



EFL TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHERS' POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: A MIXED METHODS RESEARCH IN PALESTINIAN STATE SCHOOLS

Jehad Faraj

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COMPETENCE: A MIXED METHODS RESEARCH IN PALESTINIAN STATE SCHOOLS

DOCTORAL THESIS

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Statement of Supervision

I STATE that the present study, entitled “**EFL Textbooks and Teachers’ Potential for Promoting Intercultural Competence: A Mixed Methods Research in Palestinian State Schools**”, presented by Jehad Faraj for the award of the degree of Doctor, has been carried out under my supervision at the Department of English and German Studies at this University. The thesis is opting for an international doctorate mention.

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Tarragona, August 25, 2023

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Abstract (ENGLISH)

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and globalized, stakeholders and educators in foreign language education are now facing the need to reassess proficiency in foreign languages to include *Intercultural Competence* (IC)—the ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This entails incorporating suitable cultural content and teaching methods to foster the development of students' intercultural communication skills.

Despite the acknowledged significance of culture as an essential component in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching materials, there still exists a misconception about the type of culture to include and the purpose of its inclusion. While superficial and celebratory culture tends to be the default perception of culture, the purpose of teaching culture is often viewed as primarily increasing students' cultural knowledge and facilitating language learning, rather than as a means to develop learners' intercultural attitudes and skills.

Given the limited number of studies conducted on the potential of Palestinian EFL textbooks and teachers in this regard, this research aims to provide the basis for further enhancing Palestinian EFL teaching materials and teachers' professional development. It does so by assessing both EFL textbooks and teachers' potential in promoting IC. Additionally, this research seeks to better understand the nature of IC development by exploring the impact of international exposure and intercultural training on teachers' intercultural competence.

To achieve these objectives, the research uses a mixed methods approach, with both quantifiable and non-quantifiable data being collected and analyzed to provide a holistic picture of the cultural elements of the textbooks. Additionally, the research employs a nationwide survey to gather data from a sizable sample of Palestinian EFL teachers ($N = 360$), selected through the stratified random sampling method. The collected data was analyzed with descriptive statistics,

including means and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistics, namely the Chi-square test of independence.

Findings show that culture was incorporated haphazardly and incidentally into the EFL textbooks without receiving considerable thought. Findings also reveal that IC development was not considered when creating the textbooks, as the incorporated cultural aspects aimed to increase students' stock of knowledge rather than their intercultural communication skills. The findings concerning teachers' IC reveal that while Palestinian EFL teachers had adequate knowledge of IC, their attitudes towards IC and cultural teaching practices were moderate. Besides, the overwhelming majority of teachers lacked international exposure and adequate training in IC. Furthermore, teachers' knowledge and practices of IC were positively correlated with international exposure and training in IC. However, teachers' attitudes were only correlated with international contacts, with no association with overseas experiences and training in IC.

The research findings shed light on the impact of textbooks and teachers on students' acquisition of IC. In this vein, this thesis has provided the first comprehensive assessment of EFL textbooks and teachers in terms of their potential for promoting IC in Palestine, since it covered the entire *English for Palestine* (Macmillan Publishing House) textbook series, analyzed both quantitative and qualitative cultural aspects using a mixed methods approach, and surveyed Palestinian EFL teachers nationwide. Consequently, this research provides valuable insights for promoting intercultural competence. Such improvements may directly influence students' success in cross-cultural interactions.

Keywords: *culture, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), intercultural competence, Palestinian EFL teachers, English for Palestine textbook series*

Resum (CATALÀ)

A mesura que el món esdevé cada vegada més interconnectat i globalitzat, el conjunt d'agents implicats i educadors de llengües estrangeres s'enfronten ara a la necessitat de re avaluar la competència en llengües estrangeres per incloure la Competència Intercultural (IC), definida com la capacitat d'interactuar de manera efectiva amb persones de diverses procedències culturals. Això implica incorporar continguts culturals adequats i mètodes d'ensenyament per fomentar el desenvolupament de les habilitats d'interacció intercultural dels estudiants.

Tot i que s'ha reconegut la importància de la cultura com a component essencial en els materials d'ensenyament de l'anglès com a llengua estrangera (EFL), encara hi ha una idea equivocada sobre el tipus de cultura a incloure i el propòsit de la seva inclusió. Mentre que la característica superficial i festiva sol ser la percepció predeterminada de la cultura, sovint s'entén que l'objectiu de l'ensenyament de la cultura es centra principalment en augmentar el coneixement cultural dels estudiants i facilitar l'aprenentatge de la llengua, en lloc de ser un mitjà per desenvolupar les actituds i habilitats interculturals dels aprenents.

Amb una limitada informació disponible sobre el potencial dels llibres de text d'anglès com a llengua estrangera i dels professors palestins sobre aquest tema, aquesta investigació té com a objectiu proporcionar la base per millorar els materials d'ensenyament d'anglès com a llengua estrangera i el desenvolupament professional dels professors palestins. Ho fa avaluant tant el potencial dels llibres de text d'EFL com el dels professors en la promoció de la IC. A més, aquesta investigació busca aprofundir en la comprensió de la naturalesa del desenvolupament de la IC explorant l'impacte de l'exposició internacional i la formació intercultural en la competència intercultural dels professors.

Per assolir aquests objectius, la recerca utilitza un enfocament de mètodes mixtos en el qual es van recollir i analitzar dades quantificables i no quantificables per proporcionar una visió holística dels elements culturals dels llibres de text. A més, la recerca emprà una enquesta nacional per recopilar dades d'una mostra considerable de 360 professors d'EFL palestins, seleccionats mitjançant el mètode d'estratificació per mostreig aleatori. Les dades recopilades van ser sotmeses a anàlisi d'estadística descriptiva, incloent mitjanes i desviacions estàndard, així com a anàlisi d'estadística inferencial, concretament el test de la Chi quadrat d'independència.

