

Investigating The Cultural Aspects in EFL Textbooks
A Case Study of the NorthStar Intermediate Textbook
Dr. Khaled A. Dweikat /Quds Open University
&
Mrs. Ghada Shbeitah /An-Najah University

Abstract

This study investigated the cultural aspects in the NorthStar textbook which has been taught since 2008 at An-Najah University as a compulsory course. The study addressed the following questions:

- 1-What are the Western cultural aspects that are implied in the NorthStar , Intermediate Textbooks?
- 2-To what extent is the foreign culture included in the NorthStar Intermediate level?
- 3- To what extent are the Arab-Islamic cultural aspects included in the NorthStar Intermediate level ?

The study revealed that the textbook involved different types of cultural aspects and that the frequency of some cultural aspects was higher in some units depending on the main theme of the unit. These frequencies ranged between 22 and 274 and the religious aspect had the lowest frequency, while the social aspect had the highest frequency. Moreover, it was found that the textbook did not only focus on different aspects of a foreign culture but it also dealt with different cultures. The content analysis revealed that the most frequent cultural aspects were related the American culture which indicated an obvious bias towards the foreign cultural aspects in general and the American cultural aspects in particular at the expense of the Arabic –Islamic culture as no unit that talks about Arabs or Muslims or any Arab or Islamic country except the mentioning of the word “Arab” which was mentioned only once in the textbook and in a way that even displeases the Arabs.

In the light of the results, the researchers recommended analyzing and evaluating the content of EFL textbooks of foreign authors to be sure that they do not include cultural aspects that might go against our Arab-Islamic culture. Therefore, careful attention should be paid to how the others are presented and how to filter the undesirable cultural aspects that in a textbook. Finally, the researchers called for EFL national curricula at the Palestinian universities.

Key Words: *Content Analysis, Cultural Aspects, EFL Textbooks, NorthStar Intermediate Textbook*

**استكشاف الأبعاد الثقافية في كتب تدريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية
كتاب NorthStar نموذجاً وحالة دراسية**

هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف الأبعاد الثقافية في كتاب NorthStar الذي يدرس منذ عام 2008 في جامعة النجاح كمساق إجباري. تناولت الدراسة الأسئلة التالية: 1- ما هي الجوانب الثقافية الغربية التي تزد فيها كتاب NorthStar؟ 2- ما مدى احتواء كتاب NorthStar للثقافة الأجنبية؟ 3- ما هو مدى احتواء كتاب NorthStar للأبعاد الثقافية العربية والإسلامية؟ أظهرت الدراسة أن الكتاب المدرسي تضمن أنواعاً مختلفة من الجوانب الثقافية بنسب وتكرارات متفاوتة حيث كان أعلى في بعض الوحدات حسب الموضوع الرئيسي للوحدة. وتراوحت هذه التكرارات بين 22 و 274 حيث سجل البعد الديني أدنى تكرار، بينما سجل البعد الاجتماعي أعلى تكرار. كما ظهر أن الكتاب المدرسي لم يركز فقط على الأبعاد المختلفة للثقافة الأجنبية، وإنما تضمن ثقافات مختلفة. وقد كشف تحليل المحتوى أن معظم الأبعاد الثقافية الأجنبية في الكتاب لها علاقة بالثقافة الأميركية حيث ظهر انحياز واضح نحو الجوانب الثقافية الأجنبية بشكل عام والجوانب الثقافية الأميركية على وجه الخصوص وذلك على حساب الثقافة العربية الإسلامية، حيث لم تتحدث أي وحدة في الكتاب عن العرب أو المسلمين أو أي دولة عربية أو إسلامية، باستثناء كلمة "Arab" التي ذكرت مرة واحدة في الكتاب، وبطريقة غير مقبولة. وفي ضوء هذه النتائج، أوصى الباحثون بتحليل وتقييم مضمون كتب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التي يؤلفها مؤلفون أجانب للتأكد من عدم احتوائها على تضمينات وأبعاد ثقافية قد تتعارض مع الثقافة العربية الإسلامية. كذلك ينبغي الاهتمام بدراسة كيف يتم عرض وتقديم "الأخر" في مثل هذه الكتب، والعمل على غلبة وتنقية الجوانب الثقافية غير المرغوب فيها. وأخيراً، دعا الباحثون إلى استخدام مناهج وطنية في الجامعات الفلسطينية تستخدم لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

كلمات مفتاحية: تحليل المحتوى، الجوانب (الأبعاد الثقافية)، كتب تدريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، كتاب NorthStar

Introduction

Teaching a language inevitably means teaching culture implicitly as language does not exist in a vacuum; it is somehow embedded in the culture of people and reflects the beliefs and values of speech community. Language, in this regard, reflects and affects culture. As we learn a second language, we also

learn a second way of modeling and patterning the world. Or, as Foley (1997) noted, language is often treated theoretically as a subsystem of culture, and that cultures and languages do not exist in isolation, nor are they unchanging. Language, in this case often treated theoretically as a subsystem of culture within cognitive anthropology, but in practice the structure of language as revealed by modern linguistics has generally served as the paradigm for analyzing other aspects of culture. Such elaboration of the well-established relationship between culture and language can be simplified clearly by quoting one or two definitions of "language" as given here and there by some educators. The first one sees language as "language is a cultural product", or "language is an arbitrary system of vocal symbols used to communicate ideas and express feelings among the members of a certain social community". (Al-Quds Open University, 1996).

Moreover and regardless of what culture we talk about, learning a new language implies learning about another culture, another way of life. If that new way of life is itself attractive to you in some, then it may be easier to cope with the moments when language learning seems impossibly slow, or impossibly demanding of concentrated effort (Allwright, and Bailey, 1991). Bearing this in mind, Al-Abed Al-Haq (1998) wrote, "...the nature of the relationship between language and culture has been under consideration since ancient times. It is not easy to separate language and culture as there is an intimate relation between them, therefore, language is not self-dependent. It cannot be wholly understood without reference to the culture of which it is a vital part. Through language, we can understand people's culture, customs and aspirations. (Shatnawi, 2005). Second language learning is often second culture learning and that understanding the culture may lead to the understanding of language and, therefore, culture competence enriches linguistic competence. (Brown, 1986)

Statement of the Problem

EFL is taught nowadays in Palestine from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and it is also taught at The Palestinian universities either as compulsory courses or as major courses. It has been claimed that language courses should have authentic content so that learning can take place and learning English can be an effective tool for "acculturation", learning of culture since cultural competence can enrich linguistic competence. It is known that publishing companies from English speaking countries mostly U.S.A and Britain, for example, Longman, Oxford University Press, and Regents, write and produce the textbooks for a number of countries where EFL/ESL is a school subject or a university requirement. These textbooks however, should be examined, analyzed and criticized for their cultural aspects so as to prevent some negative effects of the so-called "acculturation" and bias as well which might lead to the westernization of the new generation in Palestine to the extent that it might leave a negative impact on the beliefs and behaviors of the Palestinian students. Therefore, the content of English language university textbooks of foreign authors which are used in Palestine should be examined and analyzed so as to investigate their values and concepts which might work against our own culture, values and traditions. Consequently, the researchers

have become aware of this problem after teaching one of these "foreign" textbooks entitled " NorthStar" Intermediate for a few semesters at An-Najah University.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to analyze and identify the cultural dimension in teaching English as a foreign language as manifested by a case study of the NorthStar series mainly The Intermediate Edition .

