feelings, emotions, and necessities can be greatly modified by culture. On the other hand, our particular personality is a result of individual experiences and is partly a result of a specific set of genes, and partly learned over personal experiences. Learning, in this case, can have two sources, personal experiences and culture. Behaviors shared between cultural groups' members and, at the same time limited to them, are dictated by culture rather than personal nature or experiences.

To clarify this point, I would use an example from the Arab general[8] culture, which would be the emotional behavior of males in the Arab world at times of death of family members. A widespread reaction to sad events such as the death of a close family member would be the emotion of sadness for the loss; however, cultures can dictate to express these emotions in different ways and through different reactions. Being a patriarchal society where men are supposed to show strength and control over their feelings, Arab communities expect the man to hide any emotional 'signs of weakness', and the cultural behavior at such times would be avoiding crying, which is a natural reaction for sadness, and trying their best to show or give 'logical' consolations such as "*This is the way of life*", "*We are all walking on that path*" etc. Still, personal experiences may sometimes change this cultural behavior when a man cannot for a reason or another

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[8] I use the word *general* here to refer to a concept shared all around the Arab countries, hence, it is not from the Syrian Arab culture only.

hold himself from crying and showing great affection for the ones who passed away. This example shows the three kinds of possible behavior at a specific time, and it helps clarify existing differences between universal, cultural, and personal nature.

3.5 CULTURAL REFERENCES/ASPECTS (CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS)

Out of the diverse definitions of culture, the interpretation used by Canedo (2009) is relatively a clear and well-categorized one, in my opinion. It refers to three fundamental conceptions of culture: (a) lifestyles that characterize collectivity; (b) works and practices of art, intellectual activity and entertainment and (c) human development factor.

These three conceptions may be explained as follows: in the first concept (a), culture is a system of signs and meanings created as a result of the social interaction of individuals who, with time, generate their ways of thinking, identities, and values. Aspects included in this conception would be the immaterial cultural inheritance, language, stereotypes, foods, traditions, religion, beliefs, values, family, events, and holidays and social organization of each community.

The second concept (b), intellectual and entertainment activities, in addition to works of art, are a bit more restricted sides of culture as they are usually carried out as an economic activity, which limits their audience. At the same time, as Rubim (1997) explains, such works are 'strategic for the development of nations' because they generate both jobs and income. In this regard, Canedo (2009) states that the diversity of this part includes traditional and cultural activities like literature, visual arts, theater, music, dancing, architecture and handicrafts, creative industries such as fashion, design, advertising, decoration, sports, tourism, electronic devices, technology, telephony, internet in addition to toys and electronic games. All those activities include preserving the culture and profiting economically because of it.

As for the third conception of culture (c), it relates more to the social development factor, and cultural activities are looked at as both social and political stimuli, Canedo (2009) claims.

Canedo continues summarizing these three concepts as; one which looks at all society members as culture producers through the values and meanings they have,

another about producing, distributing and consuming a series of activities and services which conform to a system of cultural industry, and a third concept which serves as an instrument for political and social development, and includes whatever improves the life of this cultural group.

Even though defining culture proved to be a complex task, as culture is an active component in different fields of knowledge, such as sociology, anthropology, and education among many others. We may say that defining cultural aspects and getting to know what items in a society's life belong to its culture (or cultures) is luckily an easier task.

Choosing specific cultural references and analyzing them as presented in the studied material is a vital part of my work here, which is why I am going to shed some light on potential cultural collections, items, or areas in general first. In its description of the culture, The National Center for Cultural Competence (2000: 1) states that it refers to:

an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group.

In this description, we can see different potential categories that are usable as cultural aspects to be searched for in the teaching materials. However, they are still very general and can apply to a great number of aspects. Based on this description and other early-mentioned definitions, my categories of analysis are going to include (yet not be limited to) the following:

A- Beliefs, habits, traditions, values, and related items, institutions, and people;

B- Art, science, sports, living areas, commercial activities in additions to items, people, and institutions related;

C- Life- and world-improving activities, items, and people.

It is important here to emphasize that titles of these categories are limited, unlike the items, people, and institutions related to them. Thus, we expect a great number of cultural manifestations to represent these categories in the books studied.

3.6 CULTURE AND EDUCATION

The connection between culture and education is not an issue that needs too much theorizing to justify it. Almost everyone who has ever been to school can remember different occasions when new cultural content was introduced into their classroom, the happiness of discovering something new, the richness of meeting new concepts or ways of thinking…etc. The importance of having cultural content in the educational context is explained by professor Barend van Heusden (2016) from the University College Groningen based in Groningen, the Netherlands. He argues that integrating culture in education makes students reflect about their own culture and the other ones, in addition to making them reflect on what culture is in a general sense.

This, according to Heusden (2016), makes students more present members of the society as they can develop a kind of identity that brings them together with other members of that cultural group. It can also give them a chance to receive that culture and continue sharing that inheritance. Reflecting on others' cultures, on the other hand, may result in fewer stereotypes and more tolerance, as well as a better understanding of the other, and a chance to get away from the pre-formed ideas about other cultures and their members. In today's world, understanding the other or not could be the only difference between a cooperative international citizen or an extremist with a shotgun in his hand massively killing innocent people. This benefit of cultural content is mainly one of the most important benefits and most connected to our life; as understanding and tolerance are the only shields against terrorism and hate crimes that are, unfortunately, growing every day more and more by nationalists and extremists all around the world.

Reflecting on culture, in general, has the potentiality of creating active society members who, instead of just receiving culture passively, are getting interested in promoting it, producing their part of it, new songs, novels, dishes, clothes, etc. This can serve the society in general as its culture is growing, in addition to bringing the newer generations closer with new cultural products instead of just repeating older ones. Cultures that do not have new products, that are not renovated and renewed by their younger society members run the risk of becoming too old or too outdated to comply with the modern lifestyles. These cultures may also get more and more distant from their

community members, becoming mere memories in the minds of older generations and getting lost in the jam of stronger ones intensified by communication revolution, globalization, immigration, and technology.

With all that said, we can see how important it is to include culture in our syllabus, we can see its benefits for students and society on the unity and cultural side probably, but still, there is much more to come. In most modern communities, schools are getting more and more diverse every day. Students do not belong anymore to one social class, color, race, nationality, mother tongue, etc. In different contexts, we can see how societies are becoming a mixing pot with students that feature too many differences; sometimes more differences than similarities.

Still, all those students are supposed to be taught by one teacher that does not have a lot to share with too many of them. A lack of similarities can easily lead to a lack of understanding. Different educational problems that result from a lack of knowledge about the others have one big result, less education taking place. When the teacher has no idea about the difficulties students of lower social classes get through every day, it is very difficult to give a correct sincere evaluation for them, for instance, it is very easy to mistake a too tired student who walked for forty-five minutes to reach school for a lazy uninterested one. It is easy to mistake a Japanese student who is taught to work in groups for a shy or lacking self-confidence, and a North American student to be rude as for trying to answer fast and without asking for permission. All these examples, whether the misunderstanding included happens as teacher-student or student-student, can impair education from taking place and can turn schools into unbearable places, where students suffer much more than they learn. Consequently, cultural education is a necessity if we really seek better results at our schools, and if we truly care about the integrity of our communities, their development and even safety.

But moving to the language classroom, what culture is there? What content does exist or needs to be included there? Kumaravadivelu (2003) sheds some light on the situation of cultural education, as he explains that until World War II, only the general creative part of the culture as art products used to be taught in language classes. But then, after the end of that conflict, the relative personal part of the culture that includes behavior, beliefs, values and everyday activities came into the spot with the change

towards communication as the main objective of language classes. Since then, culture became an important component that is always participating in forming syllabi. Byram (1989) and Kelly (1976), for instance, discuss extensively this phenomenon, calling culture the hidden or the unstated curriculum.

H. H. Stern (1992) divides cultural teaching into three components: the cognitive component, which relates to types of cultural knowledge, such as geographical knowledge, or the understanding of values and attitudes of that culture; the affective component, which creates empathy for that culture, and the behavioral component, which explains cultural behaviors and teaches students to behave culturally.

Under the same vein, Kumaravadivelu (2003) continues explaining that the majority of these efforts to teach culture while teaching language is directed towards the target culture, or the second language (L2) culture to facilitate communication with the L2 community, that is, native speakers. The author describes the situation;

The overall objective of culture teaching, then, is to help L2 learners develop the ability to use the target language in culturally appropriate ways for the specific purpose of empathizing and interacting with native speakers of the target language. (Kumaravadivelu 2008:114).

Then, Kumaravadivelu comes to criticize such a perspective towards culture in ELT showing the disadvantage of such a limited view that firstly, associates cultural identity with the national one, treating all citizens of one country as one cultural group that belongs to one culture (English or North American), ignoring all subcultural variations. Different works stated in Kumaravadivelu (2003) such as Tannen (1992) and Rampton (1995) explain extensively about many other factors that affect people's cultural identity in addition to the national and linguistic backgrounds, such as ethnic heritage, religion, social class, beliefs, age, sexual orientations, among many others. Kumaravadivelu (2003) continues his criticism explaining that such an educational view gives all attention to the target language culture, and in addition to not representing the richness of the target community cultures, it ignores the diverse world of cultures which learners bring to the classroom. In this way, cultural education experience fails to build on the wealth of cultural content that is already available for it.

To overcome such shortcomings, recent studies by second language teaching theorists such as Gail Robinson and Adrian Holliday started searching for a way education can build on more than the target language culture by emphasizing the 'cross-cultural' experience as Kumaravadivelu (2003) calls it. Robinson (1985), for example, emphasized the importance of looking at culture as a way of living, behaving, interpreting, and understanding the world instead of thinking of it as merely static items. Robinson (1985) discusses exactly that acquiring another culture cannot mean losing ours, but rather having more ways to live and understand the other in a better way. This author uses the metaphor of lenses to refer to this process of acquiring a target culture and assert that it resembles culture to a lens we have. In other words, if we have a blue lens and a person we interact with has a red one, then acquiring the other's culture should result in our being able to use a purple lens instead of exchanging our blue lens for the red one.

Kramsch (2003) is another author that moves in the same direction, looking at cultures' interaction as an opportunity to create a third one, that only exists in the language classroom if teachers could help their students keep free from both cultures, chaining them with their unique 'lens'.

Such studies have emphasized the importance of benefitting from all our cultural resources available, i.e., the students' culture and the target one. Besides, Kumaravadivelu (2003) stresses that only through their own culture, learners can appreciate and understand other cultures, and knowing other cultures, at the same time, allows students to understand better their own culture, values, and choices. He calls such a relation 'Critical Cultural Consciousness'.

These works show clearly the importance of not only teaching culture openly and systematically in language classrooms but also emphasize the essential role the original culture or cultures of students and teachers have and how important it is to recognize its contribution to better learning experiences. Hence, the importance of having the local culture content present in teaching materials becomes clearer and better-supported. After all, this is exactly the focus of this research, to which extent is local culture present in the teaching materials.

3.7 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

We all know that the connection between culture and language has been an important discussion for a long time in the field of education and language teaching. The most important theorization about it is a hypothesis created by Edward Sapir and supported and explained later by his student Benjamin Whorf. The work they conducted in that particular area came to be called the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The most important aspect of the hypothesis is that language decides our thoughts, and controls the way we think and that the structure of the language we speak dictates our view of the world. In other words, language through its metaphors and vocabulary can somehow lead our thinking in one way instead of another. Whorf gave different ideas based on translating phrases taken from an Indian American language of the Apaches to show that they have a different way of organizing their thoughts that may be based on their language being organized differently.

However, much later, Pinker (1995) invalidated that hypothesis, claiming that it lacks scientific evidence, and that recent advances of science about thinking show that no relation is there between language and thinking, and that the misunderstanding may have come from the fact that it is easier to examine our words than our thoughts.

John Carroll was an author who restudied Whorf's work and came up with what came to be known as the "weak form of the hypothesis" that explains that language may not dictate our thinking, but it surely influences it. And then came different linguists in the same line of thinking, such as Jim Gee (1993) and Ann Wierzbicka (1997). Both believed that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has some weak points and exaggeration, but still, for them, it applies in the sense that our language does influence the way we think and what we focus on. However, not to the extent that it lets us imprisoned inside this or that way of thinking. We have the freedom to go out of this specific way of thinking and choose whatever one used by other people.

So, on the educational side, culture was always considered an underlying part of the language teaching curriculum, as Kelly (1976) claims. Cultural learning was considered a by-product of learning a language, but the situation changed later when

teaching cultures needed to become an explicit part of teaching because of new migration waves, displacement, and multiculturalism.

The interest in culture in the language teaching field continued to increase until the 1990s when these efforts were materialized in two ways:

the first way is the American one in 1996 when the National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project were released. This document included, as Kumaravadivelu (2003) states, five C's of foreign language education which are: Communication, Cultures, Connection, Comparisons, and Communities. For more details, Kumaravadivelu (2003) mentions five standards which have a close relation to culture teaching and inclusion in the curriculum. We can see clearly that culture, at the time of the new project became a recognized goal and output of the educational process.

On the European side, this took a bit longer. In 2001, the Council of Europe published the Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, which has promoting intercultural awareness as one of its goals. It is worth saying here that even though having these standards whether American or European is a good step on the right path, however, too many more steps need to follow, as these standards are too general and do not focus on applicable measurable procedures. And, of course, cannot be blindly applied to disregard different realities.

3.8 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Once we talk about culture, intercultural competence always comes along. But what is exactly this term that we call intercultural competence? Almost as the situation with defining culture is vague and complex, defining intercultural competence shows similar symptoms of being similarly difficult. Taking the easy way, we can see that Zhou and Griffiths (2011:114) define intercultural competence (hence IC) as "the ability to change one's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to be open and flexible to other cultures." They also mention another definition by Tylor (1994:157) as "an adaptive capacity based on an inclusive and integrative world view which allows participants to highly accommodate the demands of living in a host culture." Rayner and Zhuang (2003) define IC as the ability that allows a person to develop different relationships with

members of different cultural groups and makes him/her able to bypass different cultural limits seeking better solutions when needed in addition to being able to communicate culturally with people.

These definitions may look generalized somehow, for this reason, I feel urged to quote an excerpt from Barrett et al. (2014) which translates the idea of IC into more specific abilities and attitudes a person needs to reach or have to be interculturally competent. According to these authors,

intercultural competence is, therefore, a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others, to:

- understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from themselves.
- respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people
- establish positive and constructive relationships with such people
- understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural 'difference'. (Barrett et al. 2014:16-17)

So, having these definitions in mind, it is this exactly what new teaching materials are trying to reach. In other words, this is the kind of person needed in this 21st-century, totally-connected and as-never-before brought-together world. Including cultural aspects in teaching materials changes the result of such an education process totally from a new language speaker to a new individual that can do much more than speaking a new language, that is, someone who can understand a new society, communicate and behave at higher levels with other members of the target language community, and most importantly, communicate with anyone who uses that language while being culturally sensible and sensitive.

Having said that, I believe it is important to briefly talk about the IC components. The huge necessity that exists nowadays for creating interculturally competent members of societies surpasses the great difficulties that have always been around whenever cultural themes came into the spotlight. This resulted in too much theorization and

explanation about the term IC and its components. Barrett et al. (2014), for example, divide IC into attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills.

The attitudes include but are not restricted to, being respectful, curious, engaged and cooperative when it comes to other cultures. Knowledge and understanding include knowing the connections between different cultures and groups, knowing the stereotypes, assumptions, and preconceptions about both the local and the target culture(s), in addition to acquiring vast knowledge about cultural components such as beliefs, habits, practices, and of course understanding the process of social interaction. Then, the skills part includes multi-perspectivity, discovering information and interpreting them to understand their cultural content, in addition to being plurilingual, and the ability to be a mediator whose main role is to exactly facilitate intercultural communication.

Getting through this whole load of information about culture, its definitions, concepts, and cultural competence, is a good and necessary step before any cultural research no matter how simple it is. However, since the research is about culture as represented in teaching materials, a chapter that reviews teaching materials throughout the development of teaching methods is needed. Chapter Four offers the chance to take a look at the long history of language teaching focusing more on teaching English, the methods that have been used along this rich history, and the connection with teaching materials that also have been developing immensely in the process.

CHAPTER FOUR: **ENGLISH TEACHING 'KUTOB'[9]**	**الفصل الرابع:** كتب تعليم الإنكليزية

> Designing appropriate materials is not a science; it is a strange mixture of imagination, insight and analytical reasoning, and this fact must be recognized when the materials are assessed. (Low 1989: 153)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Analyzing and improving any process is an operation that requires deep reflection about all the involved aspects, weighing each of them respectively, trying to figure out what effect each has on the proceeding, and measuring what differences the changes done to these aspects make. The more factors included in a process, the more important and sensitive it becomes to pay more attention to each of them. The educational experience is not different. On the way to improve its output, different elements of the teaching/learning experience have been continuously improved and put to test. Also, advances in other knowledge fields such as pedagogy, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and even anthropology, among others have always affected the educational theories and applications. This chapter intends to shed some light on the historical development of English teaching methods and approaches, tracing the changes as they were reflected by the teaching materials used.

4.2 WHAT ARE TEACHING MATERIALS?

Since this research is basically about ELT textbooks used at some schools in Brazil and Syria, it is important to have a general idea about the category of the teaching materials and their historical development. As a start, it would be a good idea to define exactly what teaching materials are.

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[9] 'Books' in Arabic.

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Teaching materials are one of the pillars of any educational process. Tomlinson (2001) defines materials as anything that facilitates the process of learning, whether linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic, and the way of presenting materials can be live or recorded performance, in print, or online. Materials created specifically for pedagogical use are labeled as 'pre-fabricated', while those which are normally taken from the "real world" are called 'authentic', that is, they are used without any editing.