Els resultats mostren que la cultura es va incorporar de manera desorganitzada i incidental als llibres de text d'EFL sense tenir en compte una adequada consideració. A més, es revela que no es va tenir en compte el desenvolupament de la IC en la creació dels llibres de text, ja que els aspectes culturals incorporats van tenir com a objectiu augmentar el coneixement cultural dels estudiants en lloc de les seves habilitats de comunicació intercultural. Els resultats referents a la IC dels professors revelen que, tot i que els professors d'EFL palestins tenien un coneixement adequat de la IC, les seves actituds cap a la IC i les pràctiques d'ensenyament cultural eren modestes. A més, la majoria aclaparadora dels professors mancava d'exposició internacional i una formació adequada en IC. A més, el coneixement i les pràctiques dels professors en IC estaven correlacionats positivament amb l'exposició internacional i la formació en IC. Tanmateix, les actituds dels professors només es correlacionaven amb els contactes internacionals, sense cap associació amb les experiències i la formació en IC a l'estranger.

Els resultats de la recerca il·luminen l'impacte dels llibres de text i els professors en l'adquisició de la IC pels estudiants. En aquest sentit, aquesta tesi proporciona la primera avaluació completa dels llibres de text i els professors d'EFL en termes del seu potencial per promoure la IC a Palestina, ja que ha cobert tota la sèrie de llibres de text *Anglès per a Palestina (Editorial*

Macmillan), analitzant tant els aspectes culturals quantitius com qualitius mitjançant un enfocament de mètodes mixtos que inclou una enquesta a professors d'EFL palestins a tot el país. En conseqüència, aquesta recerca proporciona visions valuoses per potenciar la competència intercultural. Aquestes millores poden influir directament en l'èxit dels estudiants en les interaccions interculturals.

Paraules clau: *cultura, Anglès com a Llengua Estrangera (EFL), competència intercultural, professors d'EFL palestins, sèrie de llibres de text Anglès per a Palestina*

Resumen (ESPAÑOL)

A medida que el mundo se vuelve cada vez más interconectado y globalizado, las partes implicadas en la enseñanza de idiomas, junto con los educadores, se enfrentan a la necesidad de reevaluar la competencia en idiomas extranjeros para incluir la Competencia Intercultural (IC), definida como la capacidad de interactuar de manera efectiva con personas de diversos contextos culturales. Esto implica incorporar contenidos culturales adecuados y métodos de enseñanza para fomentar el desarrollo de las habilidades de comunicación intercultural de los estudiantes.

A pesar de la importancia reconocida de la cultura como un componente esencial en los materiales de enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), todavía existe una concepción errónea sobre el tipo de cultura a incluir y el propósito de su inclusión. Mientras que la cultura superficial y festiva tiende a ser la percepción preponderante, el propósito de enseñar cultura a menudo se considera principalmente centrado en aumentar el conocimiento cultural de los estudiantes y facilitar el aprendizaje del idioma, en lugar de ser un medio para desarrollar las actitudes y habilidades interculturales de los aprendices.

Con escaso conocimiento previo sobre el potencial de los libros de texto y profesores de EFL palestinos sobre este tema, esta investigación tiene como objetivo proporcionar la base para mejorar los materiales de enseñanza de EFL palestinos y el desarrollo profesional de los educadores. Lo hace evaluando el potencial tanto de los libros de texto de EFL como de los profesores para promover la IC. Además, esta investigación busca mejorar el desarrollo de la IC explorando el impacto de la exposición internacional y la formación intercultural de los profesores.

Para lograr estos objetivos, la investigación utiliza un enfoque de métodos mixtos en el que se recopilaron y analizaron datos cuantificables y no cuantificables para proporcionar una visión holística de los elementos culturales de los libros de texto. Asimismo, este estudio incorporó una

encuesta nacional para recopilar datos de una muestra amplia, compuesta por 360 profesores de EFL palestinos, seleccionados mediante el método de muestreo aleatorio estratificado. Los datos recopilados fueron sometidos a análisis estadístico descriptivo, incluyendo medias y desviaciones estándar, así como análisis estadístico inferencial, concretamente el test de Chi-cuadrado de independencia.

Los resultados muestran que la cultura se incorporó de manera desorganizada y ocasional a los libros de texto de EFL sin recibir una consideración considerable. Además, se revela que no se tuvo en cuenta el desarrollo de la IC al crear los libros de texto, ya que los aspectos culturales incorporados tenían como objetivo aumentar el conocimiento cultural de los estudiantes en lugar de sus habilidades de comunicación intercultural. Los resultados relativos a la IC de los profesores revelan que, aunque los profesores de EFL palestinos tienen un conocimiento adecuado de la IC, sus actitudes hacia la IC y las prácticas de enseñanza cultural son moderadas. Además, la abrumadora mayoría de los profesores carece de exposición internacional y formación adecuada en IC. Así también, el conocimiento y las prácticas de los profesores en IC están correlacionados positivamente con la exposición internacional y la formación en IC. Sin embargo, las actitudes de los profesores solo se correlacionaron con los contactos internacionales, sin asociación con experiencias y formación en IC en el extranjero.

Los resultados de la investigación arrojan luz sobre el impacto de los libros de texto y los educadores en la adquisición de la IC por parte de los estudiantes. En este sentido, esta tesis proporciona la primera evaluación integral de libros de texto y los profesores de EFL en términos de su potencial para promover la IC en Palestina, ya que abarca toda la serie de libros de texto de *Inglés para Palestina* (Editorial Macmillan), explorando tanto los aspectos culturales cuantitativos como cualitativos mediante un enfoque de métodos mixtos que incluye encuestas a profesores de

EFL palestinos de todo el país. En consecuencia, esta investigación proporciona conocimientos valiosos para potenciar la competencia intercultural. Estas mejoras pueden influir directamente en el éxito de los estudiantes en las interacciones interculturales.

Palabras clave: *cultura, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), competencia intercultural, profesores de EFL palestinos, serie de libros de texto Inglés para Palestina*

Declaration

I, Jehad Faraj, hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, carried out at Rovira i Virgili University for the Degree of Doctor in Humanistic Studies. The current thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged. Some parts of this thesis have been previously published or are in the process to be published in:

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Considering that from elementary through secondary school, children spend an average of 15,000 hours at school (Rutter et al., 1979), it is no wonder why textbooks and teachers—among other school factors—are considered to be a major force in shaping students' cognitive, affective and behavioral development. It is, therefore, essential to make sure that students are in safe hands, which requires constant improvement of textbooks' content and development of teacher professionalism.