Question of the Study

This study addressed the following questions:

- 1-What are the Western cultural aspects that are implied in the NorthStar , Intermediate Textbooks?
- 2-To what extent is the foreign culture included in the NorthStar Intermediate level?
- 3- To what extent are the Arab-Islamic cultural aspects included in the NorthStar Intermediate level ?

Significance of the Study

Being one the most pioneering universities in Palestine, An-Najah National University in Nablus believes in the importance of teaching English as a foreign or a second language since English has become a vital tool for progression and modernization in nearly all aspects of life. English as the most influential and international language dominates science, information technology, the WWW, business and above all mass media. Thus, English is used at Al-Najah University as the medium of instruction in some colleges such as Medicine, Nursing, Engineering, Pharmacy, and Sciences.

As this study aimed to shed some light on the cultural dimension of the NorthStar Textbook, it might be a useful tool for predicting the problems that may occur because of the lack of the understanding of the cultural background of such textbooks which may negatively affect students' learning in one hand and their achievements on the other hand. Moreover, the results of this study might be useful for the decision-makers at An-Najah University who suggested using these textbooks. Furthermore, based on the researchers' knowledge, few studies have dealt with this series to explore its suitability concerning content and culture. For this reason, this research might add some useful information to the growing body of literature in the area of EFL/ESL textbook analysis.

Definition of Terms

1-**NorthStar, Intermediate**: The Textbook for TEFL taught at An-Najah University only in the compulsory course (10103)

2-**Acculturation**: the gradual change affecting individuals and societies as a result of the influence of a foreign dominant culture where this change leads to the acceptance of foreign cultural patterns and forsaking the original ones. (Al-Barakat, 1996)

3-**Cultural aspects**: The 10 cultural components used by Shatnawi (2005) which include: historical, economical, geographical, literary, man-woman relationship, political, religious, social, *Habits, Customs, and Traditions* , and way of living.

Limitations of the Study

- 1-The material of this study includes the cultural dimensions in the NorthStar , Intermediate textbook.
- 2-The content analysis of the textbook will be limited to the cultural dimensions only.

Theoretical Background

A-The NorthStar, Intermediate.

The NorthStar, Intermediate Level is one of an innovative five- level series written for students with academic as well as personal language skills. The authors of the NorthStar , Intermediate level (Reading and Writing) are Laurie Barton and Carolyn Dupaquier Sadinas, while the author of (Writing Activity Book) is Helen S. Solorzano. The textbook, published by Longman Publishing Company, has been used at An-Najah University since 2006 as a general English compulsory course for all students of the university. The textbook aims at exploring fascinating content while building language competence encouraging critical thinking skills, stimulating students' imagination and promoting personal experience. To achieve its objectives, the two books were enriched with new and updated high-interest stimulating topics that motivate students to express their own points of view, expanded vocabulary and pronunciation practice which ensures greater language proficiency.

The NorthStar, textbook consists of ten units. Each unit has two reading comprehension passages which integrate the study of grammar with related vocabulary and cultural information. Moreover, each unit of the thematically linked Reading and Writing strand and Listening and Speaking strand explores intellectually challenging, contemporary themes to stimulate critical thinking skills while building language competence. Furthermore, each unit is divided into four easy to follow sections: Focus on the Topic, Focus on Reading/Focus on Listening, Focus on Vocabulary, and Focus on Writing/ Focus on Speaking. All of these sections invite students to focus on the process of learning through NorthStar.

B-Unit of analysis

For the consistency of this study, the term "unit" was used to express a group of pages on the same topic. The analysis used in this study was based on the sentence level. In this case, the researchers were able to make use of the definition given by Longman dictionary which defines "sentence" as *"A group of words that forms a statement, command, exclamation, or question, usually contains a subject and a verb"*.

Moreover, the content analysis of this textbook was conducted using the criteria taken from Shatnawi(2005). These criteria involved 10 cultural aspects (mentioned above) that were established and defined precisely prior to the analysis process so as to code the aspects consistently and coherently.

C- Methodology of Analysis

The content analysis was done by reading sentence by sentence and writing down the frequent occurrences of each cultural aspect. In this study, the two researchers worked as the raters with the help of a lecturer who has been teaching the textbook for about 5 years.

Then the results were tallied by frequency so as to transform the quantitative data into qualitative one which was used to make inferences and conclusions.

D-Review of the Related Literature

Abbas (2011) investigated the cultural and intercultural dimensions in the Palestinian new syllabus ,11 and 12 grades . The researcher used the survey and the content analysis techniques. The results of the study showed that books were very rich of these various cultural aspects and that these various dimensions were interwoven and interrelated. Furthermore, the results revealed that the curriculum largely covered Palestinian , cultural aspects and to some extent Arab and Islamic features and that the intercultural dimensions which were introduced helped to orient the students in these aspects and to create intercultural communication and understanding. The analyzed books successfully explored vital global and intercultural issues to a great extent but simultaneously they succeeded in placing a reasonable degree of focus and display for the Palestinian cultural identity. The study showed that the authors succeeded to some extent in applying the strategy of the planners which stated the importance of creating local and global cultural awareness among the learners as well as highlighting the Palestinian cultural identity.

Dweikat (2011) carried out a study that aimed at analyzing the exercises and activities of "English for Palestine" textbook for 10th Grade and investigating teachers' and students' attitudes towards appropriateness and usefulness of the activities and exercises. To answer the questions of the study, the researcher analyzed the two parts of "English for Palestine" textbook: the Student Book and the Workbook. Moreover , a 29-item questionnaire was administered among the two samples. The results indicated the exercises and activities fulfill the textbook objectives and develop the language skills and the study skills which can be used for effective communication. These exercises and activities, encourage critical thinking and classroom interaction.

Yamada (2010) analyzed EFL textbooks used in Japanese junior high schools. He investigated which countries were introduced and how Japan's domestic diversity was constructed in those textbooks. The concepts of race and ethnic relations in a global context were discussed to understand representations of individuals. The study suggested that multicultural perspective not only promoted understanding varieties of English use in Asian contexts but also helped educators and students recognize the internal diversity of Japan where multilingual and multicultural communication takes place.

Lee (2009) examined how 11 high-school EFL conversation textbooks used in Korea represent and teach culture. Findings showed that all of the textbooks neglect both the teaching of the culture-general aspect of culture learning and the small “c” target-culture learning. Remarkably scant use of authentic materials along with interactive technologies like the Internet for teaching culture was used. The findings also revealed that that the 11 textbooks did not encourage the culture-general aspect of culture learning. The use of authentic materials such as print, audio, video and realia, along with interactive technologies such as the Internet was scarce throughout the textbooks which deprived students of the opportunity to be aware of both mainstream socio-cultural values and norms and sociocultural variables of a target culture.

Abbas (2009) aimed at investigating the cultural elements in the new English syllabus by using content survey and analysis. Therefore, a detailed analytical survey for the contents of EFP textbooks for grades 10, 11&12 was made to describe the content of these textbooks in terms of the topics they cover and the way they are covered. For this purpose, these topics were analyzed to see what international (global) and Palestinian (including Arab &Islamic) issues and dimensions they deal with. The analysis revealed that each unit contains a reading passage followed by various activities involving all language skills based to a great extent on the thematic, lexical and structural content of the reading material. The workbook gives extra activities and homework exercises which reinforce what has been introduced.