4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MATERIALS

While the term teaching materials includes all materials related to formal instruction such as students' books, teacher's guides, CDs, DVDs, realia, and every other material used both inside and outside the class to enhance the teaching/learning experience, it is worthy of note to emphasize that the discussion here is mainly about the textbooks. Basically, some reasons for their being the target of our analysis are: they are the easiest resources to be used, they are also the most common instructional materials to be used as many schools around the world are not well-prepared to use other possibilities such as videos, for example, and they are almost always within students' reach even in some of the poorest places of the world. This importance made books always the cornerstone of most of the courses until very recent times. Nowadays, with the fast movement of the internet world, more ways of learning and teaching languages are invading the educational spaces, such as online courses, learning applications (apps), and even the older recorded lessons.

So, in a lot of circumstances, teaching materials decide the course of the educational process, and books are one of these materials. But how did these materials change, develop, and improve over time?

4.4 TYPES OF SYLLABI

The syllabus according to Rabbini (2002:1) defines the syllabus as "an expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning; it acts as a guide on both teacher and learner by providing some goals to be attained." Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80)

describe the syllabus as "At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learned. It reflects of language and linguistic performance." Rahimpour (2010) mentions Krahnke's (1987) division of kinds of syllabi that I find genuinely interesting. The reason is that it helps a better panoramic picture of the syllabi aside from teaching methods, and shows a larger frame where these methods are used. According to Krahnke (1987:10), the types of syllabi are:

1. A structural syllabus that focuses on linguistic structures, usually grammatical ones;

2. A functional syllabus that teaches functions of language in different grammatical forms;

3. A situational syllabus that teaches students how to deal with situations like getting a taxi, asking for directions, opening a bank account, for example.

4. A skill-based syllabus that teaches language through fostering specific abilities;

5. A content-based syllabus that does not teach language, but teaches specific contents, let us say biology, math, physics, etc. through the TL. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and Content and Language Integration in Primary CLIP are two examples of this type.

6. And, finally, the task-based syllabus, which comprises groups of tasks learners need to achieve to gain linguistic abilities.

The information included in a syllabus can have different aims and serve different roles. Mansbach (2016) explains about them in detail focusing more on online courses, I mention here some of them which apply to more kinds of courses as well:

- Course description.
- Course materials which state the needed materials for the course.
- Course learning goals.
- Grading information.
- Assignments
- Course schedule
- Technology support

The importance of syllabus comes from different facts related basically to its nature and purposes:

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- The syllabus helps the instructor organize and prepare the course, knowing what is to be taught and how.

- The syllabus offers the objectives of the whole learning process. With that information, teachers can be able to decide what to focus on, and what remedial procedures would be taken when necessary.

- The syllabus shows students what are they to expect from the course. What they are going to learn and be able to do at the end of the course.

- The syllabus also helps students to know how to practice for the course, what kinds of exercises are they going to practice solving, and what may be asked in the exam for example.

Kaur (2019) also mentions some benefits of a course syllabus that range between creating a better understanding between students and teachers as both can get an idea what is the content going to include and what each party needs to achieve, showing an overall picture of the course, emphasizing responsibilities of participants, and describing materials and activities included in the course, in addition to possible supporting ones.

Appleby (1994) explains different problems that teachers usually face due to students' lack of information concerning different aspects of the course. Students' duties, grading, and required materials are all topics that prove problematic when communication is for a reason or another is hindered or is missing between students and teachers. The great value of the syllabus comes from the fact that it includes highly important information about all the mentioned aspects of the course which can be available for students since their first day there. When teachers explain to students what is the syllabus, or at least provide printed handouts about the course, mediating syllabus information, different problematic situations are certainly going to be avoided. Better teaching results can be achieved as two important participants of the teaching process have a copy of the contract that states a fully understandable road map towards success and best results.

4.5 ELT MATERIALS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

4.5.1 The beginnings and changes until the 1980s

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Since its start, teaching languages has always been an important and relevant activity. It has constantly been sought by people trying to advance their lives. Reasons for that ranged from trying to get the knowledge of other nations, visiting different countries, dealing with conquered people, searching for a better job to studying and entertainment reasons as well. Due to the relations between knowledge branches, the field of teaching has repeatedly been affected by the other fields and their theories and has always tried to benefit from their advancement.

In brief, I am going to summarize the historical development of teaching languages with more emphasis and attention directed to English, and, for this goal, I find it important to clarify some important terms before proceeding.

Some of the basic terms used when speaking about teaching languages are, for instance, methods and approaches. But what is the difference between these two terms? According to Harmer (2007), an approach refers to our bigger understanding of the way teaching or learning a language takes place. Based on that, it is a larger source of our understanding of the way things occur in the teaching process, and out of it come the smaller parts such as methods, procedures, and techniques.

A method, on the other hand, is the more practical side or the application of this general understanding. The method dictates kinds of materials to be used, the way of organizing a syllabus, the role of teachers and students in the process, and it also includes the more practical and specified parts such as procedures, and techniques.

Procedures are the sequence of doing things, the order of the techniques that come from the overall understanding and the method. Then the smallest part of the process is called a technique, that is, it rather describes one event instead of an order or a series of actions. Having these few terms in mind would facilitate the task of grasping developments that teaching has undergone until now.

Taking a look at the beginnings of foreign language teaching (hence FLT), we can see that historically, scholars, traders, government officials and so forth used different ways to learn additional languages. One of the earliest widely used activities to reach such a goal was learning grammar rules and memorizing vocabulary lists. These techniques were rather individual and served for trading and studying purposes. As time went by, and the need for teaching foreign languages grew at schools, the so-called

"Grammar-translation method" appeared in the nineteenth century with roots in those earlier activities. At that time, the goals of FLT were teaching students how to translate and how to write grammatically correct sentences. To achieve that, grammar rules were given and explained using the mother tongue (MT), new words were taught translated, and exercises of grammar choices and translation of words and sentences between the MT and the foreign language (FL) were given. Teaching materials following that method included vocabulary lists with translation into the MT to be memorized, grammar rules to be studied and memorized too, and exercises of translating literary excerpts.

That method worked pretty well for a long time, allowing students to read earlier-written works of literature, read registers, and exchange commercial and governmental correspondence. However, it was not useful at all to prepare students to deal with oral communication needs as they could handle the FL only through the eyes of their first language. Next, and due to such drawbacks of the Grammar-translation Method, the "Direct Method" started to appear towards the end of the nineteenth century. It tried to avoid such weak points that Grammar-translation Method showed.

As the name suggests, the Direct Method introduced learners directly to the target language, without the medium of the MT. It stopped the overuse of translation and promoted speaking, minimized also grammatical explanations and taught grammar inductively. It also started using pictures and real-life objects (realia) in the classroom. Besides, the use of the TL in class became vital, and this was opposite to what the Grammar-Translation Method did. At that stage, teaching pronunciation became essential, and the native speaker accent was the preferred one. Some of the techniques used were: question/answer exercises, dictation, reading aloud, conversation practice and paragraph writing.

This method had different advantages: firstly, and above all, it improved students' abilities to use language for oral communication instead of only writing and reading. It helped students to think directly using the TL, which resulted in more fluent students; it treated and taught all language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, amplified the market of teaching materials and created a space for students inside the class to be more active. On the other hand, some of its drawbacks were the need for highly skilled and preferably native teachers, the difficulty to apply its tenants well with large numbers

of students, being better suited for lower levels, in addition to being time-consuming and not teaching grammar systematically.

Within that sequence, Audiolingualism came up directly from both the Direct Method and Behaviorism. By adopting behaviorist principles, mainly stimulus-response techniques, and looking at language as a big set of linguistic habits, Audiolingualism tried to create "good" and "correct" linguistic habits in students, and get rid of what would be considered "bad" ones. Using repetition, drills, and feedback also, the "Audiolingual Method" sought correctness at all costs, and had accuracy as its main goal. However, it did not take too long until it started to lose its popularity due to the rise of Chomsky's ideas about Universal Grammar, which were a big challenge to the whole behaviorist thinking about language.

Even after becoming individually not so effective in many people's view, Audiolingualism continued to be part of some courses as its advantages do exist, and its disadvantages can be somehow overcome by complementing these courses with the missing parts, such as more organized grammatical content and writing exercises. Audiolingualism had different advantages over the Direct Method, such as paying more attention to different language skills even though the focus was still speaking, in addition to being easy to use with larger groups of learners. On the other hand, the disadvantages included being based on behaviorism, which lost its power over time, not having communicative competence as a goal, giving too little freedom for both teachers and students over the content, and placing the student in a passive position.

Such a decline for the Audiolingualism resulted in searching for better options, that is, methods and approaches that would take into consideration new ways of thinking about language, not as mere behavior, but as cognitive concepts that when set would result in acquiring more complex linguistic structures than was offered in the input. Thinking of language as a cognitive activity, treating language as a mental set of complex concepts, grammar, rules, connections, and items made acquiring these rules the goal and the objective of learning and teaching, instead of just forming habits.

Based on this, here came the Cognitive Approach, which emphasized cognition over repetitive habits. It taught grammar rules both inductively and deductively, decreased the importance given for pronunciation, and the overestimated need for perfection. It also

took errors as a healthy part of the educational process and as well-justified steps on the way of learning, brought more balance to the importance of all language abilities (listening, speaking, reading. and writing) after being very biased for a long time towards the importance of only listening and speaking.

It is important to bear in mind that different methods had the goal of overcoming the weaknesses of others as the reason for getting to the surface. Here, for example, newer methods took advantage of the Direct Method and Audiolingualism being indulged in a hundred percent preformed content and not taking into consideration neither teachers nor students, to rise and shine. The Affective-Humanist Approach tried to change that reality by respecting the personal differences of teachers and students, emphasizing work in pairs and groups, seeking meaningful communication, taking good care of the class atmosphere, in addition to highlighting the importance of collaboration inside the class between teachers and students from one side and students between each other on the other side.

That, mixed with the more recent theories about language acquisition paved the way to the Comprehension-Based Approach, which advocated that learning a second or a foreign language should be more or less similar to learning the first one. This way, listening comprehension was looked at as an introductory step towards improving all other language abilities. Meaningful speech was appreciated as the most important kind of input, and learners were even accepted to respond nonverbally at the first stages until they could do it verbally too, besides, speaking was left to happen naturally so that students would not feel pressured. The input difficulty level was organized to increase slowly with time. Error correction was unnecessary as long as the communication went on. Both native and non-native teachers could succeed using this approach because, although questionable, the teaching materials offered native speaker's input for students. Nevertheless, the reality was a bit different from theory. Teaching materials for the Comprehension-Based Approach were not as comprehensible as expected. In other words, they included different types of materials that favored certain types of learners over others. Puzzles, for example, were used but not every learner could 'comprehend' language through them in the same way. The method also based comprehension on induction, a drawback that placed deductive learners at a disadvantage. The method

controlled the order and way of presentation without offering certain content. Few materials were available for teachers, and this was too inconvenient and required too much effort on the teachers' side. Finally, the method did not pressure oral production, which was good to ease the stress for students, but at the same time created less need for verbal interaction between learners and that minimized pair- and group-work in the classroom.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) offer great details about more methods and approaches that did not become very popular for a long time or in different countries but still played a role in the continuum of developing teaching foreign languages. During the 1970s and 1980s, different approaches and methods gained visibility after significant changes took place in the field of teaching foreign languages. The movement towards more authentic communicative content and less theoretical pre-molded one resulted in blooming different methods which, even though did not last long, were important as well for being developing steps towards our current educational reality. Richards & Rodgers (2001) advocate their importance based on their emphasis on different aspects of language teaching and for their highlighting important aspects of language that used to be a bit underestimated at that time.

As for some of these so-called FL methods, Total Physical Response (TPR), for example, has its roots in developmental psychology, pedagogy, and different language learning procedures proposed by Harold and Dorothy Palmer in the 1920s. Asher, the alluded father of TPR, tried to imitate the way children learn their first language through orders and actions, and apply that to an educational context where adults receive similar commands in the FL. Following that path, they respond to the commands physically in the beginning, and then verbally as their level of proficiency improves. TPR also emphasizes the importance of emotions in the process of learning as children usually receive a lot of affection through their learning process. This, for sure, could be a motivating factor on the way to such a difficult goal as learning additional languages.

The goal of TPR is teaching both grammar and vocabulary through imperatives. Clearly, for Asher, the verbs are the most important part of the language since every other vocabulary item is going to be taught in a form, revolving around a principal verb. Creating a link between verbs and actions is one of the learning facilitating properties of this

method as it makes it easier for linguistic items to be memorized and recalled later, and strengthening that link with a kind of motor action facilitates it even more. Since the objective of TPR is to teach beginners meaningful communicative content and reach a proficient level of communication with native speakers without barriers of hesitation and shyness, and since the way of achieving that is through imperatives, this gives us a glimpse of how the syllabus looked like. Richards & Rodgers (2001) explain that:

The type of syllabus Asher uses can be inferred from an analysis of the exercise types employed in TPR classes. This analysis reveals the use of a sentence-based syllabus, with grammatical and lexical criteria being primary in selecting teaching items (Richards & Rodgers 2001:75).

To be able to carry on the imperatives, students needed essentially to understand the orders. Consequently, vocabulary items introduced in each order or sentence needed to be well thought of and calculated so that students know exactly what is required and do not get overwhelmed with new content. The way of correcting errors in TPR is sensitive as it is similar to the way parents correct their children. For the beginners, correction is rare, and the more they advance the more correction they receive. Too much correction is looked at as a hinder, not as a facilitator, and as explained earlier, perfection is not sought as long as communication takes place. All in all, the popularity TPR witnessed was a result of the movement towards a more comprehensible content and a more humanized way of treating students and creating the syllabus. Other advantages were reducing the need for perfection and by that decreasing the rate of correction times during classes. Different aspects that once made part of TPR stayed in action even after it started to decline. These principles were included in newer approaches and methods as we will see when talking about some of the considered more contemporary ones.

Continuing with the explanation, until the 1980s, several other methods appeared and were used along the way, such as The Silent Way, and Suggestopedia. However, their effect and their reach were limited, and that is why I am not going to get into them for the time being.

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Globalization, the revolution of technology, advances in communication and trade created a huge necessity for FL learning strategies, methods, courses, and improvement. Crystal (2008) states that the number of English language speakers around the world was two thousand million. He emphasizes that almost one-third of the population of the whole world speaks English, of course with variations in proficiency. The ratio of native to non-native speakers ranges between one to three and one to four and highlights two points. First, the center of gravity of ELT is moving from natives to non-natives. Second, the huge need for better, richer and more effective teaching environments, theories, materials, technologies, etc.

4.5.2 Contemporary methods

Probably, the shift towards looking at communication as the ultimate goal of language teaching and learning was one of the greatest changes since the 1980s and 1990s of the last millennia. This left its mark clearly on the tradition of teaching foreign languages, especially English, all around the world. Nowadays, what matters is that students communicate, whether inside the class during the learning process, or outside it when applying what they learned. Very briefly, I am going to discuss some of these so-called contemporary methods in the next sub-sections.

4.5.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) started to appear as a way of looking at the manners language should be taught since the 1970s. We can trace it in Wilkins (1976), for example, who argues that CLT changed the focus from what language is, its forms and rules, to what language does and what it is used for. Wilkins (1972) offers communicative and functional definitions of language which could be the basis of any communicative language course. According to him, the essence of language started to receive less importance and functions of language became more important. Naturally, this resulted in teaching activities which had as their goal students being able to communicate information, carry on tasks, without necessarily sticking to one specific

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pattern of grammar, without being attached to one way of speaking, and, of course, without the need to imitate the native speaker's accent.

CLT, as we know, is not a specific method with well-defined activities, techniques, and strategies to be followed blindly and applied with no changes. It is rather a way of thinking about how language is supposed to be taught and what real benefits its potential users, the students, can acquire out of it. For this reason, we can see that CLT includes an array of methods and activities which differ in their 'communicability'[10] from being extremely communicative and minimally pre-decided to being moderately communicative and much more pre-defined.

Within that line of thought, Harmer (2010) explains that CLT included activities that fluctuate between two extremes; from being totally to minimally communicative. I.e., while one procedure used inside the class could be classified as non-communicative or minimally communicative, others could be taken as more communicative or even extremely communicative. This way, what he meant is that the course of applying these communicative principles inside the class may have infinite forms and still, all of them can be called Communicative Language Teaching.

Different variables were included in Harmer's (2010) explanation of the "opposite ends of a communication continuum" such as having or not a desire and a purpose for communication, the shift of focus between form and content, using one or more languages, the degree of the intervention of the teacher, and the control of the material.

Sources from which CLT received support and earned its importance include and are not exclusive to: Chomsky's new ideas about the nature of language and how we learn it, different well-theorized works by Wilkins, Widdowson and other British linguists, in addition to good results when CLT was applied in classrooms which in turn speeded up the content makers' adoption for the CLT's new ideas.

Features of the syllabus at the time of CLT started with Wilkins (1976) who laid its cornerstones. He defined the semantic-grammatical categories and the categories of communicative functions that learners needed to learn. Then this syllabus was more elaborated by The European Council, which added more explanations about common needs and objectives of language courses as shared by European youth.

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[10] The degree of being communication-oriented.

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Richards & Rodgers (2001) explains that the acceptance or rejection of a specific approach or method has a lot to do with the level of difficulty with which such an approach or method can be used or applied. The more needs a method has, the more preparation, the more equipment, the less probable it is for it to become widely-spread. The same part of the book draws attention to the fact that the issue of appropriateness was raised in the 1990s to highlight that no one method or approach is or can be all-time correct and applied everywhere with full success. Since then, methods were considered much less important, and Richards & Rodgers (2001) came to use the term 'post-methods era' to refer to our current time.