Due to the increase in internationalization, the need for preparing students to live and interact in a multicultural world has become one of students' most in-demand skills (Griffith, 2016). Clearly, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks and teachers, in particular, can play a big part in developing this skill, since they aim to teach students the English language, which is a tool for facilitating communication between different people from different cultural backgrounds. Prompted by these concerns, this study aims to investigate EFL textbooks and teachers' potential for promoting students' acquisition of *Intercultural Competence* (IC), which is defined as “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009, p. 7).

The emergence of IC as a concept came in response to the increasing role of English as an international language across the entire world, which according to Crystal (2003) makes English a global language *par excellence*. The new situation is best described by Strevens (1992), who claims that “most ESL/EFL today relates to NNS [non-native speakers] populations requiring English for their internal purposes, or for dealing with other NNS populations, without the presence or intervention of native speakers” (p. 41). Accordingly, IC seems to be the right response to this

situation, since its development extends beyond merely acquiring cultural knowledge related to English-speaking countries, to involve cultivating a range of intercultural abilities, skills, and attitudes that empower EFL students to engage successfully in cross-cultural interactions, irrespective of the nationalities of their interlocutors.

1.1 Personal Motivation

My interest in the topic of intercultural competence grew out of a long discovery journey of self and other. Growing up in a country where traveling abroad seemed like a distant dream, I was haunted by nostalgic stories about life in the West, as told by people who had experienced it firsthand. This led me to believe that moving to the West was the key to a happy life, as my perception of life there was predominantly positive. However, it was only through traveling and direct interactions with internationals that I developed a realistic perception of life there.

My journey to the West began almost fifteen years ago, with Spain being my first destination. During that time, I was surprised to find that many of the students I met were primarily interested in discussing fashion and tourist attractions, whereas I was still trapped in images of the ongoing uprising in Palestine at that time, which hindered my ability to genuinely interact with them. One memorable encounter involved a colleague who approached me with a hesitant inquiry about the Islamic Resistance Movement (known by its acronym ' Hamas'). Sounding apologetic, he said, "Sorry for asking you, but I wonder if you can tell me about Hamas". At that point in time, I was not fully aware of how negatively the organization had been viewed there. However, the look of shock on his face following my response revealed his unquestionable beliefs about the organization. I frankly replied, " Hamas is a response to the Israeli occupation of our land and they represent the aspirations and hopes of my people". The man refrained from providing a response to my statement, possibly because of the assertive manner in which I conveyed it, which left little

room for further discussion. His reaction made me curious about the type of stories he had heard, which formed his perception about Hamas. Equally, it prompted me to reflect on the straightforward manner in which I had responded to his question.

After Spain, I traveled to the USA, where I learnt my first lesson about the ‘dangers of a single story’, to put it in Adichie’s words (2009), and how a single story can support different narratives if told differently. I remember attending a presentation about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict when I arrived there and was taken aback when the presenter shared a story about an Israeli settler who, during the 2014 war on Gaza, shared “his” water with a Palestinian farmer who happened to have his land near the settler’s land. The presenter concluded that this incident could lead to further cooperation at various levels between the two peoples. After having asked to comment on the presentation, I told the presenter that I, as a Palestinian, knew very well that the conflict was not about water and by telling such a story she was intentionally or unintentionally giving an incomplete if not distorted picture of the conflict. I further explained that if she wanted, I would be willing to share other stories about the conflict. My comments exposed me to a verbal attack from a fanatically pro-Israeli attendee.

Quoting the words of Mourid Barghouti, “if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with ‘secondly’. Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story” (1997, as cited in Adichie, 2009, 10:02), Adichie suggests that presenting an incomplete story would result in an entirely different narrative. In a like manner, our presenter friend has chosen to introduce the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with a story of an Israeli settler who is sharing “his” water with a Palestinian farmer, leaving other more significant stories untold.

It was through these experiences that I discovered how one-sided narratives could shape false perceptions of others. These incomplete or distorted stories can be found in books, on TV, on

the internet, and in the words of ordinary people. Textbooks and teachers, especially those concerned with teaching foreign languages, can play a significant role in presenting multi-faceted stories of self and other. Including only positive and superficial narratives can lead to misunderstandings and exclude the richness of the many facets of the world's cultures. In brief, I think what makes this topic so special to me is the fact that it gives me, as a Palestinian English teacher, the chance to guide my students on a long discovery journey of self and other, similar to the one I went through, though with fewer hardships.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of culture as an essential component in EFL teaching materials, there remains a misconception about the type of culture to include and the purpose of its inclusion. While superficial and positive culture is often the default perception of culture (Hinkel, 1999; Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013; Paige et al., 2003), the purpose of teaching culture is often viewed as primarily focused on increasing students' stock of cultural information and facilitating language learning, rather than as a means to develop learners' intercultural attitudes and skills (Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005). This limited perspective restricts the potential of EFL teaching materials and teachers to foster intercultural competence.

Furthermore, current research suggests that EFL textbooks are not adequately designed to enhance IC. This is because they often focus on superficial aspects, such as tourist attractions, (Aliakbari, 2004; Espinar & Rodríguez, 2019), fail to provide authentic international and intercultural components (García, 2005; Nguyen, 2011; Pasand et al., 2018), and give special coverage of the cultures of the main English-speaking countries, sparing limited space for other international cultures (Gholami Pasand & Ghasemi, 2018; Ponte, 2019; Shin et al., 2011; Su, 2016). Similarly, research indicates that EFL teachers may not possess comprehensive competences in all

dimensions of IC, such as cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Gu, 2015; Sercu, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005). Consequently, learners may not receive the necessary exposure, guidance, and opportunities to develop their IC.

Zooming in on the Palestinian context, the existing studies investigating IC are limited in scope, focusing on a few textbooks without comprehensive coverage of entire textbook series. Furthermore, the existent research has primarily focused on intermediate and secondary school textbooks, neglecting the examination of coursebooks designed for primary levels. Similarly, research into EFL teachers' perception and practice of IC is understudied. Only one study, conducted by Abu Alyan (2011), specifically targeted EFL university teachers, overlooking the perspective of schoolteachers.

