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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON AN INTERNATIONAL ELT TEXTBOOK AND A LOCAL TEXTBOOK IN TURKEY IN TERMS OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

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LANGUAGE LEARNING | RESEARCH ARTICLE ARTICLE

A comparative study on an international ELT textbook and a local textbook in terms of English as a lingua franca*

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Abstract: This article aims to investigate the possible outcomes of World Englishes and English as a lingua franca in second language teaching and coursebooks. The main focus of the research is on the perspective of ELF. This study examines two English textbooks: a book with a local audience which is written by the Ministry of Education of Turkey, and a book with an international audience which is internationally published. To analyze these coursebooks, Cortazzi's and Jin's (1999) and Adaskou, Britten, and 'Fahsi's (1990) frameworks divided the cultural content of the materials into three different culture types were adopted. The study's findings indicated that the ELT textbooks tended to be different in the way they represented L2 and international cultural content.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca, language teaching, textbooks

English has been used by many people, both native and non-native speakers. Since English has become that common, it has gained global status. As a result, it has started to be defined as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and has gained significant importance in English language teaching (ELT). A contributing factor to this situation is that providing a clear definition of Standard English is impossible (Jenkins, 2006). That English curriculum and instruction are designed to prepare the students to deal with international communication is of great importance. Byram (2011) supports this idea by pointing out that being competent in the target language culture, the local culture or the international culture is not enough to achieve the main objectives of language learning: global consciousness and intercultural citizenship.

ELT classes are essential for researching intercultural communication competence because many of the students encounter different cultures for the first time (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998). Textbooks are a crucial component of an English Language Teaching classroom, and the importance of ELT textbooks is widely acknowledged. ELT textbooks are seen as a facilitator type of ELT material that takes the responsibility to "promote the development of a reflexive, open, and globally aware language learner" (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 696). When English as a Lingua Franca is taken into consideration, textbooks play a significant role, as well. This is why textbook evaluation represents a great starting point for the development of English as a Lingua Franca awareness in an educational setting (Vettorel, 2016).

When published ELT materials are viewed, a language model that is shaped around native speakers of English (generally British or American) is seen (Cavalheiro, 2015). However, as time goes by, ELF-aware approaches implemented in textbooks have been published (Bayyurt & Akcan, 2015). Additionally, they have become subjects to investigate their content in terms of intercultural content and ELF, especially at the discourse level, as they have a

significant role in language education (Rashidi & Meihami, 2016). To what extent the textbooks include concepts regarding ELF, and intercultural communications is an area of widespread research interest.

1. Literature review

English as a lingua franca (ELF) refers to the use of the English language as a means of communication between native speakers of different languages. As Kopperoinen (2011) mentions in her study, English was perceived to be perfect so long as the native speakers are imitated. Being and sounding like a native speaker was the fundamental aim of learning and using English. However, this has started to change due to the changes across the world. As the majority of English speakers are changing from L1 users to L2, which creates an environment where L2 learners interact with each other rather than native English speakers. As Crystal (2003) mentions, the number of non-native speakers of English is higher than the number of people who are native speakers of English. Hence, English is used as a lingua franca more than used as a native language. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) considers English as a 'vehicular 'language', which is defined as a "new variety that emerges in situations where interlocutors do not share an L1" by Mauranen (2003, p. 514).

As the area of use is expanding, English has become a language that is obligatorily learned worldwide. Furthermore, English teaching has become the main concern for many scholars, especially starting with young learners. Traditionally, one of the main goals of language teaching is to sound like a native speaker who is considered to be the indicator of a good education. However, as the number of English language learners is increasing drastically; the majority of English speakers are bilinguals. They communicate with L2 learners rather than native speakers, which creates a multicultural language. Therefore, expecting native-like comprehension from language learners is not realistic. Jenkins (2002) suggests that British English or American English should not be the case anymore; instead, an international perspective should be acquired. He also states that non-native speakers should not be judged because of their variety of English. It is suggested that the learners of English should not be educated to communicate with native speakers anymore. Instead, they should be taught English for international communication (Kuo, 2006). While arguments associated with ELF have been broadly discussed, it has gained a great deal of significance that English programs are designed to prepare English learners to learn the ways of international communication (Luo, 2017). Sifakis (2004) also suggests that English teachers teach the English language as an international language. He also suggests that the programs should prepare the students for authentic situations.

Luo (2017) conducted a study to examine Taiwanese English teachers' perceptions of ELF. She collected data from university teachers through surveys and interviews. From the data, she reported that most of the teachers considered ELF teaching beneficial; however, they were likely to refrain from it since it is too challenging. In addition, many of the participants complained that there were not enough materials for ELF teaching. In short, teaching materials are a crucial notion regarding English as a Lingua Franca teaching.