Different reasons are given for having a 'no-methods' era, or 'post-methods' era. The first criticism offered is about the lack of liberty a method leads to inside the class. In such a context, teachers are supposed to stick to everything about the method, and the more they follow it blindly, the better applicants they are considered. However, this does not necessarily result in a better educational experience; actually, it may even lead to negative results since the variety of learning styles, the differences between students and their preferences are not at all taken into consideration before deciding what kind of material they are supposed to study. Using and sticking to a specific method deprived the teaching/learning process of two concepts that became very important during the 1990s. These two concepts are 'the learner centeredness' and 'teacher creativity'. This made both of the process' parties want to break free from methods. Although Richards & Rodgers (2001) explain a lot about the importance of teaching approaches and methods, how they improved our experience about learning and teaching experience, they still emphasize that teachers should be granted the right to choose what suits their students the best, and this is exactly the essence of the post-methods era.

4.5.2.2 The post-method era

With all these theories about language, approaches and methods of learning and teaching it, one concludes that there is nothing more to be done about inventing anything new in the field. The current situation has continued since the 1990s and for a while, it looks like the innovation cycle has stopped since then. However, with a great theoretical

heritage there to be scrutinized, and plenty of approaches, methods, techniques, and strategies, we can say that now is the time of invention in the ELT field. Linguists, applied linguists, pedagogists among others have a golden chance to reach better combinations now. It is not always necessary to invent something new to be successful, sometimes all that is needed are the same old medicines with different better combinations and miracles can happen. The lack of current need for searching for new methods is explained by Kumaravadivelu (2006) that relates the 'post-methods era' to three predecessors.

The first predecessor is related to the meaning of a method, a method is a set of theoretical principles about language and learning mixed with a set of classroom activities. While the majority believe that each existing method is unique, different researchers pointed out that many methods are a kind of redecorated camouflaged older ones. There are no real set boundaries between existing methods, what is there, on various occasions, is a mere change of terminology and some class activities.

The second predecessor is the group of myths believed about the methods. Different myths about the methods are there back in the mind of all who believe in the importance of methods. Myths about methods are various, Kumaravadivelu (2006) explains some of them. Myth one is the existence of the best magical method that can work anywhere, all the time is one of these myths. Myth two is the infinite importance of methods to have successful learning is another myth. Myth three says that methods have ahistorical and universal importance. Myth four says that teachers are just consumers of knowledge which is a product of theorists. Myth five says that methods are neutral and have no ideological motivation. These ideas commonly spread about methods, their nature, and importance discussed in detail in Kumaravadivelu (2006) and proven to be no more than 'myths' led to the third predecessor of the 'no-methods era' which is the death of method.

The death of the method refers to the current educational reality state, where the term 'method' is no more important or helpful. Allwright (1991), as Kumaravadivelu (2006) explains, was the first to justify the method's becoming useless nowadays. Some of the reasons he states are:

- Different methods claim to have many differences that almost disappear in the classroom.

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- The oversimplification of complex items such as learners' differences.
- Consuming too much time and energy which could, otherwise, be assigned to preparing better and more suitable class activities.
- Constructing barriers of method-loyalty and rivalry between teachers, instead of cooperation.
- Blocking innovation by pretending that all essential questions in the teaching/learning process have been answered.
- Distracts teachers' efforts towards real self-growth into cheaper, faster and less significant learning-about-the-methods growth.

(Allwright 1991 as cited in Kumaravadivelu 2006:168-169)

All this leads us to the situation where we need to restudy our status quo both researching the content of classrooms pedagogically and ideologically, searching for a better relationship between theory and application. A relationship that prioritizes the classrooms and their realities instead of forcing one way of thinking on all existing classrooms. The 'post-methods era' is the era of classroom needs being heard, learners being looked at and listened to, and teachers' realities being taken into consideration, and treating all these as a priority instead of limiting all of them to one method no matter what.

4.6 A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THE DIFFERENT TEACHING APPROACHES

After all this theoretical explanation about methods and approaches and their development along with the history of language teaching, I find it interesting to make a more practical comparison between the most important ones in my personal view. Such a comparison is mainly concerned with more practical sides of the approach/method such as its objectives, roles of the participants, the nature of the interaction in the classroom, and the evaluation process. I base this discussion on Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), one of the best and most organized books about the topic.

The Grammar-translation method, for example, has enabling FL students to read literature in the target language as its main goal. Thus, teaching materials includes mainly literary excerpts in English with comprehension questions which students needs to

answer in English. After that, it is possible to have English word lists that students need to write their counterparts in their mother tongue (MT). Teaching materials explained grammar explicitly. Grammar is usually written in English in the materials; however, teachers offer generous MT explanation whenever needed. Lessons also often include vocabulary lists that are already translated into the MT for the sake of memorization and training to use. Exercises of Grammar-translation method include translating, solving grammatical and writing exercises. The role of the teacher in the classroom is traditional as he/she is taken as the only source of authority and information. This also decides the nature and direction of the interaction in the classroom. Most of the interaction is from teacher to students with almost no student initiation or student-student interaction. This method idealizes the literary language, and the cultural content is only available as it appears in the literary form taught there. As for the skills, most of the focus is on the reading, and writing, while speaking is much less, and listening is almost forgotten. Grammar-translation classes use the native language almost all the time, and all the target language content is translated into the native language. The evaluation comes in the shape of translation tasks and grammar exercises. A very little part of the evaluation may tackle the cultural content of the literary texts studied.

The Direct Method, which emerged as a response to the Grammar-translation method, had communication in the target language as the main goal of teaching, and that is why students became almost partners in the class instead of being passive receivers of the information. Teachers were supposed to encourage students to think 'directly' in the target language without using the native one, and for that reason, they were to avoid translation and use the native language in the class. The new focus on communication moved the look to the language from a group of grammatical rules applied through vocabulary items to looking at language as a means of communication. Students trained to communicate about daily life, learned about different cultural habits of the target language countries as well as their geography. Oral communication with a focus on pronunciation and an immediate correction whenever necessary are essential in the Direct Method even though it teaches all the four skills. The native language is almost prohibited in the classroom, and the evaluation comes in the shape of asking students to

show their linguistic ability orally or in a written form through speaking or writing about something they know for example.

Teaching materials for the Direct Method, just like the teacher, avoids any use of the MT. Target language texts, articles, pictures and other authentic materials are included in the books as to expose students *directly* to English without a medium. Whenever teachers need to explain what a word means, all possibilities are to be used before translating it. The questions about the text require complete answers. Maps, pictures and diagrams to be labelled by students are recurrent type of exercises in the Direct Method too. Writing Exercises include writing paragraphs and essays about already discussed topics, and groups discussions are a prevalent type of activities in the materials of the Direct Method.

The Audio-Lingual Method shares good communication as a goal with the Direct Method, however, it does that more structurally. The way of learning that is usually through forming new and correct habits in the target language that replace their old 'wrong' native language habits. The role of the teacher is like an 'orchestra leader' that students need to imitate and learn the correct habits from him/her. Imitation, repetition, and drills are the keywords of this method, and grammar is only taught inductively. At the same time, dialogues are offered, cultural content is embedded in them usually, and it is also presented by the teacher sometimes. Although the interaction in the classroom is usually balanced and is to include everyone, still, the interaction is always initiated by the teacher. The language view used here is descriptive and its system has different phonological and semantic levels, for example. The cultural content is taken from the images of lifestyles included in the materials.

The Audio-Lingual Method taught all language skills, but focused and started with listening and speaking, and after that students moved to almost the same content but in a written form to learn reading, and writing. The native language is not usually used in the classroom, however, according to this method, it is the interference from it that creates learning difficulties and requires more attention. Evaluation is made for one linguistic point at the time, and errors are to be avoided at all costs by teaching students what to say and how to say it according to a standard.

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Materials used with the Audio-lingual method were pretty different from its predecessors, as the focus moved totally to listening and speaking and took away all grammatical content away from the books as well as literary content. The Audio-lingual syllabus focuses on phonology, morphology and syntax in a way that comes from a contrastive analysis with the MT as differences with the target language are considered the source of the errors and difficulties students may encounter. It is worthy to mention, however, that even though the focus of the Audio-lingual method was on listening and speaking, reading and writing are also taught in more advanced levels, and activities in the books included them as well in an organized and well-structured way. Dialogs are the prevalent feature of Audio-lingual teaching materials, and the dialogs are usually developed so that they train students to use a specific grammatical pattern while avoiding any explicit reference to grammar even though these structures are excessively focused on during drills and training in general. Being teacher-oriented is another important feature of materials developed for this method, to the degree that students my not have their own books in the basic levels as students' roles are only listening, repeating and responding, and the printed word may offer a distraction to them. Later on, the printed materials students received contained the dialogs and helpful tips and instruction for drills and exercises. On the other side, teachers enjoyed a great range of supporting materials especially when they were non-native speakers, as the native input was the chosen as the best for such a method. Tape records, language laboratories and audiovisual support materials all played an important rule in improving students speaking and pronunciation, and in decreasing the necessity for translation which is prohibited.

The proponents of Total Physical Response (TPR) believe in the importance of students' liking what they study and imitating somehow the way native children come to learn their mother tongue. The role of the teacher is variable; at the beginning, when students do not have enough information or vocabulary to participate, the teacher is the main director of the class, but later when students can participate, the situation gets more balanced and students, individually and/or in groups, participate with the teacher in leading the class. The revolutionary feature of TPR is that it cared for students' feelings. It did not require immediate linguistic answers from students, that is, students were supposed to start speaking whenever they feel they could. Besides, the teacher tried to

make the class as enjoyable as possible. On the other hand, TPR shares the importance of oral communication with previous methods.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) state that TPR syllabus is built on grammatical and lexical bases, but differs from earlier methods in that it focuses on meaning rather than the form since the early levels of learning. The syllabus pays great attention to the vocabulary items introduced as they can facilitate learning and improve the results.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as its name suggests, required more than knowing the language, it required students to be able to communicate in the target language. Thus, the teacher's function became to facilitate communication in the classroom. Students get indulged in communication activities, and the teacher offers support for them. That is why it is a much less teacher-dominant method. CLT also cared for students and left them a great space to express themselves and do something useful, rather than just repeating the unrelated phrases of the books. The main goal of the language is communication; thus, any linguistic abilities are part of the process and not everything. In addition to knowing the language, students need to know the different functions as this is what makes learners better communicators. Culture in this method is more important as it is essential for communication, especially its nonverbal parts that may facilitate or impede communication. In the majority of cases, language is taught as functions, departing from simple to more diverse and complex ones as learners' abilities improve. This method privileges all language skills, not only oral ones, which is an important quality of it. A great feature of CLT is the way it deals with the mother tongue. CLT does not criminalize using the MT, however, it stimulates the use of TL whenever possible, even in explaining classroom activities as this is mainly the point of learning language, communication.

Interestingly, CLT evaluates both accuracy and fluency, unlike different other methods that just evaluated the former. CLT also accepted students' errors as long as they did not prevent communication. Errors were even looked at as a natural development sign of students.

Teaching materials in CLT have three types, according to Richards & Rogers (2001). Firstly, text based materials which contain prompts students can use to create conversations, in addition to pictures and useful language expressions. Secondly, task-

based materials which contain mainly exercises, activity cards and interaction booklets. And finally, realia which is a type of authentic teaching materials based on magazines' and newspapers' articles, maps, pictures of animals, places, activities and so much more of materials that are concrete and can create a space for better conversations and discussions in the classroom.

As for this part, we saw a comparison of different aspects of each method some of them theoretical while others practical. However, the next section will deal basically with the issue of cultural content in a more detailed way.

4.7 CULTURE IN TEACHING MATERIALS

Having Chapter three mainly discussed culture and its related components, I still find it essential for the research to include some details about the current situation of culture in teaching materials and how it is treated and included in them.

Though the importance of teaching culture in FL classrooms is no longer debatable since long, and its importance is so clear that Louise Damen calls her 1987 book "Culture learning: The Fifth Dimension In The Language Classroom," still, we do not see any cultural objectives in the openings of the majority of the best-selling series of English teaching books' units. Why is it like this? Why is something considered essential for the educational axes of the books such as communication is so easily neglected while planning the materials used? All we can see in the openings is the sum of the linguistic abilities that students are expected to be able to carry on when finishing the unit or the book. This makes the process of teaching culture rather vague for both teachers and students and lays a great burden on the shoulders of the teachers who are supposed to teach cultural content in their way, based on their interpretations and without a way to post-evaluate the process.

While giving such a hard task to teachers, different categorizations for culture appeared in the educational field. Liddicoat (2002, 2004), for example, discusses the dynamic and static view of culture. Maijala explains Liddicoat's concept of static culture as the "treatment and transmission of facts that can be separated from language

teaching" (Maijala 2018:2). On the other hand, the dynamic view of culture is the active and interactive engagement in the knowledge of culture (Maijala 2018: 2-3).

Another categorization or division of the cultural components of the teaching/learning process comes from Bauman (2004) and Dervin (2011). Maijala (2018) discusses Dervin's (2011) division of intercultural knowledge into solid interculturality which includes "descriptions of national features of all of the representatives of a certain country by other or themselves" (Maijala 2018:3), these descriptions, argues the author, usually lead to stereotypes, and liquid interculturality which is the interculturality that results from learners' interaction with the target culture. I.e., liquid interculturality is the real exposure to the culture that results from active coexistence or cohabitation. The main reason for mentioning these two categorizations or divisions is to highlight that, materials that do include cultural components focus mainly on the solid or static part of interculturality without much attention to the liquid or dynamic side of it.

Maijala (2018) mentions different studies, such as Castro et al. (2004), Sercu (2005), Garrido and Álvarez (2006), which discuss European teachers' frustration with different barriers that prevent them from being able to teach cultural content as the Common European Framework of References for Languages (2001) requires them to do, and as the importance of the cultural content requires. Following that line, obstacles the teachers encountered included the absence of a cultural teaching method defined by the Common European Framework of References for Languages (2001) or by the content makers who even though inserted cultural content in their coursebooks, did not include teaching suggestions and tips related to this sensitive part of the syllabus, in addition to lack of time, and institutional constraints too. Maijala (2018) mentions that some European teachers, due to the lack of cultural teaching training and the missing cultural activities in the course planning, many times felt that the focus should be on the linguistic content as they often did not know how to develop cultural activities that were already missing in the courses, such as cultural reflection and behaving culturally correctly (Sercu, Méndez García, and Prieto 2005). In other words, different sides of the cultural teaching process in FLT are still in urgent need of improvement. This is normal for such a relatively newcomer into the light spot of FLT.

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After my attempt to clarify both culture and teaching methods and materials, I think it is time to let the research start showing its practical results. In the next chapter, we will see deep insights about the two series of books compared and contrasted. One more step on the way of moving towards the end of this enjoyable journey of cultural analysis.

With the previous chapters building bigger frames of the research both methodologically and theoretically speaking, it is the time now for the practical side of the research to come into the spotlight. In the next chapter, the practical part of the study takes place where I analyze the books and show different examples from both series as this allows readers who have no access to the series to have a real feel of what the books are like and what kind of references the research focuses on.

CHAPTER FIVE:
'ALGHAWS'[11] DEEPLY

<div dir="rtl">

الفصل الخامس:
الغوص عميقاً

</div>

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This long journey, that has started a long time ago, comes now to one of its most important stations: data generation and analysis. This chapter is mainly divided into two sections; the first is about generating and organizing data, while the second analyzes these data.

Clarifying more about these two phases of the research, I state here that; in the first section, I seek to discover, whether or not, the studied materials approach and use aspects related to the native/local culture. Searching for this kind of content, I tabulate any found data appropriately through the tables introduced in Chapter Two, according to the cultural categories presented in Chapter Three. However, for the sake of space and to avoid being repetitive, I am not going to include the full version of the data generated by the research[12]. However, I am rather going to use parts of it to show examples through both generating and analyzing the data found. The second section of this chapter, on the other hand, seeks to show what similarities and differences the two groups exhibit concerning the local culture representations used, and which ones may lead to stereotypes when seen by non-members of that cultural group.

5.2 CULTURAL CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES USED IN THE BOOKS.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the availability of too many conceptualizations for the term culture requires defining our principal thinking lines before spending any further efforts on the data analysis because, without a thinking frame, this process would be useless. An earlier quick scan of the content of the series studied intersected with previously discussed theorization about the term culture, resulting in the following broad

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[11] 'Diving' in Arabic.

[12] Though full data tables are not included in the research, they are available upon request from the researcher.

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categories: 1-lifestyles, 2-works and practices of art, intellectual activity and entertainment, 3-human development factor. As these three categories are very general, I decided to establish sub-categories or, let us say, narrower categories or items in the material evaluated. The organization of the found items is to be carried on according to the order of the three main categories mentioned above.

5.2.1 The first category: Lifestyles

This category contains items directly connected to the way a specific cultural group lives, its habits, traditions, beliefs, in addition to items and social roles related to these sub-categories. Cultural manifestations included in this category include, but are not exclusive to, the following:

a- Language that is spoken by the group in the country where the books are taught;

b- Nationality and citizenship which refer to cultural representations related to the country and to being a citizen, such as mentioning the name of the country, its anthem, etc.;

c- National events and holidays celebrated in the country. These are an essential component of the culture as they play a unifying role in the life of the group usually;

d- National animals which can come to be representative for the whole country on different occasions by being its mascot, such as *Fuleco*, the Brazilian three-banded armadillo that represented Brazil in the World Cup 2014 (Figure 7);

e- Food that contains any national dish or even fruits and vegetables that are commonly attributed to that country;

f- Traditions and customs of that cultural group, common ways of behaving, greetings, common names and ways of celebration;

g- Family, including relationships, types, and sizes of the families, etc.;

h- Religion and related items and people in addition to religious events.

i- Traditional clothes and the cultural choices of fashion;

j- Proverbs that are an essential component of any culture since they pass beliefs and ways of thinking to the next generations;

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k- Stereotypes, their possible reasons and explanation.