Hasan & Volker(2008) explored the cognitive, affective and procedural aspects of EFL elementary textbooks in Syria and Germany. They analyzed a corpus which consisted of three Syrian elementary textbooks, *Starters I-III*, and their German counterparts, *Kooky I-II*. Based on the paradigmatic change from instructivism to constructivism, a descriptive-analytical approach was used to examine the content-material in terms of teacher vs. pupil orientation, product vs. process orientation, virtuality vs. authenticity, cognitive learning vs. learning. Results indicated that the Syrian material focused on the cognitive element of language learning without ignoring affective and procedural factors, whereas the German material tended to put special emphasis on affectivity and process-orientation. Culturally, the Syrian textbooks confined their view to the domestic background before opening up to British culture in book III, whereas the German textbooks were keen to introduce the British dimension right from the start. For the Syrian material, the study suggested the inclusion of pronunciation exercises and a stronger consideration of learner autonomy. For the German material, close attention should be paid to a well-balanced relationship between the three parameters mentioned above.

Lund(2006) aimed to describe and discuss the ways in which questions of context and culture are dealt with in four English textbooks used for the teaching of English at the Norwegian from grades eight to ten. The results found that a large majority of them provide students with information about the history and the cultural heritage of countries in the English-speaking world. Far fewer non-fictional texts were devoted to contemporary issues and general information about the foreign countries, and even fewer texts still provide students with the opportunity to meet individual people. There was a great mixture of topics and issues, from fact-oriented presentations of central historical events to incidental descriptions of rather peripheral phenomena. Moreover, it was found that the texts vary a great deal in terms of culture-specific reference, and that many texts could contribute much more to the students' learning if more information was provided about the context in which the texts are set.

Sarah (2006) investigated how the English language cultural component was treated in the Algerian textbooks of English used at the Intermediate and Secondary Levels. Additionally, an attempt was made to investigate the teachers' understanding of culture and culture teaching, the way they actually handle it in class, and their views about its place in the coursebooks they use. The learners' perceptions of English learning and their attitudes towards English-speaking cultures were also examined. Another aspect of this

study was to design and test the effectiveness of a culture training programme intended for prospective teachers of English. The work was led through a qualitative analysis which used an evaluative guide, two teachers' questionnaires, a pupils' questionnaire and an experiment. The first teachers' questionnaire was concerned with the approach, methods and techniques of culture teaching; the second had to do with the place of culture in the Middle / Secondary School textbooks. The pupils' questionnaire shed light on their viewpoints about and attitudes towards learning the English language and culture. The results revealed that the target language cultural aspect was either overlooked or inadequately considered in the textbooks, that at least half the teachers did not include it in their language lessons, notwithstanding their awareness of its relevance, and that most of the learners gave more importance to learning the linguistic components, though they did not on the whole display negative attitudes towards English-speaking cultures. The experimental programme about culture had proved to be successful with about half the participants. On the basis of these findings, recommendations were suggested to syllabus designers, textbook writers and teachers to remedy the deficiencies and reform the teaching of culture in the Algerian School.

Shatnawi (2005) investigated the role of culture in foreign language textbooks through content analysis and the extent to which culture is represented in the Cutting Edge series. The analysis revealed that the textbooks include these cultural aspects: historical, economical, geographical, literary, political, religious, social, man-woman relationship, habits, customs and traditions.

Bataineh (2004) examined the representation of the local environment in EFL for Tenth Grade textbooks. The findings revealed that the Jordanian environment is moderately represented in the textbook she analyzed. The environment, in general, is well represented and a lot of references are made to regional and international components.

Shatnawi (2003) evaluated Enterprise textbooks series used at Yarmouk University Model School and many other private schools in Jordan and some other Arab and Islamic countries. The results of the study showed that some parents, teachers, and pupils were not fully satisfied with the content of Enterprise since it was not more relevant to the students' culture and background. (Cited in Shatnawi, 2005).

Reda (2003) examined topics of a sample of six EFL textbooks including the well-known *Cambridge English Course* and *Headway*. In particular, using materials from *Headway*, the study drew attention to the prototyping pattern of moving the lexical syllabus from general interest topics to higher levels. It showed that the expansion of vocabulary in EFL programmes broadens the horizon of basic English by incorporating lexical items with reference to developments in the life of the English nation. Reda recommended to enlarge the basic area of English vocabulary to include an unlimited range of purposes, especially in a period of globalization.

Ansary & Babaii (2002) explored the status of sexism in current ESL/EFL textbooks. Two types of analysis were performed to examine the manifestation(s) of sexist attitudes and values in the textbooks (*Right Path to English I & II*) that are locally designed to cater for and respond to the English language needs of Iranian students at secondary schools. Results revealed that *Right Path to English I & II* can be

considered sexist textbooks that present students, in their early exposure to the English language, with an unfair and inexcusable picture of women. It was suggested that this sexism, though embarrassing and undesirable, seems to mirror the institutionalized unfair sex discrimination to the disadvantage of women in society

Chang, Bok-Myung (2002) aimed to evaluate the communicative competence of Korean EFL learners through the Discourse Completion Tasks analysis. The data concerning EFL textbooks was based on analyzing six textbooks for middle school students published on the basis of the 7th national curriculum. The results of English textbooks analysis showed that four language function strategies were concentrated and limited in certain categories, therefore, these concentrated categories do have some significant effects on EFL learners' discourse competence. To improve the communicative competence of Korean EFL learners, English textbooks must suggest more varied strategies for language functions. As the syllabus design plays a very important role in the construction of English textbooks, Koreans must improve the syllabus design in order to improve and cultivate the communicative competence of Korean EFL learners. Moreover, there is a need to develop the components of multi-syllabus model and take the discourse components of syllabus design into consideration.

Lee (2002) aimed to understand the present English education Korean medical colleges by reviewing the data of 41 medical colleges all over the country in the years 1998 -2002. The study showed that the average of 169 hours of English are taught for Korean medical students. National universities offer the average of 78 hours of English whereas private colleges provide almost three times as much , 194 hours of English. The most popular English courses in medical schools are medical English and conversational (or practical)English. The study concluded with the fact that the syllabus design plays an important role in any level of curriculum and textbook.

Al-Momani (1998) evaluated AMRA textbooks for the first and second secondary classes in Jordan. To achieve that purpose the researcher developed three evaluation instruments. The first one was two evaluation questionnaires, one for teachers and supervisors which contained (91) Likert- type items covering eleven major characteristics of a good English textbook. The other evaluation instrument was for students. Their questionnaire included (85) Likert –type items. The second evaluation instrument was the interview form. It consisted of (22) questions covering all the aspects related to the evaluated textbooks. The third evaluation instrument was the observation form which included actual observations on teaching methods and use of evaluated textbooks in the classrooms. The results of the study revealed that:

- 1-The objectives of AMRA textbooks were based on teaching English for communication, and they met the students' needs and interests.
- 2-The vocabulary items were selected to suit the students' level and to facilitate communication.
- 3-The grammar and structural functions were selected to suit students' backgrounds .
- 4-The workbooks were useful; they enhanced understanding of the present material.
- 5-The rationale of the textbooks was suitable. It did not help developing one's country.
- 6-The content of AMRA textbooks was not interesting to the students.

7-The number of units in AMRA textbooks was big and intensive.

Al-Barakat (1996) aimed at identifying and evaluating English language textbooks for the basic stage in Jordan, PETRA series. The researcher made a quantitative analysis which consisted of all the main passages presented for reading. He also made a qualitative analysis which included all the material. The results showed that the six books of Petra Series reflected cultural bias as revealed the criteria of the two instruments. (Cited in Shatnawi ,2005)

Byram & Morgan (1994) describe the following content areas which, to them, constitute a ‘minimum content’ of any foreign language course: social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behavior, socio-political institutions, socialization and the life-cycle, national history, national geography, national cultural heritage and stereotypes and national identity.