When talking about English textbooks, a large number of various textbooks can be obtained in the market. However, the presence of intercultural content in the books is still questionable. Whether addressed at an international or at a more local audience, textbooks seem to increasingly contain the term international either in the subtitle or in the teaching/learning aims they promise to attain (Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013). To clarify this issue in the field in her study, Hilliard (2015) researched to examine images, stereotypes, representations, ideologies, and culture in language and ELT textbooks. The findings showed that the textbooks were inadequate in showing local cultures and nations.

Furthermore, the activities were insufficient to improve 'learners' intercultural awareness as the textbooks used an oversimplification of the culture and stereotyping excessively. Similarly, a case study by Yuen (2011) was conducted to find out the frequency of different cultural contexts in the two ELT textbooks used in Hong Kong secondary schools.

The researcher categorized aspects of different cultures into products, persons, practices, and perspectives, and the results showed that English-speaking countries were more represented in relation to cultural content while there was an under-representation trend with regard to African cultures.

In another study, Syahri and Susanti (2016) aimed to investigate the percentage of local culture integration and target culture integration in 9 English textbooks for senior high school in Palembang. According to the results, it was observed that almost half of the books were not in full comprehension of the importance of promoting intercultural materials. In contrast, the other half required improvement of cultural content in English textbooks. In their study, it was also addressed that there is an imbalance between the introduction of the local and target culture in the coursebooks.

To investigate intercultural context and how culture is disseminated in ELT textbooks, Hermawan and Noerkhasanah (2012) also examined written texts and illustrations in six primary-level English textbooks. The results showed that the target culture content demonstrates dominance over local culture. On the other hand, local culture is represented in the form of local names used for characters, places, and locations in reading passages.

To sum up, the intercultural context in ELT books is not adequate to support the awareness of English learners. The current publication industry supports coursebook target culture while excluding local voices.

2. Significance of the problem

The textbooks play a crucial role in second language teaching; as a result of that, they always set a reference point for teachers and students. There have been various research studies on English language teaching textbooks. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the ELT textbooks in terms of ELF is still not studied or studied insufficiently in some countries such as Turkey. This was why this study had been initiated.

3. Research questions

The following two research questions were addressed in the current study:

- a) How is the cultural content represented in a locally published textbook in Turkish state schools and an internationally published ELT textbook?
- b) How are the cultural elements represented in a locally published textbook in Turkish state schools and an internationally published ELT textbook?
- c) To what extent a locally published textbook in Turkey represents local cultural content?

4. Methodology

This study aimed to analyze the textbooks used in the Turkish context from the perspective of English as a Lingua Franca. In order to achieve this, two student's books of an internationally published coursebook and of locally published coursebook, were used. The criterion that the researchers took into consideration while deciding on the coursebooks was the level of each coursebook. Both of the textbooks are A2 level even though they are used with different grades due to the different teaching/learning contexts.

One of the textbooks was Moonlight English Course published by a local press in Turkey. The book is offered to be used in the 7th grade of middle school education in the state schools by the Ministry of Education in Turkey. The coursebook is prepared by the writer and the publisher selected by the Ministry of Education in Turkey. The units in the book are designed thematically.

The other coursebook chosen for this research was “Oxford Discover” internationally published by Oxford University Press. The focus of the coursebook is to provide an English Language Teaching atmosphere to gain students' early school ages general English skills by combining ESL and ELA approaches. The coursebook is mostly used in the instructional setting of English language teaching, where the CLIL approach is applied. For this reason, the coursebook is designed thematically.

4.1 Textbook analysis

To carry out textbook analysis from the perspective of ELF, Cortazzi's and Jin's (1999) framework was adopted. The framework divided the cultural content of the materials into three different culture types, which are local (L1) cultural content, target (L2) cultural content, and international content.

Since the cultural content consists of a variety of elements in itself, a second framework was used for the analysis of cultural elements in particular, in addition to looking for the inclusion of characters (NSs, NNSs) and/or settings as a reference to ELF. Therefore, the two senses of the meanings of cultural content elucidated in Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi's (1990) framework were chosen as the basis of the second step in the data analysis. The first sense of meaning is an aesthetic sense, and its other name is big "C" culture. It contains media, literature, and music. The second sense proposes a sociological meaning to culture and accounts for small "c" culture. This small "c" culture comprises the organization and nature of daily life surrounding an individual in circles of family, home life, interpersonal relations, work, customs, and institutions.

To achieve the data analysis, reading and listening sections of the predetermined coursebooks were examined for cultural elements depending on the mentioned frameworks and categories under them and frequency charts for cultural types (target, local and intercultural) and elements (big “C”- or small “c”) were created..”