Figure7- Fuleco (Source: Internet)
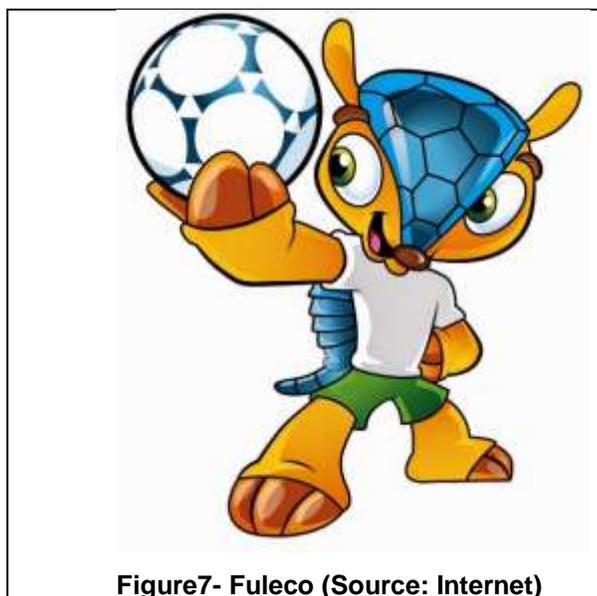
The following Table 3 shows different examples of Lifestyles' sub-categories as found in the studied books (*High Up*/Brazil – EFS/Syria):

Cultural Category	Sub-category	Book	Page number	Place & type of the representation
Lifestyles	Language	*High Up 1*	P. 10	The opening pictures of Unit 1 contain a picture of a beach sign that says "Aluga-se." (Figure 8)
Lifestyles	Language	*High Up 1*	Various	Different parts of all units are totally written in Portuguese, such as the units' objectives and "In Other Words." (Figures 9 and10)
Lifestyles	Language	*High Up 3*	Various	The book continues to use Portuguese systematically in all grammatical explanations in addition to other occasions.
Lifestyles	Language	*English for Starters (EFS)* 10-11-12	Cover and Front-matter section	The three EFS books use Arabic for some legal information about the books in addition to place and date of publishing; however, the majority of this information is written in English. (Figures11 and 12)

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Lifestyles	Nationality and citizenship	*High Up 1*	P.4- ex. 5	The exercise raises direct questions to students about their country and their parents' nationalities.
Lifestyles	National events and holidays	*High Up 1*	P.56–ex3	The Independence Day of Brazil
Lifestyles	National events and holidays	*EFS 10*	P.11-Ex. 6	The exercise asks students about special events, and what kind of food they eat during them.
Lifestyles	National events and holidays	*EFS 11*	P.14	An Eid al-Adha (an Islamic event) feast is shown in the pictures. (Figure 13)
Lifestyles	National animals	*High Up 1*	P.27	Unit 2's opening shows a picture of Jabiru (Tuiuiu in Portuguese). (Figure 14)
Lifestyles	National animals	*EFS 10*	P.47	A text about a natural reserve; Al-Talila, mentions different animals from Syria, such as the Arabian Oryx, red foxes, sand cats and jackals. (Figure 15)
Lifestyles	Food	*High Up 2*	P.88-Ex. 3	Different questions about foods students eat. (Figure 16)
Lifestyles	Food	*EFS 10*	P11-Ex. 4	Comparative questions about Syrian and non-Syrian dishes. (Figure17)
Lifestyles	Traditions and customs	*High Up 1*	P.38	Ex. *Put it in Writing* asks students to tell about habits related to their state. (Figure.18)
Lifestyles	Traditions and customs	*EFS 11*	P.19-ex3	Questions about people's habits of clothing, shopping, meals, household jobs and holidays.
Lifestyles	Family and relationships	*High Up 3*	P.142-ex1	Questions about the type of the family students belong to.
Lifestyles	Family and relationships	*EFS 11*	P.14	A picture of a Syrian family having a feast.
Lifestyles	Religion	*EFS 10*	P.9	A picture of a famous mosque in Syria.

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Lifestyles	Traditional clothes	*EFS 10*	P.34	The opening's pictures include a woman wearing a head cover.
Lifestyles	Proverbs	*High Up 3*	P. 12	Some English proverbs are introduced and there is a question about equivalent ones in Portuguese.
Lifestyles	Stereotypes	*High Up 1*	P. 34	Different stereotypes about Brazilians. (Figure 19)

Table 3 - First category examples

The local culture in public high schools' ELT coursebooks.
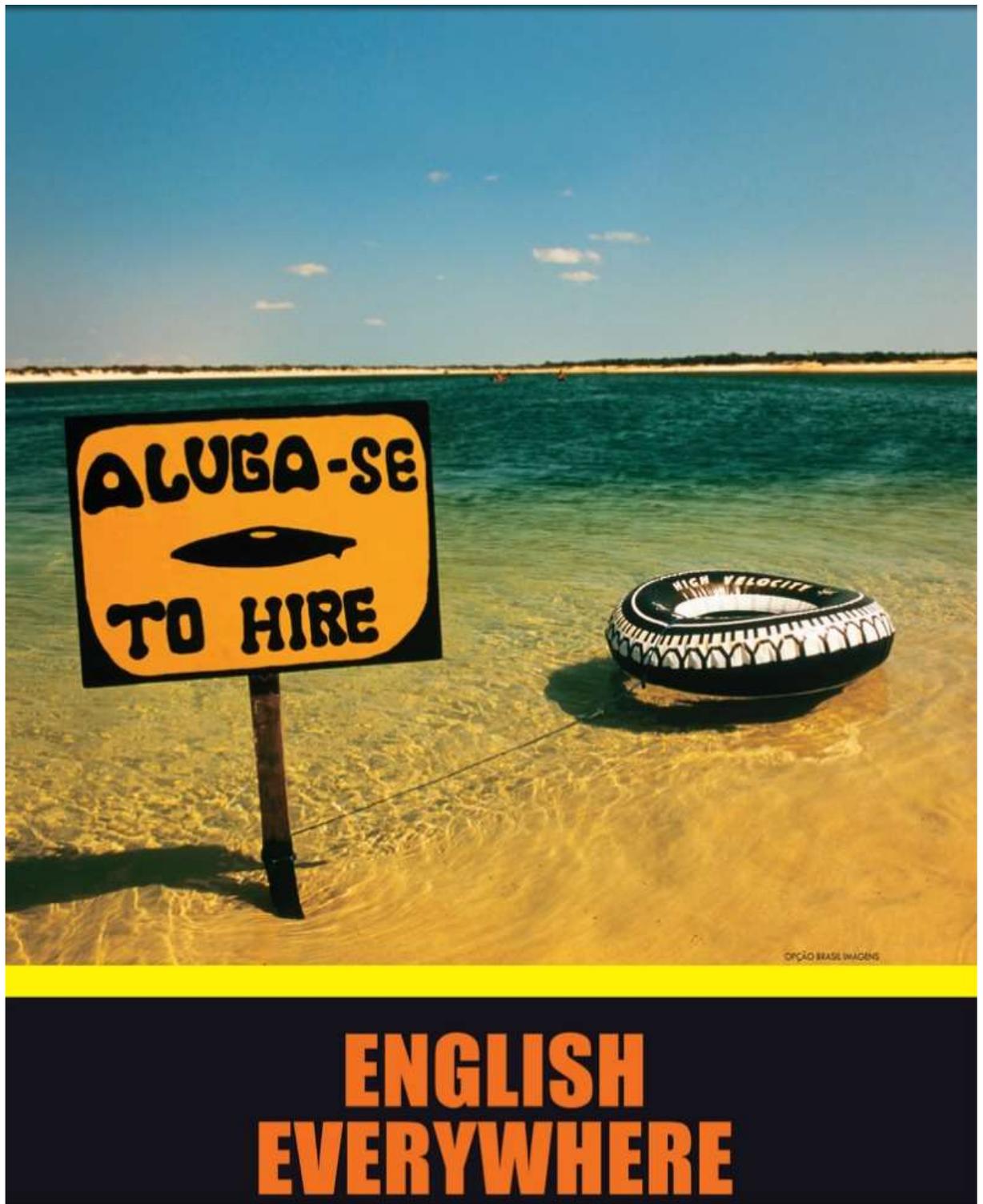
Figure.8, High Up 1. p.10, Language 1

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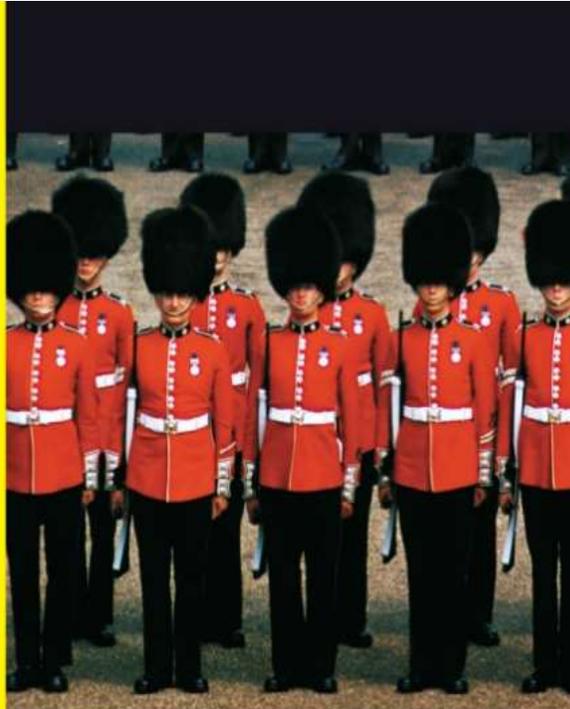
PHOTO RESEARCHERS RM/GETTY IMAGES

ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

unit 1

- Em que medida o inglês está presente no Brasil? Cenas como a retratada na página anterior são comuns onde você vive?
- Que aspectos dos países onde se fala inglês estão representados nas imagens desta página?

Figure.9, High Up 1, p.11, Language.2

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Figure.10, High Up 1, pp. 20-21, Language.3

The local culture in public high schools' ELT coursebooks.
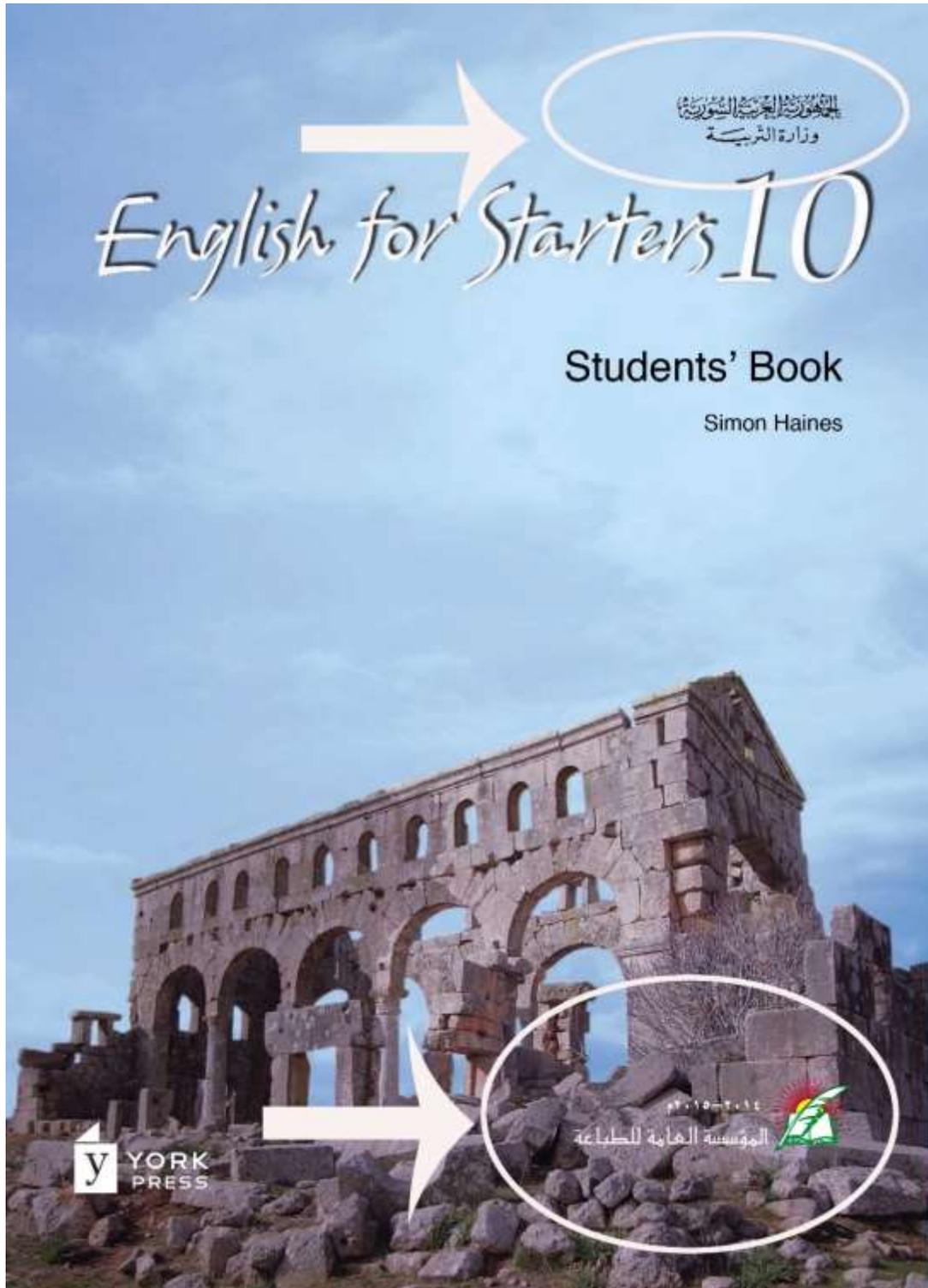
Figure.11, EFS 10, Cover, Language.4

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حقوق التوزيع في الجمهورية العربية السورية
محفوظة للمؤسسة العامة للطباعة

تدقيق ومواءمة كتب اللغة الإنكليزية

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Figure.12, EFS 10, p.2, Language.5

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Figure.13, EFS 11, p.14, National events and holidays

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NESTA UNIDADE VOCÊ IRÁ:

- refletir sobre alguns estereótipos a respeito dos brasileiros;
- estudar palavras relacionadas a comidas e hábitos brasileiros;
- trabalhar com os gêneros lista e entrevista oral;
- usar o *Simple Present*;
- identificar e utilizar *adverbs* of *frequency*.

TONY QUINN/ICON SMI/CORBIS/LATINSTOCK
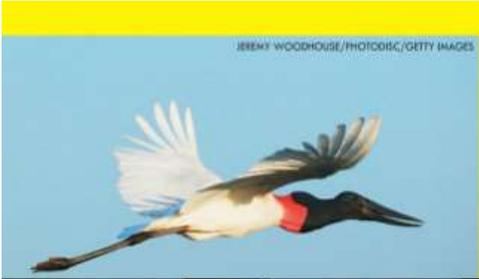
JEREMY WOODHOUSE/PHOTODISC/GETTY IMAGES

unit 2

- A que aspectos da cultura brasileira essas imagens se relacionam?
- Qual dessas imagens melhor representa a cultura da região onde você vive? Por quê?

Figure.14, High Up 1, p.27, National animals.1

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The **Al-Talila** Nature Reserve opened in 1991. The main purpose of the reserve is to protect rare species of wildlife in the Syrian desert that are in danger from hunting and habitat destruction, and to increase their numbers. It is also an important education centre for local people, children and tourists. The Environmental Education Centre (EEC) includes an environmental guide for visitors and teachers, a conservation club, visits to the field and meetings with local hunters. Some of the most important projects are those focused on the involvement and training of locals in contributing to the reserve. Bedouin cooperatives work with the project and receive training in skills that will enable them to participate in and benefit from future ecotourism projects. The EEC's work also extends to literacy programmes, English teaching, and study trips to other nature reserves abroad. Bedouin women have been trained in traditional tailoring and embroidery, and local young men have become nature- and bird-watching guides for tourists visiting the Al-Talila reserve. Another important role for local hunters has been to use their knowledge of the flora and fauna to help create a fauna inventory – a list of all the animals and birds living in the reserve. This list includes the endangered Arabian Oryx. The last oryx in the wild was killed in Oman in 1972. However, ten years earlier, two wildlife organisations had taken nine oryx from different countries and established a World Survival Herd. Other animals at the Al-Talila Reserve are red foxes, sand cats, jackals and hedgehogs. There are also over 270 species of birds, including a type of ibis that was previously registered as extinct, and many different trees, shrubs and other plants such as wormwood and lavender. In addition, the Reserve contains a hot spring, with natural healing properties for neural and dermatological conditions.

Check your understanding

4 Read the text again. Are these statements true or false?
a The reserve looks after animals from all over the world.
b The World Survival Herd was created in 1962.
c The main focus of the EEC's work is on literacy and English teaching.
d Bedouin will be involved with tourist projects connected with the Reserve.
e Water from the hot spring on the Reserve can help you if you have some medical problems.