Kawano (1987) aimed to create and test a process by which cultural information in English textbooks in Japan can be analyzed and examine what and how much information about foreign culture is taught in English classes in Japan. The process entailed an analysis of the cultural content of 10 senior high school English textbooks published in Japan. Results revealed that the textbooks were inadequate for the purpose of raising students' cultural awareness. The average percentage of cultural units was 22.41 % which was unsatisfactory and the quality of cultural information should be improved, for the contents were superficial and illustrations were stereotyped. The study found ethnic and national bias as white Americans were a dominant group being presented in a smart , bright and wealthy image. This bias might prevent students from mastering English smoothly and from enhancing international awareness. It was concluded that the English textbooks examined in this study do not contain sufficient information to make students culturally sensitive and international.

Reliability of Content Analysis

So as to establish the reliability of the content analysis of this book, much attention was paid to coding the data in order to increase intercoder reliability. Therefore, the following procedures were followed:

1-The researchers developed rules for coding the text so as to code things consistently and coherently throughout the text in the same way every time.

2-The researchers developed a pre-defined set of concepts and categories. The researchers in this case precisely defined the categories used in this analysis so as ensure the consistency of the analysis.

3-The researchers coded the text so as to form a coding –checklist that can help them in the analysis process. Then they started reading through the text and manually writing down concept occurrences by tallying the frequencies of each category.

4-The researchers repeated the analysis after one week of the first analysis using the same rules and procedures. Consequently, co -efficiency between the two analyses done by the researchers was done. It was found that the consistency was (0.85) which indicated a high coincidence between the two analyses.

Results of the Study

1-Results related to the first question: *What are the Western cultural aspects that are implied in the NorthStar , Intermediate Textbooks?*

To answer this question, the researchers analyzed NorthStar textbook unit by unit and sentence by sentence to count the existence and/or the frequency of the Western cultural aspects using the criteria given by Shatnawi (2005). These criteria involved 10 cultural aspects that were established and defined precisely prior to the analysis process so as to code the aspects consistently and coherently throughout the whole textbook.

Firstly, in terms of the themes and topics discussed in the textbook, Table (1) shows that the textbook under analysis contains 10 units which cover 10 contemporary global issues.

Table (1) :Units and Number of Pages in the Textbook

Units	Topic	No. of Pages
1-	The World of Advertising	18
2-	Extreme Sports and Obsession	16
3-	Fraud and Miracle Cure	18
4-	Storytelling :The Metamorphosis	20
5-	Speaking of Language and Gender	20
6-	Ecotourism	19
7-	Humor : What's so Funny about that ?	22
8-	Always in Fashion	20
9-	Crime and Punishment	20
10-	Marriage :Finding A Spouse	18

Moreover, Table(1) indicates that selecting these topics and themes was apparently based on pedagogical considerations in order to appeal to the students' interests and their own experience and to motivate them for language learning. Thus, advertising, sports, gender, fashion, marriage ...etc and various forms of entertainment are dealt with in a number of texts .This might be based on the assumption that there is a common and shared understanding among the members of any society of what the main elements of a country's cultural aspects are.

In addition to this, it seems that the authors of this textbook seem to believe that cultural knowledge can help students interpret the context and the cultural references in a communication situation, especially when they get closer to something "universal" or "global" in order to have something worthwhile to talk about in their attempts to learn the language. Such claim might be supported by the statement mentioned in the introduction of the textbook that states *"Each unit explores intellectually challenging, contemporary themes to stimulate critical thinking skills while building language competence"*. Thus, it appears that factual knowledge about the country or countries in which the language is spoken is seen to be particularly important in this connection.

For example, a passage that talks about how fashion and cosmetic surgery are dealt with in many Western countries such as America, France, England, China, India, North America, could allow students to learn about the ‘nature of culture’, and provide them with information about a whole range of cultural differences . Hence, it is clear that such passage and similar ones may represent interesting encounters with the foreign culture and provide valid examples of language as it is used in a particular discourse community. In this sense, and by presenting many new ways of understanding, thinking and speaking about one’s surroundings, foreign language education can provide students with more realistic facts and perspectives that will enable them to see that different cultures represent equally valid ways of looking at the world but from different angles.

The content of themes and topics in the 10 units indicates that the textbook is supposed to have a "fascinating content" wrapped with contemporary, global issues that can stimulate students' imagination and promote their personal experience and thus can meet the different interests of the students who take this course for the sake of building language competence, expanding vocabulary and practice pronunciation which ensures greater language proficiency that enables them to express themselves and their own points of view as well.

The content analysis of NorthStar revealed that the textbook provides authentic materials that can stimulate students' interests and encourage them to get some informative glimpses of everyday situations and everyday life in the foreign countries,. Such authenticity seems to agree with Simensen (1998) who provides the following examples of authentic texts that can be brought into the foreign language classroom : novels, short stories, plays, poems, , biographies, travel books, pamphlets, instructions, comics, time-tables, maps, diagrams, dictionaries, articles in newspapers, journals *etc.* (p: 155)

On the other hand, and regarding the number of pages in each unit, Table (1) shows that the thickest unit is unit seven which has 22 pages that talks about humor while the thinnest one is unit two which has only 16 pages and it talks about extreme Sports and Obsession.

Secondly, regarding the frequencies of the cultural aspects in each unit, Table (2) below shows the results of the content analysis of each unit.

Table (2): Frequencies of the Cultural Aspects in NorthStar Textbook

Unit	Economic	Social	Literary	Historical	Geographical	Religious	Man- Woman relation	Political	Customs And Traditions	Way of Living
One	16	9	2	3	7	2	3	4	7	12
Two	3	6	12	3	4	x	4	x	6	24
Three	6	8	8	2	5	1	1	1	2	14
Four	2	7	3	3	4	x	4	x	5	10
Five	4	64	3	2	7	x	14	x	16	40
Six	3	6	x	4	80	x	x	3	4	4

Seven	7	54	8	8	4	x	36	1	x	2
Eight	18	42	1	12	8	x	16	x	8	30
Nine	6	55	x	5	1	7	2	18	x	6
Ten	5	23	x	1	8	8	97	4	14	14
Total	70	274	37	43	128	18	177	31	62	156

Table (2) shows that the textbook involved different types of cultural aspects and that the frequency of some cultural aspects was higher in some units depending on the main theme of the unit. The table shows that these frequencies ranged between 22 and 274 and the religious aspect had the lowest frequency, while the social aspect had the highest frequency. The second highest aspect was Man & Woman Relation which had 177 frequencies and the third was Way of Living. The second lowest frequency was the Political aspect, 31 frequencies, and the third lowest was the Literary aspect which had 37 frequencies.

Talking more precisely, in unit one, we notice that the most frequent cultural aspect was the economical aspect which scored 16 times while the second was Ways of Living which scored 12 times. The least frequent aspect was the literary aspect and scored only 2 times. In unit two, we find that the cultural aspect Way of living came first and scored 24 times while the second aspect was the Literary aspect which scored 12 times. Here we notice that unit two included neither religious aspects nor political aspects. Moreover, unit 4 included neither religious aspects nor political aspects while the most frequent aspect was Way of Living which scored 10. In unit five, we notice that the social aspect was the most frequent aspect and scored 64 times as the theme of the unit dealt with the social effects on language and the differences between females and males in using the language. Again, unit five didn't include any religious or political aspects. In unit six, we notice that there were no religious aspects and the most frequent aspect was the geographical aspect which scored 115 times and that was the most frequent aspect in all units. This might be due to the theme discussed in the unit that is Ecotourism which concentrated on many geographical places and features related to ecotourism.