5. Findings

As mentioned previously, the coursebooks were analyzed based on two frameworks to find out what type of cultural content each coursebook includes more than the other. In addition to that, this paper aimed to identify to what extent the coursebook used in state schools in Turkey consists of local cultural content. The frequency counts of each cultural type in the coursebooks were determined to achieve these using Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework. The results of the distribution for each book are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. The distribution of culture in ELT coursebooks

Coursebooks	L1 Culture	L2 Culture	International
Moonlight English Course	9	25	14
Oxford Discover	2	11	32

Table 1 shows that each book has different focus aspects in terms of cultural content. Locally published Moonlight English Course pays its utmost attention to L2 cultural content ($f=25$), whereas Oxford Discover contains more international cultural content ($f=32$) when compared to the other cultural types. When it comes to the types that are most ignored in each coursebook, it can be seen that both the locally published coursebook and the international coursebook pay the least attention to L1 culture ($f=9$) compared to L2 cultural content and international content. This is a predictable result for an internationally published coursebook while it indicates that there is no possibility of mentioning localized focus in the locally published coursebook.

As a whole, it is demonstrated that both coursebooks make use of cultural content in relation to L2. However, the international coursebook makes less use of target cultural elements compared to the local book. As for the international content, Oxford Discover surpasses the locally published coursebook noticeably.

The other focus of this research was to address the cultural elements each coursebook consists of other than using names for characters of NNs and Ns and settings. The frequency table was obtained by analyzing different cultural contents depending on two categories in Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi's (1990) framework. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the senses of cultural elements in Moonlight English Course and Oxford Discovery

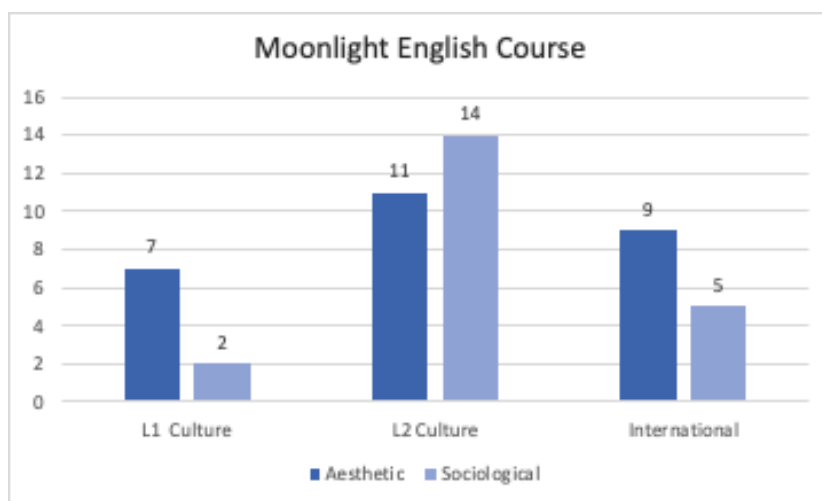


Figure 1. Cultural elements (Moonlight English Course)

Figure 1 reveals that the L1 cultural elements of Moonlight English Course textbook include both cultural senses, namely aesthetic ($f = 7$), and sociological ($f = 2$). Besides, Moonlight English Course textbook includes close numbers of L2 cultural content of aesthetic ($f = 11$) and sociological ($f = 14$) senses. The information on international cultural content of this coursebook was represented as aesthetic ($f=9$) and sociological ($f=5$).

It is revealed in Figure 1 that the use of cultural elements in a sociological sense in relation to L2 culture outweighs the use of the cultural elements in an aesthetic sense. For instance; the information on daily life routines, celebrations, and customs included in the passages like Sweet Sixteen, London Zoo, and Turnoff Week are given more place, whereas the figures from literature, history, and media such as Abraham Lincoln and William Shakespeare in the target language culture are less mentioned. As for L1 culture and international content, on the other hand, the findings indicated that the cultural elements are used more in an aesthetic sense. In other words, the focus of the given information is less on family, home life, work, customs in local culture, and international content. On the contrary, international events like the Olympics and famous figures (i.e., Albert Einstein and Sabiha Gökçen) are at the forefront.