Vocabulary

5 Match words a–f with their meanings 1–6.
a hunter
b flora and fauna
c habitat
d literacy
e neural and dermatological
f embroidery and tailoring

1 relating to the nervous system and the skin
2 the ability to read and write
3 someone who finds and kills animals
4 the natural environment where an animal lives
5 the making and decorating of clothes
6 the plants and animals of a region

Think and speak

6 Work in groups. Discuss these questions.
a How important do you think it is for countries to protect wild animals?
b Should we spend money on animals? Why?

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Figure.15, EFS 10, p47, National animals.2

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Have Your Say

1 What's food to you? Check the options that best reflect your feelings about food. Respostas pessoais.

  a ☐ I love food. I pretty much eat all kinds of food.

  b ☐ I love eating, but I'm worried about my weight. So I eat very little food.

  c ☐ I only eat organic food. It's much healthier.

  d ☐ I don't care much about food. I only eat when I'm really hungry.

  e ☐ I like food, but I don't like eating anything green.

2 Draw one of these faces next to the food items below according to your preferences. Respostas pessoais.

I love it.   I like it.   I don't like it.   I hate it

☐ rice, beans, spaghetti, etc.   ☐ lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, etc.

☐ potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, etc.   ☐ chicken, fish, eggs, etc.

☐ cakes, bread, crackers, etc.   ☐ milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, etc.

☐ bananas, apples, papayas, etc.   ☐ candy, chocolate, ice cream, etc.

☐ pork, lamb, beef, etc.

3 Discuss the following questions with a classmate. Respostas pessoais.

  a Which foods from activity 2 do you usually eat? Which ones don't you eat at all? Why?

  b Do you think our eating habits interfere in the way we look? If yes, how?

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Figure.16, High Up 2, p88, Food.1

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Listen Breakfast around the world

3 You are going to hear a talk about what people in different countries eat and drink for breakfast.
- **a** Before you listen, find out what other students had for breakfast this morning.
- **b** Now check that you know what these food words mean. Find each one in the picture below.

beans   cereal   cheese   croissant   eggs   fish   noodles   onion   rice   toast   yoghurt

c (1.1) Listen and note which kinds of food in the list the speaker mentions.

4 Answer these questions with a partner.
- **a** Which other country's breakfast is most similar to breakfast in Syria?
- **b** Which of these foods do you know?
- **c** Which would you like to try?

Check your understanding

5 (1.1) Listen again and answer these questions.
- **a** Which three drinks are mentioned as part of a 'continental breakfast'?
- **b** Where does the speaker say a 'continental breakfast' is popular?
- **c** What are some popular breakfast dishes in Syria?
- **d** What is in the Egyptian meal *foul moudames*?
- **e** Which Far Eastern country does the speaker talk about? What is unusual about breakfast in this country?
- **f** What do most Russians drink at breakfast time?
- **g** What do children particularly enjoy eating in Russia?

Think and speak

6 Work in pairs or groups.
- **a** How important are meal times in your family?
- **b** When do you have special meals?

11

Figure.17, EFS 10, p11, Food.2

The local culture in public high schools' ELT coursebooks.

Put It in Writing

Plan your writing.

What to write: A list of your personal habits related to the traditions of the state where you live.

Purpose: To show which state traditions you follow and which ones you don't.

Audience: Your classmates, teachers, coordinators, and family.

✓ C **Study some examples. Guess the state of each writer. The first one is done for you.**

a
- I have "tacacá" almost every week, but I only eat "pato no tucupi" on special occasions.
- I dance "carimbó," and I like to watch people dancing too.

a Pará _____

b
- I never eat "pão de queijo," but I love "broa de fubá."
- I rarely go swimming in waterfalls.

b _____

c
- I have "chimarrão" every day.
- I am a vegetarian, so I don't eat barbecue.

c _____

Brainstorm some of your state's traditions and take notes in your notebook. Then write a list of your own habits related to those traditions.

Use the checklist below to revise your text.

	Yes	No
1 It respects the characteristics of the genre.		
2 It meets my writing objectives.		
3 The language is appropriate to my audience.		
4 The text uses good grammar and punctuation.		

* If you checked *no* in any topic above, rewrite your list.

Publish your list.

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Figure.18, High Up 1, p38, Traditions and customs

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Grammar

1 Underline the verbs in the statements about Brazilian people below.

   a Your entire family goes to grandma's house on Sundays.

   b You travel to Brazil and take presents for the entire family.

   c You take soccer too seriously.

   d You eat rice and beans seven days a week.

   e Your breakfast consists of milk and coffee.

2 The verbs in activity 1 are in the...

   ☐ present.   ☐ past.   ☐ future.

3 The Simple Present expresses different ideas. Look at the mind map below and do the activities.

   a Cross out the ideas that are not expressed by the Simple Present.

   b Match the statements from activity 1 with the ideas in the diagram. The first one is done for you.
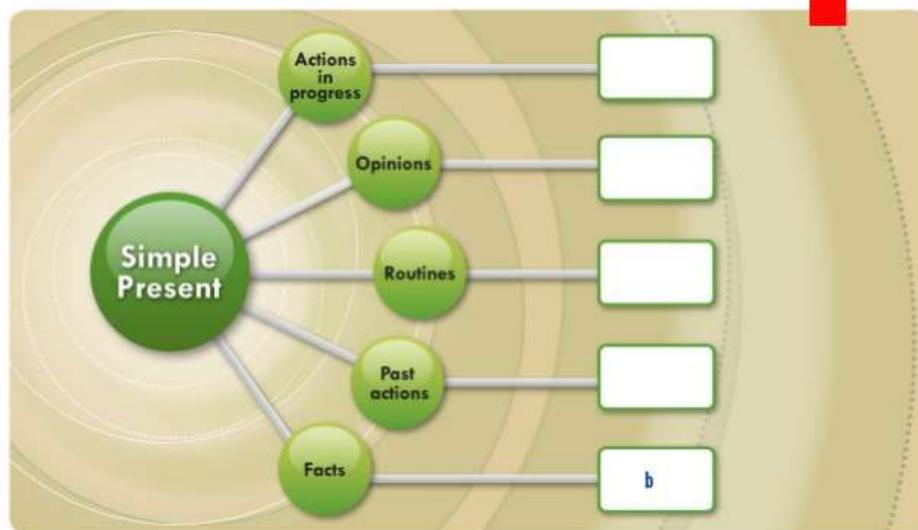
4 Go back to page 29. Find three sentences with verbs in the Simple Present and write them down.

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Figure.19, High Up 1, p. 34, Stereotypes

5.2.2 The second category: Artistic and intellectual life and entertainment

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Items of this category differ from the first one's in that they are produced by a smaller group of the members of the society and consumed by the rest of the society. In addition, they can be produced for economic reasons. These subcategories include:

a- Arts and artists in addition to their production;

b- Sports and players;

c- Leisure activities that may start with playing music and not even end with making friends;

d- Science and scientists;

e- Historic places, tourism, travelling, etc.;

f- Quotations as they are part of the artistic and scientific production of the community.

Cultural Category	Sub-category	Book	Page number	Place and type of the representation
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Art & artists	*High Up 1*	P.41	Stating Brazilian films as an activity to improve understanding the unit.
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Art & artists	*EFS 10*	P.8	A picture shows a person playing a Syrian traditional musical instrument (Alrababa) (Figure 20)
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Sports & players	*High Up 2*	P.140-141	Unit 8 is about Biking, a common sport in Brazil. (Figure 21)
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Sports & players	*EFS 11*	P.48	A tv channel programming featuring The National Syrian Football team.
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Leisure activities	*High Up 1*	P.127	A picture of a family using a Karaoke system (Figure 22)
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Leisure activities	*EFS 12*	P87	A text about The Syrian Adventure Club.
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Science & scientists	*EFS 10*	P.21	Ex2 shows a text about two famous ancient Arab thinkers, a geographer and traveler called

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				Ibn Battuta, and a historian and sociologist called Ibn Khaldun. (Figure.23)
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Historic places, tourism, travelling…etc.	*High Up 1*	P.26	Opening pictures show two Bahian women in a historic place in Salvador. (Figure.24)
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Historic places, tourism, travelling, etc.	*EFS 10-11-12*	Covers	All cover pictures feature historic places of Syria.
Art, intellectuality, entertainment.	Quotations	*High Up 1*	P.67	The page features a quotation by Paulo Freire and asks about students' opinions.

Table 4 - Second category examples.

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Figure.20, EFS 10, p8, Art & artists

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Figure.21, High Up 2, pp 140-141, Sports & players

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4 Think about the use of the following devices. What do people use them for?

a a computer: <u>to access the Internet, to create documents</u>

b a cell phone: _____

c a DVD player: _____

d an MP3 player: _____

5 Compare your list with your partner's.

6 How can you use these devices to improve your English? Write your ideas.
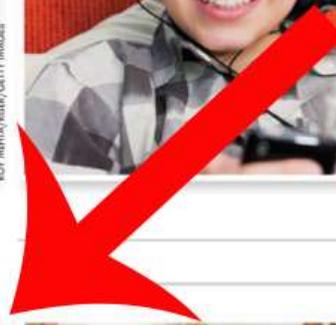
Figure.22, High Up, p127, Leisure activities

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Writing A review

task You are going to write a review of a book that you have read

Read and analyse

1 Read these two book reviews quickly.
Which is a review of a book about
▶ history?   ▶ travel writing?

2 Read the reviews again, and answer these questions.

a Are the reviews good, bad or mixed?
b What did the writers like or dislike?

Ibn Battuta

Ibn Battuta's account of his thirty-year journey is a fascinating book. Born in Tangier in 1304, he left home for Mecca at the age of about twenty. Then he travelled through forty-four countries including Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, India and even China! He covered about 75,000 miles.
The account includes descriptions of his pilgrimages, the cities he stayed in, local tales, and sea adventures – so this is a book that everyone will enjoy! His memory of the events and places was amazing. And you will remember his stories for a long time too. This is an excellent account of an amazing lifetime of travelling.

Ibn Khaldun

Ibn Khaldun *Muqaddimah* is one of the most important historical works ever written. The author was born in Tunis in 1332 CE and was a high-ranking political figure.

The work was ground-breaking and discussed many important theories which are still relevant today. Because of its complex content and purpose, the book is not easy to read. However, it is well-written and well-organised.

Reading The *Muqaddimah* will make you think – and it will change your view of the world!

3 Find three facts and three opinions in each of the reviews.

Plan your review

4 a Choose which book to review.
b Make a list of important facts.
c Make a note of your opinions and give the book a star rating (five stars is the best).

Write

5 a Write a general review in about 100–300 words. Use your notes from **4** and the *Useful language* box.
b Check your spelling, grammar, punctuation and style.
c Exchange reviews with another student. Does your partner's review give you enough information? If not, ask him/her questions.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Expressing personal opinions
This is a book that everyone will enjoy.
It is a fascinating book.
It is well-written/organised.

Making recommendations
If you get the chance, read
This is an excellent account of
You will learn a lot from it.

Figure.23, EFS 10, p21, Science & scientists

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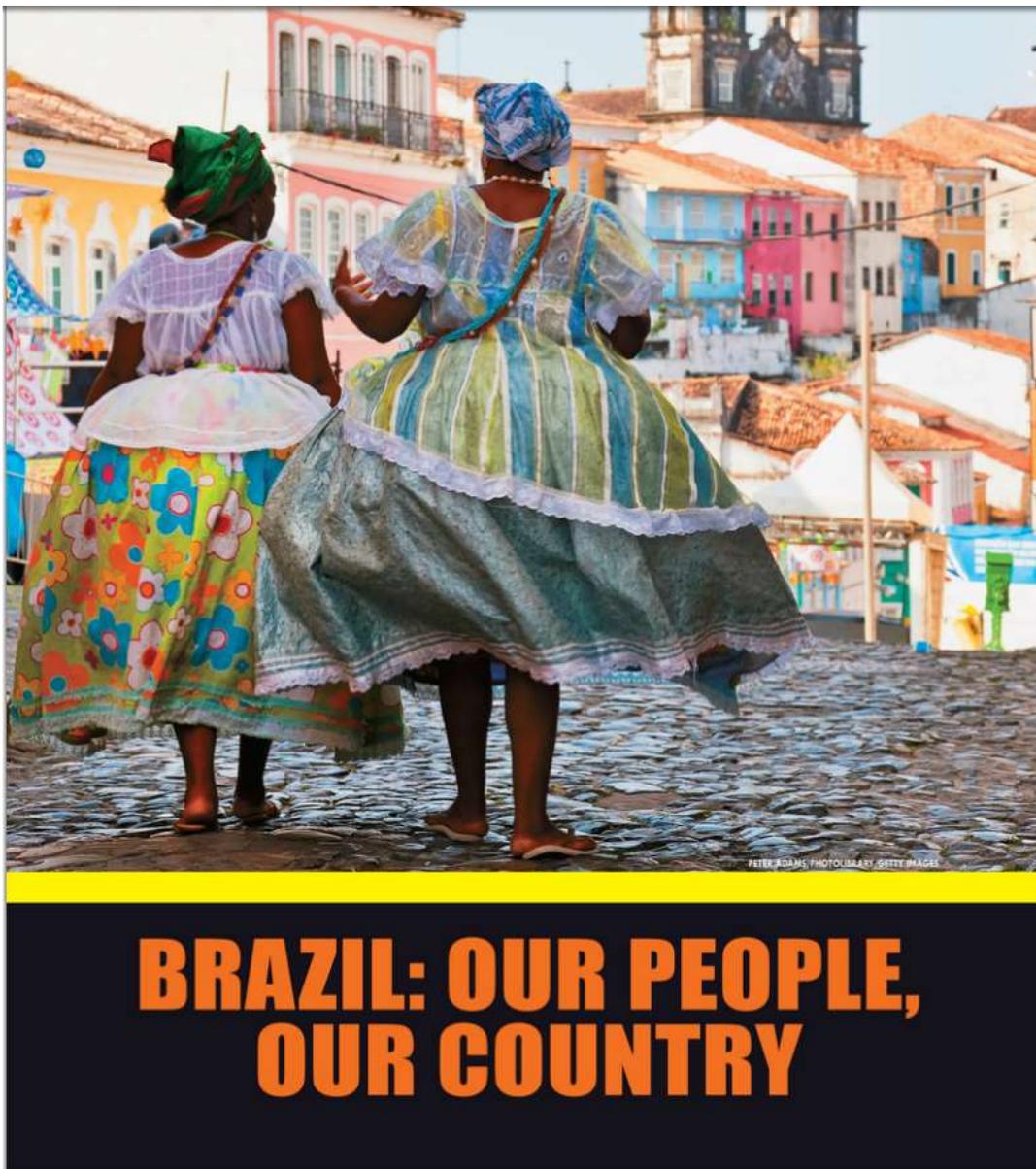
Figure.24, High Up 1, p26, Historic places, tourism, travelling, etc.

5.2.3 The third category: Human development factor.

The goal of items that belong to this category is improving the life of the group members, introducing better jobs, houses, relationships, or even environment, and all that can make life easier. It is possible to include the following subcategories here:

a- Cities, towns, and living spaces that protect the inhabitants from dangers and nature;

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b- Money and related items which have the function of making people's life easier
and increase their power;

c- Commercial activities that enable the group members to stay active and receive
money in turn;

d- Environmental preservation that protects nature as it is essential in humans'
survival on earth;

e- World improvement that applies different principles for the sake of having a
better world on all scales, i.e., relationships, commerce, tolerance, and
environment too.

f- Inventions that facilitate people's life.

g- The legal and governmental system which organizes and controls human
behavior and protects people's properties;

h- Newspapers which help communication take place, in addition to informing the
group about what is happening around them, plus advertising and improving
commercial life among too many other benefits.

Cultural Category	Sub-category	Book	Page number	Place and type of the representation
Human development factor	Living spaces	*High Up 1*	P.19	The 6th question includes a picture from Brasilia, and students need to make a question about how old it is.
Human development factor	Living spaces	*EFS 10*	P.20	Exercise 1 mentions Damascus (the capital of Syria) as the place of the survey mentioned on the same page.
Human development factor	Money	*High Up 3*	P.10-Unit1	The whole unit deals with the issue of money management. (Figure.25)
Human development factor	Money	*EFS 10*	P.24	The page uses the Syrian currency (pound) SYP to price some types of houses.
Human development factor	Commercial activities	*EFS 12*	P.91	The page features a short text and a picture about The Eighth Gate, a commercial district in Damascus. (Figure.26)

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Human development factor	Environmental preservation	*High Up 1*	P.85	Different exercises try to raise students' awareness about environmental issues. (Figure.27)
Human development factor	Environmental preservation	*EFS 11*	P.23	Exercise 6 presents a text about Recycling in Syria.
Human development factor	World improvement	*High Up 3*	P.122	The page tackles the issue of Volunteering. (Figure.28)
Human development factor	Inventions	*EFS 12*	P.78	A picture of one of the oldest irrigation systems in the world that existed and still exists in Syria is shown.
Human development factor	The legal and governmental system	*High Up 2*	P.126	Questions about getting a driving license in Brazil.
Human development factor	The legal and governmental system	*EFS 12*	P.8	The opening of Unite 1, (Law), shows a picture of the Highest Courthouse in the country.
Human development factor	Newspapers	*EFS 10*	P.99	The page mentions the *Syria Times*, the only English-speaking newspaper in Syria.

Table 5 - Third category examples.

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Figure.25, High Up 3, p10, Money

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Grammar **Talking about processes (2)** Activity Book Grammar file page 88

1 Complete these sentences, choosing the correct modal verbs.
a   Large areas of land (could / had to) be flooded when ___ were building the Three Gorges Dam.
b   Work on the dam (could / must) not be started until ___ Yangtze had been diverted.
c   The locks were built so that the Yangtze (could / had ___ ill be used by ships.
d   Unfortunately many of the historical sites (could / m ___ not be saved when they built the dam.
e   Protestors are demanding that people who had to le ___ eir homes (could / must) be given new homes and compensation.