Thus, the above numbers may imply that the topic or the theme of each unit seems to have a strong correlation with the cultural aspects revealed in the content of the unit. In what follows are representative examples on the different cultural aspects found in the NorthStar textbook.

1-The economical aspect :Items that give information about the economical system of certain governments.

Table (2) above shows that the economical aspect had 70 frequencies and the highest ones were unit 1 and 8 and the lowest ones were 2, 4 and 6. For example, in unit one we read the following examples:

- *"As companies are becoming more global, they are looking for new ways to....."* and *" global advertisers consider the different styles of communication"* and *"...is how Chevrolet tried to market the Chevy Nova in..."*
- *"Companies such as McDonald's have found that it is very important to sell different products in different parts of the world. So when you go to a McDonald's in Hawaii, you will find Chinese noodles on the menu"* and

"Many people consider McDonald's to be an excellent example of a successful global restaurant" and " Some countries have laws that forbid advertising campaigns for tobacco and alcohol on TV".

From such examples and others we notice the use of the American brand names like Chevrolet and McDonald's which reflect, to some extent, a kind of bias toward the American products although we have an indication of the *" others"* in terms of economical products mainly the Japanese (Sony) which may signal the economical competition between U.S.A and Japan in terms of marketing all over the world. In this sense we read: *"The Japanese companies were the first to start advertising in China".*

Furthermore, we found that in unit one the word *"global"* explicitly repeated 23 times and *"globally"* 4 times which may indicate an implicit call for the so-called *"economic globalization"* which is defined as a worldwide economic system that permits easy movement of goods, production, capital, and resources. A good example of this concept can be seen in the sentence *" International business such as , McDonald's offer different products in different parts of the world"* which gives an example of a multi-national restaurant which has branches all over the world while keeping on its American symbolism.

In unit two, only three economical aspects were found, one of them was *"...like being able to buy my own home when I was still in high school. And later , being able to buy another home out in the desert- and build my own skate park"* and *"he earned a lot of money before the age of 25"*.

Unit eight, we read the following examples:

-"People spend much money on the way they look" and "They will spend much time and money trying to look like the ideal man or woman." and "All people from all over the world fly into countries like Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Brazil, where cosmetic surgery is a growing business" and " It (cosmetic surgery) is also somewhat expensive for the average person" and " Cosmetic surgery is expensive".

In unit 9, we read *" It also costs the taxpayer millions of dollars more to execute a criminal than to imprison that criminal for life."*

2-The political aspect: ; Items that give information about the political system of the present and past governments.

Table (2) above shows that the political aspect had 31 frequencies and the highest frequency was in unit 9 while units 2, 4, 5 and 8 included no political items. For example, in unit one we read the following examples: *"China is a different story. For years any kind of commercial advertising was illegal. Governmental advertising was all over the place but business advertising was nonexistent" and " Remember that for years in China and Russia , people had a hard time buying things" and "For instance, certain countries will not allow TV commercials on Sunday and....." and "In some parts of the world, it's forbidden to show dogs on TV or certain types of clothing such as jeans" and " Some countries have laws that forbid advertising for tobacco and alcohol on TV".* These examples in particular may indicate an implicit criticism against the political ideology " the communism" in which the government used to control everything even the economical rights of the people and which forbade people from having their own economical and human rights to start their businesses and advertising or marketing policies.

In unit nine which deals with the theme of *Crime and Punishment*, we read the following examples:

"In the United States, capital punishment is allowed in some states" and *"Do you know of any other societies in which capital punishment is allowed?"* and *"It is cruel to not to give prisoners food or to keep them alone"* and *"The laws enforced by the courts require justice for every person"* and *"Everyone has the right to be treated fairly, and the laws must protect those rights"* and *"Since 1977, our society has been allowing capital punishment again , at a high cost"* and *"There are many laws that protect children from danger"*.

"In many countries, citizenship is given automatically to al children who are born there" and *"The government spends millions of tax dollars on execution decisions"* and *"The U.S government once followed the example of Germany, Britain, France, and other nations that no longer execute their citizens"* and *"Then there is the fact that the poor and minorities get the death penalty more often than whites do"*.

3-Historical aspects : Items related to events that happened in the past, present, or future.

Table (2) above shows that the Historical aspect had 43 frequencies and the highest frequency was in unit 8 while the lowest frequencies were in units 10, 3, 1 and 2 which had 1, 2, 3, 3 respectively. For example, in unit 8 we can see a timeline that shows how Americans dealt with the idea of beauty and cosmetic surgery between the years 1920- 1990 - 2010 ?. At the same time we read the following examples in unit 8:

"How did the American idea of beauty change in the 1950s? How did it change in the 1980s? How will it change in 2010?" and *"In 1800s, American women in New York used to admire the fashion of Paris"* and *"In the 19700s, height and weight became an important part of beauty"* and *"During the time of the French Revolution, many women used .."* and *"In England, in the 1500s, make up became an important part of beauty"* and *"Later, in North America, some women used to eat arsenic to make their faces whiter."* And *"By the 1860s, American women started using make up to make themselves more attractive"* and *"In the 1890s,Americans discovered that bicycle riding could actually improve their appearance."*

In unit 1 we read *" China is a different story. For years any kind of commercial advertising was illegal. Governmental advertising was all over the place but business advertising was nonexistent"* while in unit 9 we read *" However, since 1977, our society has been allowing capital punishment again, at a high cost"* and *" In March 2002, Zoghby International surveyed voters in Albany County, New York with the following results as shown in graphs 2 & 3. .* Meanwhile, in unit 6, we read the following examples:

"Meteorologists are now looking at the effects of the ozone hole discovered above Antarctica in 1984" and *"In 1989, one cruise ship caused an oil spill that killed many penguins and....."*.

4-Geographical: Items that give information about the location of different places in the world.

Table (2) above shows that the Geographical aspect had 128 frequencies in all units and the highest frequency was in unit 6 which talks about Ecotourism while the lowest frequencies were in unit 9 which had only one aspect and it was *" In March 2002, Zoghby International surveyed voters in Albany County, New York with the following results .."* . In unit 6 we read the following examples: *"About 98% of Antarctica's land is covered with ice"* and *"Antarctica is classified as a desert."* and *" Antarctica is the coldest, windiest and driest continent"* and *"Antarctica is the centre of important scientific research"* and *"In a place as frozen as*

Antarctica, it can take 100 years for a plant to grow back" and " The ice of Antarctica holds 70 percent of the world's fresh water" and "The tourists were visiting three main cities in Italy: Rome, Florence and Naples." And "The desert landscape is flat" – "We must preserve the rain forest because it is the home of many birds" and "That island is inhabited only by birds".- "The highest mountain in the world is Mount Everest".

- "Next summer I'm going to travel to a very remote part of Asia..." and "The coastal cities of a country are often popular vacation spots because people like to be near the ocean" and "-If tourism continues in Antarctica, people who live near oceans may be affected by bad weather ".