Consequently, there is a pressing need for a more in-depth analysis of the Palestinian context that takes into account a wider selection of EFL textbooks, especially those written for primary levels. Furthermore, there is a strong need for studies investigating the viewpoints and methods used by EFL schoolteachers regarding IC. These studies will offer insightful information about the state of teaching culture in EFL textbooks in Palestine today and will guide the creation of successful intercultural training programs that support intercultural competence among Palestinian EFL students and teachers.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This dissertation will address two primary research questions, which outline the general objective of the research. To ensure the research questions are measurable and effectively address the main objective, it was necessary to develop a set of sub-research questions. These sub-questions break down the main research questions into specific and focused inquiries, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research objective. By addressing these sub-questions, the

research can systematically investigate various aspects and dimensions related to the main objective, ultimately enhancing the overall findings and insights of the study.

The sub-questions related to the analysis of EFL textbooks are designed to encompass both quantifiable and non-quantifiable cultural aspects present in the textbooks. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the textbooks' cultural component. Two key factors were considered when formulating these sub-questions.

Firstly, it was important to include all cultural aspects in the textbooks that contribute to the development of intercultural competence (IC). By addressing a range of cultural elements, the analysis can provide insights into how the textbooks promote cultural understanding and sensitivity among EFL learners. Secondly, the assessment of all components of IC, as specified by Byram (1997)—knowledge, attitudes, and skills—was necessary. The sub-questions were designed to examine the extent and quality of cultural content incorporated in the textbooks, thereby evaluating their potential to enhance learners' cultural knowledge, shape positive attitudes, and develop intercultural skills.

Based on these considerations, the first main research question and its sub-questions were formulated as follows:

1. What potential do the *English for Palestine* textbook series have for promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence?
 - a. To what extent is culture treated as an essential element in the syllabus and the linguistic components of the *English for Palestine* textbook series?
 - b. To what extent can the micro and macro cultural representations in the *English for Palestine* textbook series help students form authentic, deep, non-stereotypical, and critical views about their own culture and the target culture?

- c. What international comparisons, mutual representations, and mutual relations are present in the textbooks?
- d. How are the renowned figures in the textbooks represented as regards their nationalities, occupational roles and gender?
- e. How is the cultural component of the textbooks distributed over the three dimensions of culture? How deep and realistic are the international and intercultural topics?
- f. How is the cultural content distributed over the local, target and foreign cultures?
- g. What intercultural contacts are embedded in the textbooks (i.e., their situations, types and the quality of their topics)?
- h. What perspectives and cultural tasks are assimilated in the textbooks?

While the first three sub-questions will be answered through a qualitative analysis of the textbooks in chapter five, the rest of the questions will be answered in chapter six by means of a quantitative analysis. When examined together, all eight sub-questions will help provide evidence to either support or prove the following hypothesis wrong.

H1: The English for Palestine textbook series has the potential for promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence among EFL learners.

Concerning the research part on teachers' IC, another main research question and its sub-questions were formulated as follows:

2. What potential do Palestinian English teachers have for facilitating the development of IC among their students, and how may their effectiveness improve in this area?
 - a. What are the Palestinian EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes and teaching practices related to teaching culture and IC?

- b. What are the Palestinian EFL teachers' levels of international exposure and training in IC?
- c. To what extent can the teachers' current level of IC and culture teaching practices be associated with international exposure and previous training in IC?

The first sub-question was formulated with the intention of assessing all dimensions of intercultural competence (IC), namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. This comprehensive approach ensures a holistic understanding of teachers' IC. Assessing only one dimension without considering the others would result in an incomplete and potentially misleading understanding of teachers' overall level of IC.

The second sub-question was designed to lay the foundation for answering the third sub-question by first having an insight into teachers' differences in terms of their international experiences and intercultural training and then comparing the responses of teachers with different levels of international exposure and intercultural training. By examining the differences between teachers who have had limited international exposure and intercultural training and those who have had extensive international experiences and intercultural training, the research seeks to gain insights into the factors that influence teachers' intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

Based on these three sub-questions, two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H2: Palestinian EFL teachers have the potential to promote the acquisition of IC among their students, demonstrated by their adequate intercultural knowledge, positive attitudes, and effective teaching practices.

H3: International exposure and previous intercultural training affect Palestinian EFL teachers' level of IC, intercultural attitudes, and teaching practices.

1.4 Significance

Investigating the potential of Palestinian EFL textbooks and teachers for promoting intercultural competence holds significant importance because it provides the basis for further enhancement of EFL teaching materials and teachers' professional development. Knowing the status of both EFL textbooks and teachers in terms of their potential for promoting IC serves as a foundation for planning intercultural training programs for teachers as well as proposing the right supplementary materials that could compensate for the lack of appropriate cultural components in the textbooks.

Additionally, the findings can serve as a guiding framework for writers and producers of EFL textbooks, who are required to provide high-quality teaching materials to meet students' current needs. Similarly, the study is also important for teachers, since knowing their own weaknesses enables them to take proactive steps towards enhancing their instructional practices and seek alternative approaches towards teaching culture.

Finally, the research significance could be viewed in terms of the effects of textbooks' content and teachers' professional competencies on student development and competence in cross-cultural communication, which can have an immense impact on fostering intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence at the international level.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter aims to provide the theoretical framework of teaching culture in the EFL classroom. It consists of three main sections. The first section will explore the concept of culture pertaining to TEFL through an elaborate investigation into the definitions of culture as proposed by the main researchers in the EFL field (Atkinson, 1999; Brooks, 1969; Byram, 1992; Debyser, 1968; Lado, 1957; Lewald, 1963; Murphy, 1988; Saville-Troike, 1978). The second section will chronologically present the major discussions that contributed to the development of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. The third section will be exclusively devoted to investigating intercultural competence (IC). Thus, five models of IC (i.e., Arasaratnam, 2006; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Navas et al., 2005) will be discussed to cover all aspects of IC: its components, development phases, interrelated concepts affecting interaction among interlocutors, requirements from interactants involving alteration for achieving competence, and the variables associated with IC.