2 Work with a partner. Discuss these questions a ___ your answers.
a   Think of something new that was built recently in you ___ wn or city. What had to be done before it could be built? How has it changed the area?
b   Think about a building project that is taking place now. When it is finished, how might the area around it be affected?

The Eighth Gate

The Eighth Gate is a commercial development in the Yafour district, near Damascus. It will be the site of the Damascus Stock Exchange and an important business centre.

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Figure.26, EFS 12, p91, Commercial activities

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7. The past two units made you reflect on the environment and on what we can do to protect it. You had the opportunity to talk and read about potential problems and also possible solutions to save our planet. What are they? Let's remember. Write P for Problems and S for Solutions.

a. alternative sources of energy ☐   d. pollution ☐

b. chemical waste ☐   e. garbage separation ☐

c. deforestation ☐   f. public transportation ☐

8. Now choose one of the problems or solutions from activity 7 and write what each photo represents.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

9. Match the columns appropriately to create meaningful statements.

a. Don't text or read cell phone messages ☐ there's a girl in there. She's trying on a nightgown.

b. In classes, always ask questions ☐ while you're on a date. It's impolite!

c. "Listen carefully ☐ to the story I have for you," said the little boy's grandma.

d. Please, speak slowly; ☐ when you have doubts.

e. Don't enter the fitting room now; ☐ I don't understand what you're talking about.

✔ Check your answers on page 208.

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Figure.27, High Up 1, p85, Environmental preservation

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5. In Unit 6 you learned that when we want to talk about future plans we use be going to. Refer back to the on page 112, to review this verb tense and its use in different contexts. In the note below, you can read Amanda's plans for the future. She intends to post it on her blog. Fill in the blanks with the verbs in parentheses in the going to form.

After my graduation, I _____ (travel) abroad. I _____ (join) a volunteer program for exchange students in Brazil. My friends and I _____ (help) women and kids who suffer from malaria and other preventable diseases. I'm sure my mom _____ (miss) me a lot, but being a volunteer _____ (enhance) my résumé. The program _____ (start) next August, but I _____ (not – get) there in August. My classes _____ (finish) in October and that's when I_____ (start) volunteering. The volunteers _____ (stay) in campsites near the most damaged areas, to keep in close contact with those who are in need. I_____ (come back) home six months later, with my heart full of joy for having pitched in effectively!

6. In Unit 6 you also learned that we use reported speech when we are reporting or telling what other people say, think, or believe. To review the uses and forms of the reported speech, refer back to page 112. Also check some other examples in context on page 113. Read the social communicative situations below and check the statements with the appropriate use of the reported speech.

a Her husband said: "She doesn't like to do the housework. She argues it is boring."

☐ Her husband said she never liked to do the housework because it's boring.

☐ Her husband said she didn't like to do the housework. She argued it was boring.

b Joe: "She's the most attractive girl I've ever met."

☐ Joe said she was the most attractive girl he had ever met.

☐ Joe said he was never going to meet someone as attractive as she is.

c Chris: "I'm the happiest man in the world because I got married to the woman of my dreams today."

☐ Chris stated that he was the happiest man in the world because he would get married to the woman of his dreams that day.

☐ Chris stated that he was the happiest man in the world because he had gotten married to the woman of his dreams that day.

d Linda said to Carol: "I think my husband will be promoted tonight."

☐ Linda told Carol she thought her husband would be promoted that night.

☐ Linda told Carol she thinks her husband was going to be promoted that night.

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Figure.28, High Up 3, p122, World improvement

Having presented the tables and the illustrations, I find important to clarify a few issues related to the content in the tables and figures:

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- The tables and figures do not include all encountered examples as there are too many;

- Showing only one example taken from only one country's books of each sub-category means that no examples of this item were found in the other country's books;

- On pages where the cultural reference chosen as an example covers most of the page and is clearly visible, no changes were made to the page, however when the reference is only a picture or a small text, a red or white arrow, circle, square, or rectangle is used to better expose the example.

Up to the moment in this chapter, I have tried to explain how these teaching materials approach the native/national culture on their way to teach English, and what aspects of these cultures are included in the two series. The next part has as its main objective identifying and problematizing the similarities and differences presented in these two series and pointing to the ones, if any, that may lead to stereotypes when seen or read by non-members of the cultural group for which the books were made originally.

5.3 PERSPECTIVES OF THE TWO WORLDS

Brazil and Syria are two countries far from each other, belong to totally different cultures and have different points of view about various cultural concepts. Sometimes the difference is little; other times, it is enormous. One can relate that to many reasons as culture is a result of many factors interacting together; geographic, economic, religious, and historical to name a few. In the following, I offer a comparison of some cultural representations in the studied materials, trying to trace any similarities and differences shown about each subcategory mentioned along the course of the books.

5.3.1 First category items:

5.3.1.1 Language

Language is one of the important items of culture as it is shared between all the members of the group. Even though the books are foreign language ones, however, their use of language shows an interesting contrast. All the High Up volumes share the same

amount of use of Portuguese. They use Portuguese systematically in different parts of the books; both that are directed to students and teachers. The presence of Portuguese is so strong in the books in textual and graphical content as well. Each unit in High Up starts with the unit's objectives that tell students what they are going to learn or achieve upon finishing it. This part is always in Portuguese even in the last book of the series which is supposedly made for an advanced level. We can see the same feature repeated in different sections in the same unit such as 'In Other Words' and 'Self-assessment.' What I find a bit strange is that in this series. As I had access to the Teacher's Guides, I also found that a hundred percent of the content directed to the teacher is also written in Portuguese, such as the little explanations spread all around the books here and there. If teachers are supposed to be proficient in the target language, why would anyone choose to communicate with them in Portuguese inside books made to teach English? Numbers of occasions where Portuguese is used in the High Up series are numerous and it is one of the highest recurrently used cultural references. Examples of this can be seen all around the books. (Figure.29, High Up 1, p13, Portuguese.1, figure.30, High Up 2, p137, Portuguese.2)

On the other hand, English for Starters (EFS) brings a different reality. Using Arabic is restricted to the cover, and the front-matter section, and even there, not more than twenty-five percent is mentioned in Arabic; pieces of information related to the name of the country and the ministry responsible for printing the book, copyrights, and the team of the content adapters, in addition to the year of printing. Starting from page three where the teaching material starts, not a word is written in Arabic. This applies both to textual and graphical content and to the three books of the series. Having been a teacher in Syria for three years, I had full access to the teacher guides of that series too. They also are written in English without any kind of use of Arabic in the materials. (Figure.31, EFS 10's teacher guide, p20, Teaching plans in EFS 10, figure.32, EFS11's teacher guide, p20, and figure.32, EFS12's teacher guide, p46.)

In Brazil, teachers of English are not necessarily students of exclusively English language, as I was informed. The 'Letras' course includes both Portuguese and English subjects, and many teachers graduate without necessarily becoming fluent in English. However, this is only one explanation of many potential ones where for example, the

status of English as a foreign language may have been emphasized through such a use, or the high variety of the level of students could also be another reason for such excessive use of Portuguese.

In Syria, teachers of English are selected based on their graduation degree which necessarily needs to be a BA of English Language and Literature. More than eighty percent of that university course is taught exclusively in English and the rest includes one European language, French or German, in addition to Arabic. This can be a reason for the difference in the way books address teachers.

The use of Portuguese to address students may be a way to ensure they absorb that Portuguese content, especially that it is grammatical content in part, which is usually more abstract and difficult than normal texts and exercises.

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3 Look at this scene from a Brazilian city and discuss with a classmate. Which of these English words do you see around your neighborhood? Are they common?
Respostas pessoais.

4 Make a list of English words or expressions we use in Brazil. Write them under the appropriate category.

Clothing	Food	Sports	Technology

Respostas pessoais. Sugerimos reproduzir esta tabela no quadro, pedir aos alunos que digam as palavras e expressões de suas próprias listas e escrevê-las na tabela, formando, desse modo, uma grande tabela com a contribuição da turma. Incentivar os alunos a copiar as palavras que não constam de suas listas.

5 Discuss the questions below. *Esta discussão pode ser feita em inglês ou em português, de acordo com o que julgar mais conveniente.*

a Why is the English language so important in the contemporary world?

b Do you remember a situation when you had to speak English? If so, describe it.

c How does the English language help you in your daily life?

6 Some of the countries on the map on the previous page speak more than one language. Match the languages below to the countries where they are spoken.

a Afrikaans	[c] Canada
b Filipino	[a] South Africa
c French	[e] India
d Guyanese Creole	[b] Philippines
e Hindi	[d] Guyana

Ao término desta seção, promover uma discussão sobre os temas tratados para que haja uma conscientização do contexto histórico, cultural e social no qual se insere a língua inglesa.

unit 1
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Figure.29, High Up 1, p13, Portuguese.1

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The Way It Sounds

1 Listen to the first part of a story told by a doctor. What is it about?

- [x] Distracted driving.
- [ ] Road accident statistics.
- [ ] Car accident trauma treatments.

2 Listen to the first part of the story again, cross out the wrong information, and correct the sentences.

- There were a lot of teenagers in a ~~truck~~. car
- They were driving ~~slowly~~ on a country road. at a fairly high speed
- They were telling stories and jokes ~~on the phone~~. to each other
- They ~~were~~ paying full attention to the road. were not
- They ~~noticed~~ a stop sign and ~~stopped the car~~. did not notice / blew through the sign

3 Listen to the second part of the story. What happened? Circle the right answer.

- The teenagers' car crashed into a (van) / truck.
- The teens' car ran into the **motorist's** / (passenger's) side.
- In the other vehicle there was a father, a mother, and their **two daughters** / (daughter and son).
- The family was coming from a **party** / (funeral).
- The teenagers **had some** / (did not have any) serious injuries.

Sugerir que os alunos ouçam e sigam o script para entendê-lo melhor e aprender o ritmo da língua inglesa em contexto de uso.

4 Discuss the following questions with a classmate.

- Why do you think this doctor is telling this kind of story publicly?
  Resposta possível: To alert people to the dangers of distracted driving.
- Teenagers under eighteen cannot drive in Brazil. Why is it important that they learn about distracted driving? Resposta possível: Because they may ride with people who get distracted behind the wheel. Also, in the future if they become drivers they should know what to do and what not to do while driving.
- Will you tell people to pay attention to their driving if you see them eating, talking on the phone, or having any other unsafe behavior behind the wheel? Why?
  Respostas pessoais. Chamar a atenção dos alunos para a gravidade do tema tratado nesta unidade e incentivá-los a mudar de atitude, caso necessário.

Did you know?

The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims was started in 1993. Since then it has been observed and promoted worldwide by several NGOs, including the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR) and its associated organizations. On October 26, 2005, the United Nations endorsed it as a global day to be observed every third Sunday in November each year, making it a major advocacy day for road traffic injury prevention.

Based on <www.who.int>. Accessed on Dec 9, 2012.

unit 7

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Figure.30, High Up 2, p137, Portugues.2

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Lesson 7

Overview

Outcomes To write an online guide to eating places
Language focus Recommending; vocabulary: eating places
Materials Students' Book page 14; advertisements for local restaurants and cafés (optional)
Grammar reference Activity Book pages 81–83

Writing An online guide to eating places

Read and analyse

1 (10 mins)
Ask the students if they ever go to local cafés or restaurants. If they do, which ones do they like best, and why?
Ask them to look at the title of the online guide shown on the page, and check they know the meaning of *recommend*. Then allow time for them to read the text. Tell them not to worry if they don't understand every word. While they are reading, write the names of the four places (International Café, etc.) on the board.
When the students are ready, point to each place name in turn and ask them to summarise what they have read about it – if possible, with their books closed.
a Tell the students which place you would choose first, and why. Then ask the students to tell you which place(s) they would choose first, and why.
b Read out the question, and put the students in pairs to find one reason for each place. Then check their answers.
c Ask the students to look at the texts again and decide with their partners which phrases describe where the place is.

Plan your online guide

2 (20 mins)
Ask the students to imagine they are visiting a new town. How could they find out about good places to eat? Accept all suggestions (e.g. *ask people, look in newspapers, the phone book, the internet* ...), then tell them that they are going to produce an 'online' guide recommending places to eat in their town.
a Ask the class to suggest suitable local places, and write them on the board. Then put the students in small groups and tell them to choose one or two places.
b Write the three headings on the board. Choose one of the places previously written on the board and ask students to suggest ideas for each heading. Write the ideas in note form under the appropriate headings. Tell the students to write the three headings in their notebooks and discuss what notes to write for each place.

Write and check (10–15 mins)

3 a Ask the students to look at the *Useful language* box. Then ask them to write three or four sentences about each of their chosen places, using the ideas in their notes and the *Useful language* box. Go round and make suggestions where necessary.
b Tell the students to check their sentences carefully. Go round the class and make further corrections if necessary. Then ask them to write a second draft of their 'guides'. Tell the students to exchange guides with a partner, if possible somebody different. Encourage them to discuss each other's guides.

Figue.31, EFS 10's teacher guide, p20, Teaching plans in EFS 10

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Festivals

UNIT 1

MODULE 1: Getting together

Lessons 1 and 2

Overview
Outcomes To describe pictures; to talk about festivals; to read about festivals; to scan for information
Language focus Past and present customs
Materials Students' Book pages 14–15; dictionaries (optional)
Grammar reference Activity Book page 81

Discuss

1 (20 mins)
On the board, write *Festivals*. Invite students to give some examples of festivals in Syria. Ask them to tell you which ones they enjoy the most, and why. Allow a short class discussion.
Then put the students in pairs to look at the pictures and discuss questions **a** and **b**. Go round and listen, giving prompts and supplying vocabulary where necessary. Then invite different students to share their ideas with the class.

Syria and China Factfiles (15–20 mins)
Tell the students they have two minutes to study the Syria and China Factfiles on page 15. While they are doing that, copy the headings from the factfiles (population, capital, etc.) on the board, as in the table below.

Factfile		
	Syria	China
Population		
Capital		
Area		
Major language		
Currency		
Main exports		

After two minutes, ask the students to close their books. Put the students in pairs or small groups, and ask them to copy down the headings and then complete the information from memory.
When they are ready, invite different students to come to the board to complete the table – each time, check with the rest of the class and make corrections as required, referring to the book only if necessary.
Finally, ask which pairs or groups (if any!) have completed their tables 100% correctly.

Extra activity (10–15 mins)
Invite students to tell you the names of other festivals from other countries. Write them on the board. Put the students in small groups and tell them to prepare a list of questions they would like to ask about each festival (e.g. Where do people celebrate this festival? When is it? What happens? What food do people eat? etc.). When they are ready, invite each group to share their ideas with the class.

Invite students to answer as many of the questions as they can for each festival, and ask them to find out more information for the next lesson.
If students have brought more information about festivals around the world, allow time for them to tell the class what they have found out.

Students' Book page

Festivals

UNIT 1

MODULE 1: Getting together

Dragon Boat Festival

Eid Al-Adha

Figure.32, EFS11's teacher guide, p20, Teaching plans in EFS 11

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The Earth at risk

UNIT 4

MODULE 2: Natural world

Lessons 1 and 2

Overview

Outcomes To talk about deserts; to read about deserts
Language focus Climate vocabulary; reading for gist and detail
Materials Students' Book pages 34-35; dictionaries (optional)

Discuss

1 (15-25 mins)

Allow time for the students to look at the photographs. Ask them to suggest relevant vocabulary and list good ideas on the board (e.g. *desert, sand, dry, rain, climate, wind*). Ask if anyone has ever been to a desert; invite students to tell the class about their experiences.
Put the students in small groups to discuss questions **a-c.**

Go round and listen, making suggestions where necessary. Then invite different students to share their ideas with the class.

2 (15 mins)

Read out the first word (*climate*) and ask the students to match it with the correct meaning. Then put them in pairs to complete the task, using dictionaries if necessary; encourage them to find the words in the text.
Go round and offer help where necessary, then check their answers.

Factfile

First, put the students in groups of four made up of two pairs (AA and BB). Ask students to look at the factfile. Students AA read the first three facts and cover up the rest, and students BB read the other three, covering the first half of the factfile. Tell them to check new words in the dictionary, and / or explain them.

NOTE: 1 hectare = 10,000 m²

Students then use the information to make three 'quiz questions' – e.g. How many hectares of land worldwide become desert every year? Every year, 5 million hectares of land worldwide become desert.
Students then close their books and ask and answer the quiz questions, either in pairs (AB) or as a class activity.

Students' Book page

Figure.33, EFS12's teacher guide, p46, Teaching plans in EFS 12

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5.3.1.2 Nationality and citizenship

Nationality and citizenship represent for many all aspects that bring together members of the same country, making them a strong united group which have the same country as a uniting item with all shared feelings, worries, happiness and suffering together. Content related to this subcategory is represented by occurrences that mention the country or city of the student. Such a content could lead to more feelings of unity and belonging.

High Up in general makes a few references to the country and its cities. A few questions are directed to students about students' country and their parents' nationalities. This does not happen on many occasions, and there is almost no mention of these representations in volumes 2 and 3.

Different from that situation, the EFS books repeat numerously the name of the country almost in every possible place. EFS 10, for example, mentions the name of the county more than fifty times, and it does this wherever it can. The book uses phrases like, *'food in Syria', 'Where do you recommend that tourists visit in Syria', 'Which country's breakfast is most similar to breakfast in Syria,'* and so on forever.