Regarding the geographical aspect, we found that the textbook included only one map in unit 6 page 93 and it shows North America, South America, Africa, Europe and Antarctic. More geographical aspects can be seen in other units such as *"Then the Pizzeria restaurant opened in Moscow"* and *"Let's start by looking at the U.S.A. Can you think of a country with more advertising than the United States?"* and *" China is a different story..... is how Chevrolet tried to market the Chevy Nova in Latin America"* and *"So when you go to a McDonald's in Hawaii. If you stop for a hamburger in Germany, you can order a beer with your meal"* and *"Fast food , for example, is a very strange idea in Russia"* and *" In Malaysia, you can try a milk shake that is flavored with a fruit....."* and *" For this reason, the goal of many TV commercials in Japan will be to show how"* and *" A Baskin Robbins ice cream commercial in Philippines might advertise mango and papaya ice cream"* and *"Remember that for years in China and Russia , people had a hard time buying things".*

5-Literary: Items that give information about the biographies of writers, poets, playwrights, scientists, essayists, and storytellers.

In this regard, we find that the literary aspect had 37 frequencies in the textbook and that unit 2 had the highest number of literary aspects while units 6, 9, 10 included no literary aspects.

In unit 1, for example, we read: *"Consider the example of Jacko. This great Australian football hero recently..."* and *" Julia Ross: the president of the Global Advertisers' Association"*

In Unit 2: *" Mary Lou Retton and Nadia Comaneci to name a few "* and *" Mohammad Ali (American boxer" Nadia Comaneci (Romanian gymnast), Evel Knievel (motorcyclist", Arnold Schwarzenegger (bodybuilder)Tony Hawk, a professional skateboarder,)Michael Jordan (basketball player)Disney animators".*

In unit 4 *" Franz Kafka , the author of the story the Metamorphosis was born in Prague"* and in unit 7 *"I love Lucy was a popular American TV show during the 1950s, created by Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball."* and *"In the 1980s, Bill Cosby, a famous comedian"*

5-Man-woman relationship: Items related to marriage and the relationship between males and females.

Table (2) shows that **Man-woman relationship** aspect had 177 frequencies and the highest frequency (97) was in unit 10 while the lowest frequencies were in unit 6, 3, 9 which had 0, 1, 2 frequencies. For example, in unit 10 we read the following:

- "In your home culture, do men and women wear wedding or engagement rings? In what other ways do they show they are engaged or married?" and "Girls are allowed to choose their favorite boy for a husband." and "Young women used to invite men to visit them at night by leaving their windows open" and "Men and women usually decide to get married without any advice from their parents?" and "A man may have more than wife"

and *"Marriage partners do not know each other before their wedding"* and *"According to the Chinese way of thinking, it would be a mistake to allow young people to follow their romantic feelings and choose their own partners"* and *"The Hopi allowed boys to leave their parents' home at age thirteen to live in a kive, where they can live and go out alone and secretly visit young girls"* and *"After a few months of receiving visits, most girls became pregnant . As a consequence, they could choose their favorite boy for a husband."*

In unit 1: *" A shampoo commercial shows a young woman running in slow motion toward her handsome boyfriend. Her long, thick shinny hair bounces up and down...As she runs into the arms of her boyfriend, he twirls her around"*. and *"The ads failed to sell cars to single women without children"*.

In unit 2: *" I didn't have a chance with the girls – forget it"*.

In unit 7 *"In the 1950s, the roles of men and women were different from what they were in the 1980s."* and *"Although Lucy knew that Ricky loved her, she also knew how limited his patience was."* and *"We identify that with Cliff's imperfections and are comforted to see that someone loves him anyway"* and *"In a perfect world, both husband and wife gave satisfying , high-paid careers."* And *"Theo's sisters think that he is irresponsible with money"* and *"Ricky and Lucy would be very much in love with each other"*

6- **Religious:** Items that are related to the practices of Christians and other religions.

Table (2) above shows that the religious aspect had only 18 frequencies in all units which means that it was the least frequent aspect. Unit 10 included the most frequencies (8) and we read in it:

"...because they expect the people of southern Germany to follow the rules of the Catholic religion" and *"As the Mormon Church grew, many of the men followed Smith's teaching and married a number of wives"* and *"Today, the Mormon Church , which calls itself the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, teaches that marriage should be a partnership of one man and one woman who will be together....."*. Then, in unit 1, we read *" For instance, certain countries will not allow TV commercials on Sunday and....."* and in unit 9, we read *" cutting the hand of a person who steals "* which indicates an Islamic law in this regard.

7- **Social:** Items that are related to: country beliefs, values, games, drinks, food, pets, greetings, festivals.

Table (2) shows that the social aspect had the highest number of frequencies (274) whereas unit five included the highest number of frequencies (64) while the lowest number was in units 2, 6, 4 which had 6, 6 and 7 respectively. In unit five, for example, we read: *"From a birth, a child knows how to behave as a male or a female."* and *" In my culture, it is better to be a boy"* and *" In my culture, it is better to be a boy"* and *" Boys and girls like different games"* and *" Men's friendships with other men are different from women's friendships with other women"* and *" The children competed in a contest. They wanted to see who could jump rope the most times in a row and not miss."* and *"Parents influence the way their children think and act. Children learn a lot from them"*.

In unit one we read about drinks and food: *"So when you go to a McDonald's in Hawaii,...you will find Chinese noodles on the menu."* and *" If you stop for a hamburger in Germany, you can order a beer with your meal."* and *"Drinking beer with a meal is an example of a custom"* and *" Because there are millions of people in China who don't know what a Big Mac is"* and *" Fast food , for example, is a very strange idea in Russia"* and *"In their (Russian) restaurants, you sit down and the waiter brings you soup, salad, meat, and potatoes –*

one thing at a time" and *"Many people believe that there is nothing wrong with eating fast food once in a while."* And *"In Malaysia, you can try a milk shake that is flavored with a fruit that most people in other countries have never tasted "*.

In unit seven , we read: *"We made our last show after we had agreed to divorced"* .

Regarding greetings as social aspects, we read in unit one: *" So good bye Jacko , Hello Energizer Bunny. Good morning, It's good to be here with you all. It's been a pleasure to be with you. Dear Ms. Ross. Hello."*

8-Habits, Customs, and Traditions: Items that are related to habits, customs and traditions.

Table (2) shows that the aspect of Habits, Customs, and Traditions scored 62 frequencies and unit 5 and 10 were the highest in number of frequencies 16, 14 respectively, while unit 9 and 7 scored zero and unit 3 had only 2 aspects.

In unit one, for example, we read: *"Drinking beer with a meal is an example of a ...(custom)"* and *" You're waiting for the good guy to get the bad guy.(Cowboy traditions in America. Red Indians."* and *"In their (Russian) restaurants, you sit down and the waiter brings you soup, salad, meat, and potatoes –one thing at a time. "* In Unit 9: *" In some cultures, people seek revenge by hurting the person who has hurt them"*. In unit 5, we read: *" American culture emphasizes success for men and beauty for women"* and *" In some cultures, having many children proves a man is masculine"* and *"A few hours after Joy Fisher's birth, her parents took pictures of her. Joy's mother put her a pink headband around Hoy's head"* and *" Gifts soon arrived including pink dresses and dolls."*

9-Way of Living: Items which are related to the way people live in certain societies.

Table (2) a shows that the aspect of Way of Living scored 156 frequencies and units 5 and 8 were the highest in number of frequencies 40 and 30 respectively, while units 7 and 9 were the lowest in number and scored 4 and 6 respectively.