2.1 Definitions of Culture in Relation to FLT

Essential contributions to the field of teaching culture in the EFL classroom were drawn from anthropology, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (Beaujour, 1969; Byram, 1988; Lewald, 1963; Murphy, 1988). Thus, the field has proven to be interdisciplinary with other related fields. Looking into the most prominent definitions of culture, which were proposed by scholars in the FLT field between the years 1960 and 2020, one can notice that a lot of literature has been written in an attempt to define culture in relation to language.

As an example, Brooks (1969) uses beautiful metaphors to draw attention to the inseparable and complementary connection between language and culture. He portrays the use of language codes, i.e., letters and words, without being accompanied by their cultural dimension, as a “river

bed without water, an engine without fuel, a mannikin without clothes” (p. 320). Based on the previous metaphors, he defines culture as “the way a given people think and believe and live, with special emphasis upon the link between the individual and the total group of which he is a part” (p. 322). Likewise, Lado (1957) refers to culture as “the ways of people” (p.110) and a “structured system of patterned behaviour” (p. 111). Similarly, Debysen (1968) describes culture as the “collective human experience” (p. 2). The writer explains that when humans are taught another “instrument of communication [a foreign language]” (p.2), they need to learn not only the alphabet and the new words, but also the new collective human experience of that language (i.e., the target culture).

Trager (1962), on the other hand, defines culture as “the system of learned and shared behaviour systems (please note — systems of systems) in terms of which the members of a society behave and interact” (p. 135). Based on his definition, we can infer that language is also a cultural system that can be part of a larger one, referred to as culture. Accordingly, culture consists of subsystems that all together form the greater image of a nation or a regional area where people live and interact with each other. This actually can be read clearly in his following explanation:

A language can be said to be a system — learned and shared — of arbitrary vocal symbols in terms of which members of a society communicate. This is very much like the definition of culture. The "arbitrary vocal symbols" are the specific content of this system, and "communicate" is the special term for language behavior and interaction. So it seems that language is a cultural system, one of the systems of which culture as a whole is a patterned arrangement. (Trager, 1962, p. 136)

Other scholars have also stressed the notion of culture as a system that is shared among a specific group of people, which can be called a society. Saville-Troike (1978), for instance, claims

that “culture includes all of the rules for appropriate behavior which are learned by people as a result of being members of the same group or community, and also the values and beliefs which underlie overt behaviors and are themselves shared products of group membership” (p. 5).

Reading through the 1960s and 1970s resources, one can observe that very few writers have dealt with individual cultural differences in the same community. However, there have been a few cases where individual differences were taken into consideration. As an example, Lewald (1963) was one of those few who have foreseen the growing change in the nature of culture, which made it subject to constant change in the years to follow. According to the scholar, culture is no longer considered homogenous. Thus, regional and class variations should be taken into consideration when defining culture. This final notion has brought an early and mature look at culture, which will be subject to further elaboration and research in the next wave of culture definitions starting in the year 1980.

The ninth decade of the twentieth century (i.e., 1980s) witnessed a change in the way English language has been perceived, which, as a result, modified the notion of culture in relation to TEFL studies. As an example of this change, Alptekin (1984) brought up questions related to the different varieties of English around the world (e.g., Indian English). He wonders why the Indian varieties are still considered ineloquent compared to the British variety. Besides, in the same period, it can be observed how the majority of scholars have shifted from defining culture as a collective identity (as seen in Debyser, 1968; Saville-Troike, 1978), to a more realistic definition which takes into consideration the individual and regional variations inside the confines of each culture. Furthermore, Morain (1983) highlights a transformation in the conceptualization of culture. It is no longer solely perceived as a means to define the parameters of a target culture and its influence on language comprehension. Rather, culture has evolved into a dynamic tool aimed at facilitating effective communication and fostering an enriched understanding of diverse cultures.

As an example of how culture was defined in the 1980s, Higgs (1990)¹ describes culture as “a sociological problem-solving device” (p. 79). He further explains that “its [culture] function is to routinize interpersonal relationships and predictable social situations in such a way that the participants do not have to approach every encounter or transaction with other people as unique and demanding of its own unique treatment or solution” (p. 79). Taking this approach as a starting point for the way culture must be taught in the classroom, the writer concludes that for each social situation (e.g., family, friends and formal relations) there must be certain cultural functions, which can be learnt to make students behave in an acceptable way. Based on the definition above, one can witness the focus on the functions of culture without any reference to what Brooks (1968) calls culture with a big C (i.e., fine arts and literature).

Another feature of the notion of culture in this period (i.e., 1980s) is the focus on the differences among different social groups within the same community, which can be found in Murphy's work (1988). His notion expands on the topic of cultural plurality as presented in Lado's work (1964), and takes it to a new level where the differences among the people of the same nation in terms of sexual orientation, religious affiliation, class, age, etc. have become essential components of the definition of culture. He explains:

Within each [nation], several sub-cultures co-exist resulting in multiple, often contradictory points of view. Whether the group is denned in terms of race, religion, region, socio-economic status, sex or age, each individual belongs to many different groups or 'cultures'. Indeed, individual group allegiances may transcend national differences: ethnically diverse members of the same socioeconomic status may have more in common than members of the same ethnic group who vary in socio-economic status. (Murphy, 1988, p. 154)

¹ Note that Higgs' paper was delivered in 1988 at the Official Language Education Conference.

Thus, culture has started to be approached in a different way that entails “making distinctions between collective and singular features” (Murphy, 1988, p. 154) within the same culture. In brief, culture, as it was defined in the 1980s, has included and excluded various notions. While it abandoned absolute homogeneity of culture, it emphasized the presence of individual and regional differences within the confines of the same culture, which led to cultural comparisons between various groups within the same nation (e.g., waged women vs. unwaged women).

The exclusion of homogeneity and collectivity as a characteristic of cultures has continued to be a focal interest during the 1990s with the notion of *fluidity* and *constant change* being added to the definition of culture. The description of culture as dynamic has been shown immensely in the works of Atkinson (1999), Byram (1992), Clifford (1992), Crozet and Liddicoat (1999), Kubota (1999), Oxford (1995), Strauss and Quinn (1997), and Spack, (1997). In fact, Atkinson (1999) has succeeded in summing up the most prominent terms that have been investigated in the 1990s to reach a better understanding of culture in relation to FLT. These terms are “*identity, hybridity, essentialism, power, difference, agency, discourse, resistance, and contestation*” (Atkinson, 1999, pp. 626-627).