It is possible to relate such a difference to the size of the country, the role that the governments would like to play in the life of the citizen. Being privately published books in a big federal country makes it easier for the Brazilian series not to emphasize this unity or inclusion too much. However, this is totally the opposite of the situation in Syria. Education in Syria is basically public; public schools are the most common, and they have more than medium quality. They offer good education for free for everyone. Consequently, books are planned, made and distributed by the government which directly supervises all teaching activities at schools. In addition, Syria has a more totalitarian system of government, and it is a much smaller country. This facilitates the governmental intrusion in teaching materials. So, you can see the name of the country repeated almost in each two or three pages. Figure.33, EFS 10, p.13, '*The country's name*' shows an example of how many times the name of the country could be repeated in one page only. The name and its derived words are circled on that page.

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Figure.34, EFS 10, p.13, '*The country's name*'

5.3.1.3 National events and holidays

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National events and holidays are one of the important cultural representations that may exist in teaching materials. These representations are shared among huge number of the cultural group members. *High Up* 1, for instance, mentions a single national holiday in Brazil which is The Independence Day. (Figure 35, High Up1, p56). *High Up* 3 also mentions a single national day which is The National Day of the Indigenous People. Other than these two occasions, we cannot see any national events or holidays mentioned in the Brazilian series analyzed.

On the other hand, the EFS collection shows a bit more diverse use of national events and holidays. The connection of these events to the daily life of students is usually made by asking students about national events they like, what rituals, if any, are performed on that day, whether there are special foods they have on those occasions, and even require that students sometimes write about these details. (Figure.13, EFS 11, p.14, National events and holidays). Still, we can see such references only in two out of the three books, as EFS 12 does not bring any of these representations.

These national representations can, to some extent, be related or connected to the early-mentioned subcategory '*Nationality and Citizenship*', thus we can imagine why they are not mentioned a lot in some of the books.

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Figure.35, High Up 1, p56, The Independence Day

5.3.1.4 National animals

National animals all around the world have a special place in the heart of the cultural heritage of the members of that cultural group. On different occasions, we can see animals becoming a representation of the whole nation. Examples of such cases includes the American eagle, the Russian bear, the Syrian bald eagle and so on. Mentioning national animals in the books creates immediate connection with students.

The *High Up* series shows one example of using national animals on page 27 of volume 1. A picture of the Jabiru bird (Tuiuiú), (figure.14, High Up 1, p27), a mainly South American bird that is well-known in Brazil. However, the studied Brazilian books do not use more examples of Brazilian animals. This is a single example.

The Syrian series, on the other hand, uses different examples of national animals. EFS 10, for instance, mentions the Arabian Oryx, sand cats, red foxes, jackals, hedgehogs, and ibis birds. EFS 11 mentions wolves, jackals, deer, mongooses, eagle owls, the wild boar, golden eagle, black francolin and hoopoe. Page 106 of volume 11 even shows a picture of the Syrian eagle, an animal used as a symbol of the country on coins and army clothes' epaulettes (See Figure 36 for the Syrian eagle, Figure 37 for a Syrian coin and Figure.38 for Syrian army epaulettes). EFS 12 also mentions different animals from the Syrian environment such as the sand gazelle, bats, vultures, and snakes. In other words, we can see that this is a very valued issue in terms of cultural content for the Syrian textbook writers.

In addition to their effect as a uniting symbol, animals also draw the attention to environmental problems they may be suffering, help students appreciate Nature more by creating a connection with one of its important components, *animals,* and even remind students of the place to which they belong.

Figure.36 The Syrian eagle, EFS 11, p106.

Figure.37 a Syrian coin. (source: the internet)

Figure.38 Syrian army epaulettes. (source: the internet)

5.3.1.5 foods

Food is essential in everyone's life. People have a lot to share about food, its ingredients, the personal preferences of dishes, the cooking process, memories that accompany the whole process, in addition to all the feelings and experiences that come with it. While it is possible to not be so enthusiastic about pets and wildlife, not be excited about arts and sports, it is almost impossible that you have the same relationship with food. Food, in addition to its biological function as keeping us alive, plays vital part in the life of society. Certain types of food are directly connected to our memories with family, traditional events, and even national events and holidays, not to forget religious rituals.

Food can be said to be the most recurrent local cultural representations in both series I studied. The *High Up* collection asks questions about what foods student traditionally eat, and like to eat; they also mention different native fruits of Brazil such as

açaí, cupuaçu, and graviola. In addition to showing different traditional dishes from Brazilian daily life.

The situation is not very different on the other side of the river; the Syrian books use every possible occasion to talk about Syrian food and dishes, connect them with traditional life in Syria, such as family reunions, religious events, holidays, vacations and so on. They show pictures of dishes sometimes, ask questions about students' preferences, and even feature full texts tackling this issue (figure.39, EFS 10, p13.)

The behavior of both series is well-justified by the importance of food in our communities. However, we can see more connection between food and family life in the Syrian series because meals in the Syrian culture are the time when all members of the family get together every day, and more importantly on the holidays and events when feasts are always prepared for the bigger family, and everyone gets together. This exactly is shown and emphasized in different questions and pictures through the books (figure.13, EFS 11, p14).

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We are what we eat 1

Vocabulary Food and cooking

1 Read this article about meals in Syria. Which of the foods mentioned do you eat at home?

EATING IN SYRIA: STYLE AND SOCIETY

Syrian cuisine has very ancient roots and has had a vital influence on modern Arabic food all over the region. The ingredients have been used for centuries but are combined in many forms – both traditional ones that every Syrian knows from family meals, and in new inventions. A typical Syrian meal will start with appetizers, a collection of small dishes that are shared between family and friends as part of social occasions. These are always beautifully presented – even the simplest bowl of houmos has a particular style of moulding and is garnished with designs made with paprika or a few leaves of fresh herbs. One of the most important dishes on the menu of Syrian appetizers is the famous kibbeh nayeh, a vital part of a high quality spread and a matter of pride when it is at its best. Kibbeh nayeh is made from raw meat, usually lamb, and bulgur wheat. The simplest versions use only a few herbs but some restaurants add chopped onions and green peppers to make the dish easier for Western tourists to eat.

The key to Syrian appetizers is that everyone has their own recipe – they vary according to region, occasion and personal taste. What doesn't change is the attractive presentation of the dishes, and the atmosphere that surrounds the consumption of appetizers – family, friends, generosity and lively talk.

Types of food

2 a Copy and complete this table in your notebook. Think of foods and ingredients you know. An example is given for each type of food.

dairy products	grains	meat	vegetables	other foods
yoghurt	rice	lamb	aubergines	bread

b Work in pairs. Talk about your favourite meal.

Ways of cooking

3 a Syrians eat grilled meat. *Grilling* is one method of cooking. Match each method 1–6 with its meaning a–f.

1 bake   a cook in a pan in hot oil or fat
2 boil   b cook in an oven so that food changes shape (e.g. bread)
3 fry   c cook in an oven or over fire (e.g. meat)
4 grill   d cook over (not in) boiling water
5 roast   e cook quickly in very hot water
6 steam   f cook under a very hot surface – heat comes from above

b Which methods of cooking are most common in Syria?

Quote "Laughter is brightest in the place where food is."
Irish proverb

13

Figure.39, EFS 10, p. 13. A text about food

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5.3.1.6 Traditions and customs

A great part of our daily habits can be related to our society; the way we greet people, dress, cook, eat our food, work and even call each other. The *High Up* books make good use of this part of the cultural representations. Along the series, we can see questions about students' traditions that are related to their state, certain uses of Brazilian names as contradicted to the more common international or English ones. *High Up 3* which is directed to older students than the other two books, raises a question on page 98, asking about the role or the importance of kissing in a relationship. This is a topic you will never encounter in an Arabic coursebook of any material, as it is uncommon to have a boy/girlfriend in the Arab culture, and even when you do, it is unlikely to be a public matter to discuss. *High Up 3* also makes a question about the life of older people in the society, an issue that may encourage the young to take better care of the old.

The Syrian series also takes into consideration habits and traditions; it reinforces their existence in the books through conversation exercises where students talk in pairs about their habits and customs that are related to different sides of life, like shopping, eating, clothing, household chores and even holidays. Other exercises include questions about family reunions and related events with all the cultural package that comes into mind with these memories, such as activities of celebration, special dishes prepared exclusively for this event, and all that comes into students' mind at the time.

Similar to the *High Up* books, the EFS materials also mention the topic of taking care of older people. EFS 12, specifically, instead of just discussing how to best take care of older people, it emphasizes the situation in Syria, as it is rare to find 'old people's homes' because family members keep taking care of the elder ones. Then, it moves into discussing better ways for offering the best to them.

Still in the traditions and habits issue, we can see that all the books of the Syrian series use almost exclusively Arabic names. Examples about that are countless, and one needs to search a lot to be able to find a 'John' or a 'Mary' in the pages of the coursebook. Such excessive use of Arabic names can even make the reader feel that the book is an Arabic book translated into English, not an English language book. However, such a feature could decrease tension for students who may be aggressive if the content was

too much '*westernized*' for different political and ideological reasons. This could lead into a bigger political discussion about the image of the West in Syria after the U.S. supported by the U.K. have invaded and destroyed a neighboring country, Iraq, in 2003, based on numerous allegations that all proved later to be false. Still, it is impossible to get into such a discussion in an educationally directed study as it is not the suitable place and time.

5.3.1.7 Family and relationships

This section includes family with all that comes to mind when thinking of it. Each community or cultural group has a lot to represent when it comes to the family topic. Relationships, ways of dealing with our family and relatives, familial behaviors in addition to types and sizes of the families that are mentioned in the studied material.

The *High Up* books feature different sizes of families. We can see a family with one, two and three kids in pictures on different occasions. We can see bigger families having a reunion and a small family entertaining themselves (Figure.22, High Up, p127.) The textual part, through exercises, offers questions to students about the type of the family they belong to. *High Up* 3, for instance, goes even further, tackling important teenagers' issues such as kissing, abuse in relationships, and having sex between boyfriends,

On the other hand, we can see the Syrian books sticking more to the traditional concept of the family. Family is always there, together in an event, a party, or even having a meal (Figure.13, EFS 11, p.14). Whether in pictures or in text, the family in the Syrian books is always one type, a father and a mother with some kids. You do not see a family without kids, and, of course, you do not see a same-sex family as you will never face a question such as to what type of family do you belong, because there is only one type of family in the Syrian reality, which is the traditional one. In addition, even though the series is directed to teenagers, it is impossible to trace any kind of discussion about mixed-genders love relationships, as they are not encouraged at all in the Arabic culture. Kissing and sex are total taboos in the Syrian teens' reality, and even if they happen, they are kept secret, that is, never to be spoken about.

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5.3.1.8 Religion

Religion plays an important role in the life of many people; it is one of the important unifying concepts of many cultural groups all around the world. Members of the cultural group come sometimes to terms of feeling they belong to religions that may not even be theirs, just because that cultural group has that religion as a kind of a shared identity. What I found surprising is that, even though Brazil is the largest catholic country in the world, there is not any mention of Christianity in the books, neither of any religion-related concepts and people. Not only Christianity, but any other religion that has great numbers of followers in Brazil such as African religions, for example.

The Syrian situation, on the other hand, is totally different. The majority of people in Syria are Muslims, and there are different minorities both Christian and Islamic[13]. The EFS books show some religious representations, only Muslim ones, in an indirect way. A picture of a mosque here, a religious festival there. A subtle way that does not exaggerate, but, at the same time, does not miss the religious general identity of the country.

It is worth saying here that the mix between religions in Syria, makes it really impossible to limit people's identity to their birth religions. Muslims, Christians, and minorities as well celebrate each other's religious events as if they belong more to the traditional life of the people, and not to their faith anymore.

5.3.1.9 Traditional clothes

Both inside and outside the country, traditional clothes on different occasions bypass their normal role as clothes to become a kind of identity for the whole group, a representation that eyes do not mistake and brings to the mind all that the country represents. The two first books of the *High Up* collection brings some representations of culturally connected clothes from the Brazilian life. *High Up* 1, in a picture on the opening of Unit Two, shows two women wearing the traditional clothes of the "baiana". This typical representation is even strengthened by having the picture taken in one of the most

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[13] Muslim minorities include: Druze, Alawite, Twelvers, and Ismailis, while Christian minorities include: Antiochian Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Greek Catholic and other Catholic Rites, Assyrian Church of the East, Armenian Orthodox, Protestants and others.

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important and historical neighborhoods in Salvador, Bahia, Pelourinho (Figure.24, High Up 1, p. 26.) *High Up 2* also moves in that direction, bringing the famous Brazilian flip flops, the everywhere-suitable sandals worn all over Brazil.

The Syrian series, however, does almost the same. Books show older people wearing traditional clothes that are rarely worn nowadays, and, on another occasion, EFS 10 shows a girl wearing a head cover (hijab) which is very common among Muslim women all around the Arab and Muslim countries.

5.3.1.10 Proverbs

Proverbs are so important in the cultural life of any group as they include the unspoken beliefs indirectly, and they pass the values and points of view of the group to next generation without too much complexity. One of the easiest way to understand how a cultural group thinks is to look at its proverbs, as they have that function of promoting the mentality of the culture, the deeper values and perceptions of the world, and keeping those values safe and sound for longer time and for the next generations.

However, the importance of proverbs is not reflected by none of the two series I studied in this research. We can see that no one proverb that belongs to the country was mentioned in any of the books. Still, on one single occasion one volume in the *High Up* series, *High Up* 3 asks the students if there are equivalents for some English proverbs, such as '*Money makes money, Time is money, a*nd *Money does not grow on trees*' in their language. The EFS series do not mention any proverbs at all.

5.3.1.11 Stereotypes

Talking about stereotypes in this part is divided into two main categories:
(a) Stereotypes that the books mention about the members of the cultural group
(b) Stereotypes that the books may unintentionally help to promote among non-members of the cultural group reading the books.

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The books in the *High Up* collection are very rich concerning the first category. In the second unit of *High Up* 1, for instance, we can see different exercises almost making use of various stereotypes about Brazilians such as

> *You know you're Brazilian when…*
> - *You can dance*
> - *You take soccer too seriously*
> - *You eat rice and beans (or you would love to) 7 days a week*
> - *You are so used to corruption that nothing surprises you anymore*

(High Up 1, p. 29)

This is something I cannot really understand; the excess of use of these stereotypes, as it is not that funny for me to make fun of myself. For almost the whole second unit, we can find stereotypical content and that goes a bit too much than just teaching English, or even connecting with the students at the cultural level. Yet, the *High Up* books, especially *High Up* 3, offer some discussion space when they sometimes ask about how stereotypes are created, the importance of media in creating them, and even require students to give examples.

The EFS books, on the other hand, make no mention to any kind of local stereotypes as if they do not exist. This practice, indirectly, may include the second category I mentioned. Having different pictures of families with a lot of kids, for example, depicts one of the common stereotypes about Arabs, which may pass on the idea that they like to have a lot of kids no matter what.

5.3.2 Second category items

5..3.2.1 art and artists

Art and artists have different roles in a society to play. They represent the heritage of the cultural group and promote its way of thinking, traditions, customs and values. Without any doubt, we can say that the presence of art and artists is the strongest in the Brazilian series. *High Up* volumes use almost all possible ways to include artistic

references in their three books almost all the time. These representations include (but are not restricted to) the following:

- Questions about students' opinions concerning kinds of movies, a specific movie, an artist, an art type, etc.;
- names of pieces of arts such as movies and songs;
- interviews with artists such as actors, models, and producers;
- introducing many common arts in Brazil such as DJing, MCing, hip-hop, etc.
- suggesting movies to be watched by students as a further exercise for what they studied at school;
- giving summaries for Brazilian movies such as 'Central do Brasil'
- the books bring a lot of local famous actors, actresses, and celebrities on their pages, such as: Murilo Benício, Débora Falabella, Gisele Bündchen, Marcelo Adnet, Paula Fernandes, director Carlos Saldanha, Lurdes da Luz, Selton Mello, Rodrigo Santoro, among many others.

The Syrian books, although containing various representation of art and artists, still, these representations are more abstract. Sometimes they present and talk about musical instruments, while other times, they show a picture of an artist or a work of art. In the pictures below, we can see the Rababa (Figure.20, EFS 10, p8, and figure 38), the Oud, (alaúde in Portuguese), (Figure 39) and the Tabla (Figure 40). They are three popular Arabic musical instruments that were mentioned along the educational content in the Syrian books.

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Figure.40, the Rababa

Source: the internet

Figure.41, the Oud

Source: the internet

Figure.42 the Tabla

Source: the internet

These instruments, among few more others, are typical and essential in any Arabic music played all around the Arab world and Syria as well. That is why including them is both important for their musical and cultural importance in the life of students. EFS 10 also makes a comparison between traditional and modern music in Syria. Within this issue, we can also see a famous actor's picture in EFS 11 on page 36, where later on, the unit discusses a well-known soap opera in Syria (Figure 43, EFS 11, p36).

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Figure 43, EFS 11, p. 36, a famous Syrian soap opera and a starring actor.

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5.3.2.2 Sports

The interest in sports is one of the clear features in the *High Up* collection. Sports that are mentioned include soccer, beach volleyball, MMA fighting, Paralympic running, sailing, Formula 1, biking, and so on. This wide range of sports was accompanied by mentioning famous players such as Ayrton Senna, the F1 driver, and Anderson Silva, the MMA fighter. Mentioning different sports in the books shows the importance sports have in the life of Brazilians, and this is truly something I can see every day. People running in the streets in the early morning and about the sunset time, teenagers skating the whole day in public squares and parks, and even older people having their morning exercises in small public squares where there are free-to-use sports machines that aim at providing a chance for everyone to train even for a few minutes every day to lead a better healthier life.