In unit one the reader finds a lot of examples that represent the western style or way of living. For example, we find jeans, dogs as pets, pizza, Big Mac, fast food, MasterCard, McDonalds, bottled water, hamburger, and noodles which reflect the Western way of life. Here we read the following examples:

-"The members of this firm are working to make a new bottled water for people who exercise regularly" and *"Energy Plus bottled water will be advertised on television and in magazines"* and *" Because there are millions of people in China who don't know what a Big Mac is"* and *"Fast food , for example, is a very strange idea in Russia "* and *"What happened with pizza in Russia is a very funny story. ...they had to explain that it was similar to Russian vatrushka"* and *"The number of fast food restaurants around the world is increasing"* and *"Most North American men believe that friendship means doing things together such as...."*

In unit 2 we read: *"That was a combination of skateboarding, BMX cycling, and rollerblading. There were a lot of good skaters there."* and *"They describe how the walls of her bedroom are covered with photos of Olympic winner"*. In unit 8, furthermore, we read the following examples:

-"Fashion is a very important part of today's society" and *"People pay too much attention to new clothing styles"* and *" Most people choose their friends because of the way they look"* and *" Rhinoplasty and*

liposuction can greatly improve a person's appearance" and " *Today, cosmetic surgery is used in many countries to improve the appearance of people*".

2-Results related to the second question:*To what extent is the foreign culture included in the NorthStar Intermediate textbook?*

The above mentioned examples clearly indicate that the textbook does not only focus on different aspects of a foreign culture but it also deals with different cultures that contribute considerably to the cultural information and cultural awareness the students should acquire. Nevertheless, the content analysis of the *NorthStar Intermediate textbook* revealed that the most cultural aspects repeated in the textbook were related the American culture which was reflected in a large number of examples found in the textbook. For example, we found cultural aspects that are related to American brand names like Chevrolet, McDonald's Pepsi-Cola, and American cities and states like *Hawaii, Washington. D.C* ...etc.

-International business such as , McDonald's offer different products in different parts of the world" and *"...is how Chevrolet tried to market the Chevy Nova in Latin America."* and *"Companies such as McDonald's have found that it is very important to sell different products in different parts of the world. So when you go to a McDonald's in Hawaii, you will find Chinese noodles on the menu."* and *"Many people consider McDonald's to be an excellent example of a successful global restaurant"* and *"In the United States, capital punishment is allowed in some states"* and *"The U.S government once followed the example of Germany, Britain, France, and other nations that no longer execute their citizens"* and *"Let's start by looking at the U.S.A. Can you think of a country with more advertising than the United States?"* and *"How did the American idea of beauty change in the 1950s?"* and *"In 1800s, American women in New York used to admire the fashion of Paris"* and *"Later, in North America, some women used to eat arsenic to make their faces whiter."* And *"By the 1860s, American women started using make up to make themselves more attractive."* *"In the 1890s,Americans discovered that bicycle riding could actually improve their appearance."* and *"In March 2002, Zoghby International surveyed voters in Albany County, New York with the following results as shown in graphs 2 & 3."* and *" American culture emphasizes success for men and beauty for women"*.

The above examples and others indicate that the "the other" was represented although sometimes partially, especially the Arab culture which has been neglected except in the word " Arab" which was mentioned only once in the textbook and in a way that displeases the Arabs: The item number 6 in unit 10 states *" a man may have more than one wife"* to be matched with the choice a *" Arab"*.

On the other hand, we find a large number foreign places including cities, countries, states, provinces, mountains ..etc mentioned in the text book. For example, Antarctica was mentioned 62 times in unit six. However, Antarctica is Earth's southernmost continent, containing the geographic South Pole. Regarding the countries, Table (3) shows the frequencies of the countries mentioned in the textbook.

Table (3) Frequencies of Countries in the Textbook

Country	Arabs	America	Britain	Germany	Russia	France	China	Spain

Unit one	x	10	3	3	6	2	6	2
Unit two	x	x	x	2	x	1	x	x
Unit three	x	8	x	x	x	x	x	x
Unit four	x	x	x	2	x	x	x	x
Unit five	x	11	x	x	x	x	x	x
Unit six	x							
Unit seven	x	18	x	x	x	x	x	x
Unit eight	x	8	2	x	x	3	1	x
Unit nine	x	11	3	3	3	x	x	x
Unit ten	1	6	x	6	x	4	x	x
total	1	72	8	16	9	7	7	2

Table (3) shows the most frequent country that was given priority in the textbook was America which was explicitly mentioned 74 times in addition to dozens of implicit indications. In some cases it was used as United States or USA, while Germany was repeated 16 times, Russia 9 times, Britain 8 times and Spain 2 times. This might be explained by the fact that the teaching of English has, traditionally, been linked to cultural information about the United Kingdom and the United States, the native speakers of English. Here we find it's the United States which scored the most frequent country in the textbook which might be strange especially when we know that the textbook was published by British publishers (Longman Publishing Company). However, one may argue that students of English anywhere need to

learn about these countries and about their strong position in the English-speaking world. Consequently, when it comes to bringing cultural questions into foreign language teaching, namely intercultural awareness and intercultural skills, it might be good to provide information about one country or more in which the language is spoken natively. Such information should clearly present 'the other', and be used as an example and as a point of reference in the students' continued efforts to understand other cultures and to cope with new situations that are hoped to promote the learner's motivation..

Nevertheless, there are other foreign countries and cities were mentioned in the textbook with limited frequencies including Costa Rica , Dominican Republic , Hawaii Australia, Japan ,Malaysia, Latin America,, Cuba, Philippines, Czech Republic , Moscow, Paris, Florida, Prague.. etc. At the same time, no Arabic country was mentioned but only the word Arab was mentioned once in unit 10, page 176 in a matching exercise. Additionally, , the number of foreign names in the textbook were 220 ,and the most frequent name was Gregor which was mentioned 64 times in unit 4. The name Gregor is originally a Greek name, Gregorios, which means "watchful" or "vigilant" .This developed into the Latin Gregorius, which was very popular among the early Christians, partly because St Paul had urged believers to be vigilant in the New Testament. The name kept its religious connotations for centuries; it was given to several saints in the first few centuries after Christ, and there was a famous Pope Gregory in the 6th century.(<http://meanings-of-names.blurtit.com/q986040.html>)

Furthermore, in all units we find foreign cultural aspects that dealt with customs, greetings, meal manners, social life, sightseeing topics ,occasions, friendship, love and social life affairs that are related to "other different cultures as we have seen when we discussed the results related to question one. For example: " *Franz Kafka , the author of the story the Metamorphosis was born in Prague*" and "*I love Lucy was a popular American TV show during the 1950s, created by Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball.*" and "*In the 1980s, Bill Cosby, a famous comedian*" and "*According to the Chinese way of thinking, it would be a serious mistake to allow two young people to follow their romantic feelings and choose their own partners*" and "*The Hopi allowed boys to leave their parents' home at age thirteen to live in a kive, where they can live and go out alone and secretly visit young girls*" and "*...because they expect the people of southern Germany to follow the rules of the Catholic religion*" and "*As the Mormon Church grew, many of the men followed Smith's teaching and married a number of wives*" and "*Today, the Mormon Church , which calls itself the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, teaches that marriage should be a partnership of one man and one woman who will be together not only during this life but forever.*"

- "*In some cultures, people seek revenge by hurting the person who has hurt them*" and "*In some cultures, having many children proves a man is masculine*" and "*Because there are millions of people in China who don't know what a Big Mac is*" "*Fast food , for example, is a very strange idea in Russia* ". and "*Most North American men believe that friendship means doing things together such as camping and playing tennis*"

As for types of pictures and illustrations related to the foreign culture or cultures, the content analysis of the textbook revealed that the textbook included 20 photographs ,4 charts and graphs , 2 drawings and

one caricature in unit 7 page 114. This caricature is a funny drawing that aimed to complement a joke that talks about strawberry. The joke says: **A: What did the big strawberry say to the little strawberry ?**

B: I don't know. A: If you weren't so sweet, we wouldn't be in this jam!