To understand these aspects more, we should further look into the definitions of culture that have been proposed in the 1990s. To start with, Atkinson (1999) confirms Clifford's (1992) notion of culture as an unbounded entity by describing culture as “traveling—unrooted, permeable and permeating, ever-developing and changing, and inherently unstable” (Atkinson, 1999, p. 632). In a similar way, Strauss and Quinn (1997) describe culture as a “fuzzy concept” that is formed in accordance to “people's (more-or-less) shared experiences”, which cause each individual to be a unique entity that can be described as “a junction point for an infinite number of partially overlapping cultures” (as cited in Atkinson, 1999, p. 637).

Similarly, Jayasuriya (1990) defines culture as “an interrelated configuration of archaic, residual and emergent cultures” (as cited in Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, p. 114). The writer then elaborates on the way this culture is formed by saying: “the manifest culture revealed in individual behavior is selective, and not necessarily representative of a historical cultural tradition in its abstract form” (Jayasuriya, 1990 as cited in Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, p. 115). The definition assures the importance of cultural practices in the past and their effects on present patterns of culture as well as the emergent ones that form newer cultural practices. However, these new practices are not necessarily formed in a logical way nor are they a perfect duplication of the past practices. This is what Atkinson (1999) confirms by assuring that “individuals frequently act in ways that modify, resist, or ignore cultural norms” (p. 633). Thus, the dynamic characteristic of culture is clearly inferred from this definition and, most importantly, formed as a result of the individual’s growth and multiple experiences first, without denying the influence of past and present affiliations.

On the other hand, Oxford (1995) suggests that the culture taught in the foreign language (FL) classroom consists of two sides (i.e., the light side and the dark side). By light culture, he means learning about joyful stuff like traditional dances, food, etc. In contrast, the dark side depicts the sad reality of a particular culture, such as stories about abuse, sexism and discrimination, etc. This actually brings up an important aspect of culture that has to do with politics and issues related to discrimination and minorities, which again poses the question of what culture to teach in the classroom.

In the 2000s set of literature, culture has started to be looked at as a ‘process’ rather than a ‘product’. Atkinson (2004) clarifies that products are the results of cultural practices, which range from everyday rituals and practices to arts and concrete cultural monuments. On the other hand,

looking at culture as a process includes thinking about culture as a series of actions that produce certain results, which are the previously mentioned products (Atkinson, 2004, p. 282).

Similarly, Spencer-Oatey (2008) seems to support Atkinson's viewpoint. He defines culture as "a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (p. 3). This way of viewing culture has come as a reaction to various calls by numerous scholars who, according to Atkinson (2004), criticized the traditional view of culture as racist because it encourages the formation of stereotypes about other cultures.

As for the way culture has been defined in the 2010s set of readings, one witnesses a confirmation of previously mentioned ideas about culture, which are clearly stated in this sample definition of culture provided by Kramersch (2015): "Cultures are portable schemas of interpretation of actions and events that people have acquired through primary socialization and which change over time as people migrate or enter into contact with people who have been socialized differently" (p. 409). This sample definition highlights the process of culture formation, which takes a dynamic nature as individuals start their everlasting journey of socialization with people from their own and foreign cultures. It also views culture as a set of contexts, which people use for the interpretation of certain actions.

Scanning through the previous series of definitions it is clear that there has been a lack of consensus on what culture is, as stressed by Williams (1976), who refers to culture as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (P. 87). However, there has been clear progress in the way culture has been defined since the late 1950s. This evolutionary process started with a view of culture as inseparable from its language (Brooks, 1969), and a collective identity of the people it resembles (Trager, 1962; Saville-Troike, 1978). Later in time, culture

started being studied in relation to enhancing intercultural communication (Morain, 1983), which required a more realistic definition that would include a reference to individual differences and sub-cultures within the same cultural community (Murphy, 1988; Robinson, 1985). Thus, culture has become defined as an ever-changing entity (Clifford, 1992), which would be later referred to as a 'process' instead of a 'product' by Atkinson (2004) and Spencer-Oatey (2008), the thing that stresses the ongoing development in individuals' cultures. In the next section, the most prominent issues in relation to culture in foreign language teaching will be discussed in accordance with a chronological order that extends from the 1960s to the 2010s.

2.2 Chronological Narrative of the Development of Culture Teaching

Going through the most important literature in the field of culture in FLT, one can make certain that there has been an overwhelming consensus on the necessity and importance of teaching culture in the FL classroom. However, earlier models of culture teaching have been noted to refer only to teaching certain cultural aspects of the target culture by way of comparing and contrasting its features to their counterparts in the source culture. As for the later models of culture teaching, they were noted to aim at teaching cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes which help EFL learners to interact with a broader audience (i.e., international) than the native speakers of English. To discover more about the nature of culture teaching, this section will follow a chronological narrative that will cover the most prominent discussions that had been going on from the early 1960s to the late 2010s.

2.2.1 Teaching Culture in the 1960s and 1970s

Since the 1960s, the teaching and learning of culture have been viewed as a source of self-enrichment and understanding (Beaujour, 1969; Lado, 1962), which, according to Lado (1962), can be achieved through education rather than enculturation. The scholar clarifies by saying that

enculturation is “those activities that lead the individual to have the same self-image as the consensus of his culture and to act and react according to the overt cultural facts without awareness of the discrepancies” (p. 125). On the other hand, education refers to “those activities that lead to an understanding of that part of culture that is not recognized in the general self-image and to the understanding of those elements which appear in the self-image but not in the overt culture itself” (Lado, 1962, p. 125).

In addition, it has been argued that learning the target culture is found to help in understanding the foreign language better and getting more fluent at expressing oneself in the target language (Brooks, 1969; Seelye, 1968). An interesting example of how that can happen is provided by Lado (1962). The scholar explains how some body parts in Spanish have two names depending on whether they refer to a human body part or that of an animal. For instance, *cuello* means a human neck, whereas the neck of an animal is *pescuezo*. This exemplifies a cultural difference that does not exist in English. Accordingly, it becomes clear that each culture has its own ways of expressing itself and relating to the surrounding. Therefore, language teachers should provide their students with the necessary cultural explanations in such cases, which will surely help them make links and consequently make learning much easier and enjoyable.