The importance of sports in the Syrian series however is much lower. Few examples of sports can be seen along the pages of the EFS books. Only one famous Syrian heptathlete, Ghada Shouaa, is mentioned in EFS 10, for example. A picture of the Syrian football national team, and some sports shows in the programming of a Syrian channel. This scarce use of sports can be justified by the modest place sports occupy in the daily life of the Syrian people. It is almost impossible to see squares with training machines, for example, and if you happen to see any, you will discover that they are used for kids' entertainment. Syrian people like to *watch* sports on TV. Whenever there is an important match of famous teams, even if it is a European Championship match, you can see people marching to cafés to watch the game, cheer for their favorite team, and even get stressed upon wasted chances. While participating actively in a soccer match, for example, is not one of the majority's priorities.

5.3.2.3 Leisure activities

Leisure activities are not that present in the *High Up* collection. It is possible to find few representations here and there. As leisure activities can share some part with other representations such as sports, we cannot really say that they are rare in the two series.

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The *High Up* books, for example, show a family using a Karaoke system together, a young woman playing with her dog, few people playing beach volleyball, and we can even find an entire unit talking about biking.

The EFS collection, on the other hand, offers a bit more complex image of leisure activities. An exercise called "Five days in Aleppo" in EFS 10 talks about a trip to Aleppo, the second biggest city in Syria. The program has touristic visits, cultural and shopping activities, visits to parks, and so on. Then, on the next page, the book asks students to organize a cultural holiday to a city in Syria with all necessary activities to make it a good one. In another representation of leisure activities, the book, EFS 10, mentions a club for sports called New Damascus Sports Club which students are required to fill in an application to register in it. EFS 11 includes preparing a leaflet about a local attraction where students need to choose one of two destinies in Syria to gather information and prepare it in an attractive way for tourists. EFS 12 mentions The Syrian Adventure club too, which looks like a good option for adventure lovers and having good time.

5.3.2.4 Science and scientists

Though we cannot exactly trace scientific representations in the *High Up* collection, modern technology is always there and present in different forms. Different texts are presented in a form of web posts and pages. Green technology is also there as part of world improvement representations. The co-founder of Facebook, who is Brazilian, is shown in the opening of Unit 5 in *High Up 1*. The use of charts and diagrams, pictures of people using a microscope, among many others, are all representations of a form of science or its results in our life.

The EFS books treat the local culture representations in science in a different way. EFS 10 features a text about two ancient Arabic thinkers, the first is a geographer and traveler called Ibn Battuta, and the second is one of the most important historians and sociologists in the world, Ibn Khaldun (Figure.23, EFS 10, p. 21). EFS 12 features a text about a Syrian dentist named Mohammad Imad Droubi and talks about his life and achievements.

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In both cases, it looks like science and related topics are not that attractive for the two series makers in themselves. However, related items are well-present almost everywhere in the two series.

5.3.2.5 Historic places and tourism

The *High Up* books do not show great interest in historic places. In reality, there are almost no examples of such representations in the whole series, except for a picture taken in Salvador-Bahia, in the famous touristic area called Pelourinho (Figure.24, High Up 1, p26).

The EFS series, on the other hand, brings a totally different reality concerning this issue. The three books of the series have covers that represent historic places in Syria (Figure 4, figure 5 and figure 6). Different activities in EFS 10, for example, are mainly about preparing trips and promoting touristic sites. Questions about the history of Syria are also encountered in the textbooks, in addition to more and more pictures of these historic places. In EFS 11, the programming of national channels shows different issues related to historic and touristic places in the country. A long text on pages 108 and 109 talks about a historic city in Syria, Mari, that ages more than 4000 years. All this historic content continues to be shown in EFS 12 with pictures of historical cities and sites, a text about another historic city called Apamea, along with questions directed to students about some historical trips they had in the past.

5.3.2.6 Quotations

Quotations, just like proverbs, can to a great extent give an insight into people's way of thinking, and they, when famous, can have a uniting effect among the cultural group members.

Unfortunately, through the whole two series, only one related quote is found: "Once present in the world, it is impossible not to contribute to the creation of this world," by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Students are required to explain their opinions about this

quote and whether they agree or disagree with it and why. The EFS books, on the other hand, do not include any quotes of any kind.

As the books are directed to teenagers, 15 to 18 years old, it would have been a good idea to include more quotes. Quotes by famous and respected people in the society offer a great chance for discussion in a language class, in addition to their potential positive effect on the teenagers' way of thinking.

5.3.3 Third category items

5.3.3.1 Cities, towns, and living spaces:

The *High Up* books show this subcategory in different forms. They bring pictures from different cities in Brazil, make questions about Brasilia and the architect who designed it. They also ask questions about where students live and discuss their answers later. The EFS books, in their turn, mention different Syrian cities in the context of exercises, such as mentioning Damascus, for example, as the area where a survey takes place, Aleppo as a touristic destiny, and Hama, which is a third Syrian city as the place of one of the oldest irrigation techniques. Both series do not focus on cities in their abstract sense, but rather use cities as the settings for other incidents in the books.

5.3.3.2 Money and related items:

Though money is not a recurrent topic in *High Up*, the series allocates the first unit of *High Up* 3 to talk about money management and to inform students about the importance of economizing and saving (Figure.25, High Up 3, p10). As we know, this is very important at such an age for students who are about to start their financial life soon.

The *EFS* books spread their use of money along the volumes in addition to having a specific unit that talks about the history and concept of money like in EFS 10. Along the series, we can see the symbol of the Syrian currency (SYP), for example, used on different occasions as well.

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Tackling the issue of money mixes English learning with financial education. A topic gaining more importance day after day with the hardships new members of the society are facing due to the contradiction societies live between promoting consumerism and the lack of entrepreneurism and investing.

5.3.3.3 Commercial activities

Commercial activities are part of the identity of the society. These activities include the common professions, ways of getting money, and money-spending behavior. The *High Up* series, in my view, made a huge advance towards students' financial education by spreading tips on how to create CV's and how to choose a good and suitable future job along all the volumes of the series. I think this is one of the best things that can be done for teenagers. We can also see in the material, explanations about different kinds of jobs which try to give the learners a glimpse about what it is like to have a certain job such as a programmer, for example.

The Syrian series, on the other hand, does not offer much concerning such a topic. In fact, it brings a few pictures that show some common street markets and commercial areas (Figure.26, EFS 12, p91**)** and depicts some questions about shopping habits which can somehow be related to the commercial activity. Still, no thorough or deep discussion is there concerning this subcategory.

5.3.3.4 Environmental preservation:

Including environment in any teaching books in the twenty-first century is no more an option, it is a necessity regarding what our planet is passing through. Global warming, deforestation, water crisis, in addition to endangered species are all real problems facing us as humans that, together, need to find solutions for.

The *High Up* collection took into consideration all these challenges and included great part of them in the coursebooks. *High Up* 1, for example, discusses different habits-changing which can result in a better environment such as reducing water consumption

for example, in addition to connecting any improvement individuals make to the power of changing the world (Figure.27, High Up 1, p. 85).

There are different exercises along *High Up* 1 that try to raise students' awareness about different environmental problems (Figure.27, High Up 1, p85). *High Up* 3 is also very rich in environmental content. It informs students about different problems the environment has, such as the garbage, for example. It also creates chances for discussions about solutions, encourages students to search for environmental problems around them and find solutions. The book also offers possible fixes for existing problems, shows how our planet is united and all nations' efforts need to join each other to protect our collective future. Green ideas from around Brazil are also there with pictures and enough explanation. The use of compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) instead of the traditional ones is also included, in addition to creative ideas to economize energy and protect the environment. A recycling project from Belo Horizonte is discussed also in a way that makes it clearer for students how each one can participate in protecting our planet.

The EFS books, however, do not offer all that much information and explanation. The topic of environment is there, still not as much emphasized as in the *High Up* collection. Some issues tackled there are nature reserves and their visitors' behavior, some questions to raise awareness about the wildlife in Syria, in addition to recycling.

5.3.3.5 World improvement

Concerning world improvement, the *High Up* collection does a great job. Too many issues are mentioned and the objective of the book is creating a participant society member that can notice, reflect about, find solutions and apply them concerning society and world problems. The series teaches students to be proactive and do their best to eliminate different world's problems.

High Up 1 encourages students to participate in society's improvement. It also draws attention to the UN's Millennium Development Goals. It sheds light on community problems such as gender inequality, the waste of water, poverty, pollution, and HIV. It also gives students various tips to help to get solutions to these problems.

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High Up 3 deals with garbage problems and brings students to discuss different possible fixes to this serious issue. It also deals with the environmental case from a *united planet* point of view, showing Brazilian green ideas, and doing all that in a positive climate of encouraging individual initiatives.

The EFS collection brings into students' attention the importance of wild life, recycling, and some other environmental issue. However, neither the content, nor the presentation way is similar to the *High Up* textbooks. The content is very limited, as topics are few, and the presentation is giving information rather than requiring discussion. The EFS books try to raise the awareness but in a rather passive way, not in a way that makes students feel they can do something about these problems, or that, for example, *they can change the world.*

5.3.3.6 Inventions

The *High Up* books do not make an effort to talk about any inventions directly. As mentioned before, their content is highly-technological as it includes different references to modern technologies such as the internet, video game, etc. The situation is not different in the EFS's, as only one old invention about an irrigation system is mentioned.

5.3.3.7 The legal and governmental system:

The *High Up* volumes make reference to the legal system on two occasions one of them in *High Up* 2, where some exercises discuss driving licenses issues in Brazil, and the other is in *High up* 3 where it explains about the "Maria da Penha" Law while discussing the problem of domestic violence.

The Syrian series however does not include the topic directly as related to the local culture, only two pictorial references are included as one of them shows the highest courthouse in the country, and the other shows a traffic officer in the street doing his job.

5.3.3.8 Newspaper

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The *High Up* collection does not mention any content related to Brazilian newspapers, and again the situation is not very different in the EFS series, where only one national newspaper is mentioned one time. EFS 10 refers to the *Syria times*, the only English-speaking newspaper in the country where almost all the newspapers are published in Arabic and owned by the government.

This chapter, five, tried, as much as it was possible, to shed some light on the presence and presentation of the main categories of local culture and traced its subcategories in the textbook series analyzed. Based on this, I worked on the comparison between the two series about each of these representations in a way that it may raise potential readers' curiosity, and, more specifically, help English teachers from both countries, and even from other countries, to have a deep insight into the local cultural content of the books.

With the essence of the research explained in this chapter, the main task of this research comes to its end. However, as there is always a place for more reflection and improvement, I would like to seize the opportunity to give my personal conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter. A part of the study that can highlight possible weaknesses and offer potential improvements and steps that can lead to better results in the educational process as to culturally better the students and make them achieve higher cultural competence and intelligence.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND 'TAWSIYAT'[14]   الفصل السادس: نتائج و توصيات

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Tuning students into global citizens who are culturally competent both in their society and in the target language one is never an easy task. It is so complex a process that requires thorough planning of the cultural content of any syllabus, and very special care when the syllabus we are talking about is also a linguistic one, as is the situation in the coursebooks this research analyzes. Better planning means better results.

As we have seen along with the work, the main objective of this research was to analyze, contrast and problematize the local/native culture in two pre-selected ELT book series. We have come to the final part, and the point of this chapter is to go a bit further in my reflections. In addition to summarizing the content, presentation and choices made in the series, this chapter tries to offer some possible changes which may result in better local cultural content and, consequently, in some improvement of the possible results of the cultural-educational process.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The analysis offered in chapter five shows the following results.

Both series are culturally rich. They offer a good amount of local cultural representations which facilitates connecting students to their cultural surroundings, making them culturally aware and sensitive, and creates great spaces for reflecting about the local/native culture through its presence in the materials;

Both series include all the main categories of culture, such as 'lifestyles', artistic and intellectual life', in addition to 'the human development factor'. In general, the choices made while planning these materials prove to have taken into consideration the main categories of culture and offered great diversity when including narrower subcategories.

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[14] 'Recommendations' in Arabic.

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Significant differences exist between the two series concerning the choices related to the subcategories. The subcategory quotations, for example, does not exist in the Syrian series, and the subcategory religion is also totally absent in the Brazilian one;

Although international issues such as world development, for example, do exist in both series; sometimes we can see some differences in the way of tackling the issues related to it. The Brazilian books, for instance, usually try to encourage students to search for solutions and participate actively in improving the world. However, such an attitude is less strong in the Syrian books which, in turn, tackle these issues more descriptively and passively;

The Brazilian series wastes a lot of chances to enrich the cultural content with local information; there are different examples for groups of cultural representations where a lot of foreign references are offered but no any Brazilian one, as is the situation in High Up 1, p 23(Figure.44) that shows pictures of different cities from around the world, none of which is Brazilian, and p47 (Figure.45)which includes a group of celebrities, none of which is Brazilian either. The same applies to a group of quotations on another occasion in the same group of materials;

The Syrian series, on the other hand, overuses local cultural representations to a degree that the books may appear a translated version of some Arabic ones. This does not reflect the status of English as an international language or a lingua franca.

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Figure.44 High Up 1, p23, famous cities.

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Figure.45 High Up 1, p47, international celebrities.

6.3 PERSONAL EVALUATION

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Cultural content is always there in these studied books. One cannot read a few pages without encountering different representations of the local culture. The target culture content is also there all the time more clearly in the Brazilian books than the Syrian ones. This can have different reasons. Not only political reasons can be responsible for this increased use of the target culture by the Brazilian books compared to the Syrian ones, geography may be a reason too. The political stand of Syria is not that of friendship with the USA for different reasons, it may be because of this reason that the North American culture which is prevalent in different English teaching books around the world is not that much clear in the Syrian series studied here. Besides, geographical reasons such as the much closer position of Brazil to the USA can also create more reasons why the Brazilian books include a lot of references to the target language culture.

In the section that follows I offer few suggestions for possible changes that may be in favor of achieving better the general cultural goals of the educational process of English.

A balance between the local and the target cultural content in the High Up books would be a good idea. The target culture representations in this series are much prevalent and surpass the local one. The current situation is possible to be understood as a hierarchical order of cultures. Students may feel their culture is inferior to the target one. Such a situation offers an advantage as it improves the target cultural awareness and can create better culturally equipped students that can interact with the target community, but the same is not true for the local/native culture. Students are not encouraged to feel proud of their culture due to its shy presence compared with the target one. Balance is also required for the Syrian series but in a different, contrary way. As already mentioned, local/native cultural content in the Syrian books is everywhere, unlike the target culture content which is rare. Such a situation, though may create proud members of the native or local cultural groups, does not help to create global citizens, and definitely does not equip students well to interact with other international citizens not to mention English-speaking countries citizens, as the Syrian students do not get a clue to the English or American cultures for instance through their English books. So, again, balance is needed in both collections for different reasons;

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Having taken a look at teacher's guides for both the series, I can assert that teaching tips or pedagogical orientations were never given to help teachers have an idea about how to teach the cultural content in the best way. The guides do not provide clear instructions concerning the cultural content; however, linguistic teaching instruction is well explained with tips about every exercise in both types of materials studied;

The units' goals rarely take into consideration the cultural content as an aim to achieve, and thus, do not offer solid testing ways, or measuring tools so that teachers can have an idea about what was understood and what needs remedial procedures to be better acquired. Since cultural content is not less important than the linguistic one as we saw explained in Chapter Three, thus, more planning and attention are essential, in addition to better testing tools and clear teacher orientation;

The Syrian series fails to deal with different aspects related to teenagers' lives at that specific age, such as relations with the opposite sex, and job hunting; two main aspects of teenagers' lives where success means becoming a better community member in the future, and failure means a decaying society. The Brazilian series, on the other hand, deals with both issues in a great way through discussing features of good relationships and assigning a special part in many units just to explain about jobs and CVs.

The Brazilian series fails to build on the religious richness Brazil has. Religious references are simply inexistent in the High Up collection. The religious context and reality in Brazil are to be celebrated, not to be ignored, especially that students in many educational contexts can show great religious variation. This is a wasted chance to inform students about each other's religious beliefs which can create a better society through more understanding and tolerance;

The Syrian EFS books in their introduction state that they have the goal to prepare students for the international culture, however, we can see they ignore the new form of single-sex families coming into the spotlight nowadays. Though such values are not part of the Syrian society and people, Syrians may just not have the stomach to digest such issues in teaching materials; still, technology opened all the spaces in front of the new generation to search for and discover anything they want. So, it can be a good idea to

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include something about these new types of families without having to go against the society's values;

We cannot also see any mention of feminism or gender equality in the EFS book, although no community is now aside from such important global discussions. I think the Syrian books can make use of some more modern philosophical ideas, and that would help create a better future for Syrians. Although such a philosophical education task is huge for only English coursebooks to carry on, still, they can lay the seeds for future argument in the minds of the students;

The native Brazilian indigenous culture is almost totally absent from the High Up collection. The series misses the chance to build on such an important heritage. A heritage that belongs mainly to Brazil, and for this reason, it is essential to enable Brazilians to recognize and appreciate it and communicate it with the rest of the world.

6.4 LAST WORDS

My cultural journey came to its end. Examining the culture and cultural aspects present in these materials was a great experience I had never had before. I have been an English teacher for more than ten years. However, just like most English coursebooks, I was never prepared to teach culture adequately as I am supposed to. This course at UFBA, along with the research study I carried out created a great experience that enabled me to gain more perspectives on life and teaching. Reading those theories about culture, following closely the development of such a concept, in addition to tracing it closely in two different worlds formed a totally enjoyable episode in my professional life. We can never have enough knowledge, and every time we feel that we know enough, something comes to happen and shows us that we just know a little.

In the end, this work can be a starting point for all those who are interested in cultural education. Cultural insights into these two worlds, Brazil and Syria, are spread along with the research pages in a step that can create bridges of understanding and love between two cultures that are so dear and near to my heart.

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