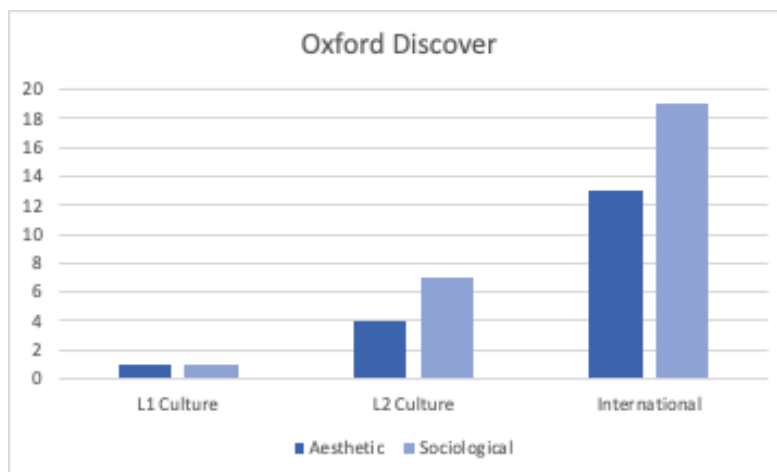


Figure 2. Cultural elements (Oxford Discover).

In Figure 2, it is addressed that L1 cultural elements of the Oxford Discover textbook include low frequency of cultural senses; aesthetic ($f = 1$), and sociological ($f = 1$). Similarly, L2 culture is represented with low frequency; aesthetic ($f = 4$), and sociologically ($f = 7$). On the other hand, it was observed from the graphic that international cultural content is included most, namely, aesthetic ($f = 11$) and sociologically ($f = 19$).

In Figure 2, it was shown that L1 cultural elements in an authentic or sociological sense are not represented in high numbers. In the Oxford Discover coursebook, it was observed that only in the passage Having Fun, L1 sociological elements are represented via customs, while in The World of Instruments unit authentic function of L1 culture is emphasized. Similarly, L2 culture content is not represented substantially, yet it was observed that sociological content is represented more than authentic content. Passages like Doctor Molly or My Summer on Winter Solstices that include daily life, family, and home outweigh authentic content that includes music, art, and history as in the reading passage Three Poets. According to Figure 2, both in terms of authentic or sociological content, international culture is represented most in the Oxford Discover coursebook. Topics that are related to celebrations, customs, home, and daily life are the most mentioned in the book. For example, reading passages like The Garden of Happiness and The Red Rubber Ball aim to inform the learners about other cultures by providing international context. Similarly, findings indicated that the target textbook provides aesthetic cultural elements like music, art, and history via topics such as The World of Instruments or Captain Magellan.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the cultural content in two ELT textbooks: a book with a local audience which is prepared by the Ministry of Education of Turkey and a book with an international audience that is internationally published. The results indicated that the locally published coursebook gives more importance to the target 'language's cultural content and to international content. This was also seen in the internationally published book, Oxford Discover. Besides, in this book, international cultural content is more dominant. It can be concluded from the results that the common point between the ELT textbook that is internationally published, which was in direct opposition to the ELT textbooks published locally, was that they contained more international cultural content. When Turkey, where Moonlight English Course was published, is considered as 'expanding circle' by Kachru's (2006) definition, the findings relating to international culture content are moderately contradictory with that of Rashidi and Meihami (2016) and Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014). The locally published book, Moonlight English Course, has less international content.

The second research focus of this study was the cultural elements of the ELT textbooks. The findings showed that for L2 culture elements, the use of cultural elements in a sociological sense outweighs the use of the cultural elements in an aesthetic sense. On the other hand, an aesthetic sense is more dominant than sociocultural elements for L1 elements. This can be said to be consistent with the studies of Rashidi and Meihami (2016), and Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014). Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) explained these results that sociocultural elements “encompasses everyday culture” (p. 10), and this leads to teaching the pragmatics of the culture itself.

The third focus of this research was aimed to investigate to what extent a locally published textbook in Turkey represents local cultural content. This study showed that compared to international culture, the book represents local culture more. However, L2 culture is the most represented one. Besides the frequency rate of the local content, when the items are investigated, it is observed that most of these items are constituted by local names like Mehmet, Ayşe, etc., which does not provide information about that culture but rather creates a sense of belonging or familiarity. Rashidi and Meihami (2016) also provide a similar finding in their study. They indicated that the ELT textbook on expanding circle used local names like Fathima.

This study aimed to examine cultural content and elements represented in the ELT textbooks used at secondary schools in Turkey. The two books are a book with a local audience is prepared by the Ministry of Education of Turkey, and a book with an international audience that is internationally published. The findings of the study indicated that the ELT textbooks tended to be different in the way they represented L2 and international cultural content. The study also showed that the ELT textbooks used different cultural elements such as aesthetics and sociocultural elements to represent their cultural content.

This study contains some implications for L2 teachers and ELT material developers. It should also be noted that this study was conducted with just two ELT textbooks used in Turkey. Further research can be done with different textbooks used in Turkey or different countries. Besides, different textbooks that are used with different levels could also be examined.

7. Disclosure of Conflict

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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