Another thought-provoking discussion that complements the earlier discourse has been raised by several researchers, including Nababan (1974), Saville-Troike (1978), and Trivedi (1978). Their discussion revolves around the concept that translation equivalents in different languages may not precisely convey the same object or notion that they are intended to denote. In this context, Catford (1965) says, “Meaning . . . is a property of a language. An SL [Source Language] text has an SL meaning, and a TL [Target Language] text has a TL meaning. . . .” (p. 35). Interestingly, the research findings in relation to this issue (i.e., translation equivalents) are opposite to what one might suppose. According to Thompson et al. (2020), the classification of a

word into concrete or abstract has no effect whatsoever on making equivalent words from different languages parallel in meaning. However, it was noticed that the more culturally related languages are, the more their translation equivalents would be parallel in meaning (Thompson et al., 2020). These findings consolidate the notion of the importance of understanding the foreign culture to grasp the exact meaning of foreign words.

Scholars in the 1970s, such as Weiss (1971) and Lafayette (1978), have initiated another discussion on the type of culture that is most useful for EFL students. In Weiss's (1971) article, which addresses teachers of German as a foreign language, he emphasizes that language teachers should behave as interpreters of culture. He contends that arranging a cultural event for FL students where they join the traditional German *schuhplattler* dance does not seem to be helpful for enhancing their communication skills. In contrast, learning about everyday German life should be the target instead. Thus, he stresses the need for caution when choosing the appropriate cultural topics to tackle in class. The proposed topics include geography and the variant regional differences in the target country, family affairs, city structure, public transportation, and politics (Weiss, 1971).

Likewise, Lafayette (1978) distinguishes between two types of culture teaching. While the first type aims at helping students recognize the conventional cultural aspects of a certain country, which only include perceptible facts (e.g., geographical and historical facts), the second type goes beyond recognition of mere facts to tackle skills of evaluation and interpretation, which are classified as higher-order thinking skills.

In summary, during this two-decade period, the teaching of culture was regarded as a means of personal enrichment and enhanced understanding (Beaujour, 1969; Lado, 1962), along with its role in improving comprehension and fluency in the target language (Brooks, 1969; Seelye, 1968). Furthermore, scholars explored the nature of the culture to be taught, emphasizing that the aim of

cultural instruction should go beyond the mere recognition of cultural information to developing skills of interpretation and evaluation (Weiss, 1971; Lafayette, 1978).

2.2.2 Teaching Culture in the 1980s and 1990s

Although English in the 1980s has become referred to as an international language, cultural competence was still viewed in terms of the acquisition of Anglo-American culture, with little attention paid to other English-speaking contexts, such as India. However, arguments about the dominance of Anglo-American culture in the EFL classroom have started to gain momentum (George, 1981; Alptekin, 1984), with a central emphasis on addressing the needs of EFL learners. These discussions of the 1980s laid the groundwork for further arguments carried out by researchers during the 1990s. The subsequent discussions were built on issues related to the new status of English as a lingua franca (Kachru, 1992), the use of native speakers as a model of excellence (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; FitzGerald, 1999; Widdowson, 1994), cultural authenticity (Kramsch, 1993), and individuality and fluidity as important features of culture (Atkinson, 1999; Spack, 1997).

Students' needs concerning future interaction and use of English have posed several questions on the credibility of some practices in the EFL classroom that claim to enhance intercultural communication. To start with, one of the most interesting discussions that works as perfect evidence of the changing status of Standard English in this period is the discussion (brought up by Smith & Rafiqzad, 1979) on the exclusion of the English spoken by non-native speakers in the teaching of listening skills. They wonder why the native English accent (i.e., British and American varieties) should be taken as a model in the classroom for teaching listening if it does not help in enhancing intercultural communication (as cited in Alptekin, 1984).

A similar discussion was presented by Krasnick (1982), who stresses that “ESL is always ESP, even if the “special purpose” is as broad as coping with a new sociocultural environment” (p. 47). This statement emphasizes the importance of taking into consideration the particularity of each teaching context and brings up questions about the usefulness of teaching British culture when EFL students need to use English in another context where English is not spoken as a first language.

In addition, universal cultural characteristics, not only culture-specific values, have been touched on continuously. Loew (1981 as cited in Allen, 1985) refers to the differences among the same group of people of the same culture or of different cultures according to their sex, age and socioeconomic status. Thus, waged women that belong to a specific culture can be compared with unwaged women of the same culture. In brief, comparisons are no longer limited to contrasting international cultures. This can be considered as a step ahead towards discussing individuality as a characteristic of the next decade where culture has become approached in relation to individual differences.

Authenticity of cultural content had its own share of the discussion in this period. In this context, Nostrand (1989) emphasizes the importance of not only including authentic cultural texts, but also of using them in authentic contexts. To understand this, Kramsch (1988) gives an example, which includes using a real German menu to teach German. In this regard, she assures that:

The cultural authenticity of menus derives from their being embedded in a host of social and symbolic relations in the C2-price of food, taxes and tips, restaurant going habits of customers, food and drug regulations, waiter's wages, trade unions, standard of living, the rituals and metaphors of dining out-that all have their counterparts in the native culture. (p. 84)

Thus, you might actually be using an authentic material when using a real German menu. However, if you are not using it in an authentic context, you still have not met the requirements of cultural authenticity.

The fact that English has become considered a lingua franca has brought up to the surface questions of why and with whom to use English after having spent years of studying it. The new situation is best described by Strevens (1992), who claims that “most ESL/EFL today relates to NNS [non-native speakers] populations requiring English for their internal purposes, or for dealing with other NNS populations, without the presence or intervention of native speakers” (p. 41). This fact has given rise to questioning and denouncing the native speaker’s act of hegemony over English and the use of Standard English as a model against which learners of English should polish their English. In this context, Widdowson (1994) denounces claiming property over English by native speakers. According to him, these people are claiming the right to preserve English from any grammatical blemishes that are the result of misuse by others who speak it as a second or foreign language. He resumes his discussion by describing the preservers of English as the ‘gatekeepers’ who keep the outsiders (i.e., people who have not acquired Standard English properly) far away from the society institutions controlled by the former. He adds that Standard English has failed to serve the purpose the gatekeepers are claiming it should serve, which is facilitating international communication. Instead, it has become a means for guaranteeing “the security of this community [i.e., the ‘gatekeepers’ community] and its institutions” (Widdowson, 1994, p. 381).