Here, the joke uses the double meaning of "jam" either the preserved fruit and being in a difficult situation and it does not refer to any specific cultural context. This joke intends to add humor to the language learning situation and to give students 'comic relief' from the more serious issues that are dealt with in the text.

Such pictures and illustrations that are used in this foreign textbook can also be interpreted as 'texts'. Some of them may provide informative signals of everyday situations and everyday life in a foreign country and help students comprehend the texts by visualizing the context and by representing a means to convey the cultural information found here and there in spite of the fact that jokes, cartoons and humour in general are most of the time culture –specific which might hinder students' understanding of the theme of this humor. Some of these illustrations, nevertheless, may be seen as a means to add color to the text and motivate students for further reading, while others may be included simply in order to fill a page or to provide a rest for the eye. Thus, we may think that illustrations can have a role to play in indicating to the learners how 'far away' the foreign culture and this may contribute to bringing the foreign culture closer to the students.

Thus, students who attempt to learn the language need to learn about foreign cultures in such a way as to enhance cultural awareness and equal respect for all nations and people especially at a time when they all live in a small village and thanks to technology which makes things easier and attainable. Teachers, on the other hand, who devote their best efforts almost entirely to grammatical and structural (linguistic) features and targets, need to pay some attention to the content of the materials presented in their classes particularly the cultural aspects that broaden students' horizons and awareness.

3-Results related to the third question: *To what extent are the Arab-Islamic cultural aspects included in the NorthStar Intermediate level ?*

The analysis of the textbook revealed that there is an obvious bias towards the foreign cultural aspects in general and the American cultural aspects in particular at the expense of the Arabic –Islamic culture which is related to the students who study this textbook at An-Najah University in Palestine.

Firstly, there was no unit that talks about Arabs or Islam or Muslims or any Arab or Islamic country in the 10 units of the textbook. Secondly, in all units nothing speaks about cultural aspects related to the Arab-Islamic world except the mentioning of the word "Arab" which was mentioned only once in the textbook and in a way that even displeases the Arabs. It was an item in an exercise in unit 10 which states **" a man may have more than one wife"** to be matched with the choice a **" Arab"**. This indicates a cultural bias towards foreigners and foreign cultural aspects which at the same time excludes Arab and Islamic cultural aspects that represent hundred millions of people in the Arab-Islamic world. Thirdly, in some cases, we find some Western cultural aspects that contradict our cultural aspects e.g., drinking beer,

" If you stop for a hamburger in Germany, you can order a beer with your meal" and "Young women used to invite men to visit them at night by leaving their windows open" and "The Hopi allowed boys to leave their parents' home at age thirteen to live in a kive, where they can live and go out alone and secretly visit young girls" and "After a few months of receiving visits, most girls became pregnant . As a consequence, they could choose their favorite boy for a husband." .

Such examples and others may be seen as harmful and controversial topics which may work against the students who belong to the Arabic and Islamic culture.

Nevertheless, to be fair, we find some exercises and activities that aimed to relate the students' own culture with the topic presented in the unit. For example, in unit one we read this activity:

1-Think of a popular food or drink product from your home country, for example, green tea, sea cucumbers, or frozen TV dinners. Where else in the world do you think the product would do well? Where wouldn't it do well?

2-In your home country, is the meaning of an advertisement more likely to be found in the exact words used to describe the product or in the feeling and mood the advertisement creates. Give examples from your country.

3-Work with a partner. Compare advertising in your country to advertising in another country.

Such activities possibly aim to introduced the students to the other culture or cultures with its diverse societies composed of peoples of different races and ethnic origins while thinking about his or her own culture, which, in some cases might lead to some cultural conflicts between the students' culture and the foreign (Western) culture.

Conclusions:

The analysis of NorthStar textbook showed that the textbook included the following cultural aspects: historical, economical, geographical, literary, political, religious, social, man-woman relationship, habits, customs and traditions and finally aspects related to the way of life. The frequency of each aspect varied from one unit to another and that the most frequent cultural aspect was the social aspect which scored 274 frequency while the religious aspect had the lowest frequency 22. Such inclusion supports the idea proposed by Foley (1997) who noted that language is often treated theoretically as a subsystem of culture, and that cultures and languages do not exist in isolation, nor are they unchanging. It also agrees with Shatnawi (2005) who maintains that it is not easy to separate language and culture because there is an intimate relation between them, therefore , language is not self-dependent and that language cannot be wholly understood without reference to the culture of which it is a vital part. This result also agrees with Abbas (2011) who found that English Palestinian new syllabus for 11 and 12 grades were very rich of these various cultural aspects and that these various dimensions were interwoven and interrelated. Such result might be explained by the claim of Brown (1986) who believes that second language learning is often second culture learning and that understanding the culture may lead to the understanding of language and, therefore, culture competence enriches linguistic competence.

Then, the content analysis revealed that the textbook presented different cultures and various cultural information related to different countries and societies and that the most cultural aspects repeated in the textbook are related the American culture which revealed a kind of cultural bias towards the Western

culture in general and the American culture in particular. This result goes with that of Lund (2006) whose study that a large majority of Norwegian English textbooks provide students with information about the history and the cultural heritage of countries in the English-speaking world mainly America and Britain. This result also agrees with Al-Barakat (1996) whose study showed that the six books of English language curriculum textbooks for the basic stage in Jordan, PETRA series, reflected cultural bias as revealed in the criteria of the two instruments.

Moreover, the content analysis of the NorthStar textbook revealed that there is an obvious bias towards the foreign cultural aspects at the expense of the Arabic –Islamic culture which is related to the students who study this textbook at An-Najah University in Palestine. This bias can be realized in two aspects: Firstly, there was no unit that talks about Arabs or Islam or Muslims or any Arab or Islamic country in the 10 units of the textbook. Secondly, in all units nothing speaks about cultural aspects related to the Arab-Islamic world except the mentioning of the word “Arab” which was mentioned only once in the textbook and in a way that even displeases the Arabs. It was an item in an exercise in unit 10 which states "*a man may have more than one wife*" to be matched with the choice a "*Arab*".

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the researchers recommend the following:

1-As it seems impractical to have a completely a culture –free language teaching as this may deprive learners of learning the language in natural and authentic contexts and in the real world, in language as communication means and as a social action. It is important then to analyze and evaluate the foreign textbooks which are usually written by foreigners to be adopted before used to be sure that they do not include cultural aspects that might go against our Arab-Islamic culture.

2-The researchers believe that there is still a possibility to link English language teaching at An-Najah University to multiple cultures and contexts so as to open opportunities for the students to relate it to their own cultural experience but after removing some irrelevant materials.

3- As students can't be excluded from their realities and surroundings, careful attention needs to be paid to how the others are presented and how to filter the undesirable cultural aspects that in a textbook.

4-Before choosing any textbook for English language teaching, the authors should take into account the textbooks' ability to exemplify 'authentic' language in interaction so to prepare students for appropriate language use in different contexts.

5- Texts and topics should be adopted and designed in such a way that students can be able to relate to the topics and the contexts that are dealt with, while their eyes are opened to new worlds at the same time.

6-Finally, both the content and the teaching approach of the textbook need to be 'pupil appropriate'. By this we mean that the topics dealt with should be perceived as interesting and relevant among the students and this recommendation calls for new national curricula at the Palestinian universities.

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