He ends the discussion by asserting that English as an international language has become the property of a wider community formed of international research institutions with its research staff. This view has received support from Kachru (1992), who confirms that “an accident of birth does not necessarily make one user more communicatively "competent" than another who may

have a wider range of experience, larger vocabulary, and better "feel" for language use. . . ." (p. 337).

Neustupny (1985) consolidates the same view with the fact that today's job requirements that demand English learners (i.e., future workers) to mobile worldwide not only in the English native countries requires them to master a wider competence than the competence needed to deal with people from the target culture (as cited in FitzGerald, 1999). This wider competence enables EFL learners to be intercultural communicators who are able to:

operate their linguistic competence and their sociolinguistic awareness of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, in order to manage interaction across cultural boundaries, to anticipate misunderstandings caused by difference in values, meanings and beliefs, and thirdly, to cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands of engagement with otherness. (Byram, 1995 as cited in Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, pp. 115-116)

Accordingly, the need for a broader competence than both the linguistic competence and the communicative competence is also evident if we are to consider the national and individual differences among English learners alongside differences in relation to their age, learning motives, etc. These factors, as Byram (1997) argues, make the creation of various syllabi a must to serve and suit different learners' needs. It is impossible to serve all the individual needs in the classroom though. However, teachers should do their best to consider individuality and try their best to treat their students as individual entities.

For the same reason (i.e., EFL learners' multinational backgrounds and individuality), Kramsch (1993) finds it impossible for foreign language teachers to use C1 as a reference to compare and contrast linguistic and cultural aspects from the second language and culture to their counterparts in the first language/culture. She explains that "the consensus [cultural homogeneity]

they used to take for granted, the fixed point from which to view the foreign culture has become an illusion that demands to be looked at with the same critical distance as the foreign culture itself” (Kramersch, 1993, p. 49). Spack (1997b) confirms Kramersch’s idea of cultural heterogeneity and takes it to another level where she urges “teachers and researchers . . . to view students as individuals, not as members of a cultural group” (as cited in Atkinson, 1999, p. 630).

As for Atkinson (1999), although he stresses individuality as a characteristic of human beings, he also confirms that it does not come into existence out of the blue; that is individuality is largely affected by a long process of social interaction. His words imply the role of multiple experiences in an individual’s life in forming their national identity. He uses Rosaldo’s (1989) words to say that “even when they appear most subjective, thought and feeling are always culturally shaped and influenced by one’s biography, social situation, and historical context” (as cited in Atkinson, 1999, p. 642). In other words, although individuals belong to certain social groups, they always succeed in shaping their own personalities that are as numerous as the individuals themselves. This fact, however, does not overlook the influence of individuals’ cultures on shaping their unique personalities. In fact, as noted by Atkinson (1999), social group membership and identity are ever-changing. Thus, culture is considered as a dynamic and ever-developing notion.

In the same vein, national identities have also been reevaluated in the 1990s period. Many scholars have touched on the idea of self and otherness in relation to new philosophical views, which break the conventional representation of culture that portrays the individual’s culture as a duplicate of their national identity (See Byram 1992, 1997; Holliday, 1999; Kramersch, 1993). In this context, Byram (1992) comments that “through a knowledge of both self and other that full communication can be successful. I need to know how others see me as well as how I see others, if we are to communicate *with* each other and not just communicate messages *to* each other” (p. 12).

An interesting discussion in this context was brought up by Kramersch (1993). She proposed looking at both cultures (i.e., native and target cultures) with critical eyes that see beyond the informational knowledge about one's culture and the others', which has become a necessity in view of the recent developments in our globalized world. She comments:

The recent revival of nationalism, and as, at the same time, national identities are being questioned around the world, the temptation is great to view culture only in terms of national traits: the French do this, Germans do that. However, traditional questions like 'what does it mean to be French/to be German?' become increasingly difficult to answer considering the growing multiethnicity and multiculturalism of French and German societies. Not that national characteristics are unimportant, but they cannot be adduced without further specification of other cultural factors such as age, gender, regional origin, ethnic background, and social class. National traits are but one of the many aspects of a person's 'culture'. (Kramersch, 1993, p. 206)

Similarly, Holliday (1999) initiates a similar discussion by contrasting two approaches to culture: the large culture approach versus the small culture approach. Whereas the former approach stands for the conventional representation of culture that is based on the notions of ethnicity, religion, nationalism and internationalism; the small culture approach looks into the cultures of smaller social entities away from racial and national dimensions (Holliday, 1999). An example of a social grouping that exhibits a small culture can be the staff members of a certain school who share among themselves a specific culture that is exhibited through their cohesive behaviors and relations. The difference between *large culture* and *small culture* is made clear through the following quotation:

In the large culture approach, culture learning tends to be 'other' or 'foreign' directed. To use Schutz' terminology, the stranger focuses learning on one, predefined, 'target' ethnic,

national or international culture within which she or he must operate. In contrast, in the small culture approach, culture learning will focus on searching for, demarcating and observing the interaction between several cultures within a target scenario. . . . Moreover, this learning of culture will not necessarily have anything to do with ethnic, national or international difference. (Holliday, 1999, pp. 259-260)

The writer then clarifies further by stressing the importance of differentiating between the terms 'sub-culture' and 'small culture'. According to him, as long as any notion of culture makes any ethnic or national references, it will not be considered as *small culture*. The term *sub-culture*, on the other hand, "seems to be essentially a large culture concept because it implies something within and subservient to a particular large ethnic, national or international culture" (Holliday, 1999, pp. 238-239). Consequently, the writer stresses the importance of viewing *small culture* as a totally independent notion of *large culture* and *sub-culture*.

According to Holliday, promoting the notion of culture as 'large culture' can be dangerous as this can encourage labelling the world peoples with stereotypical categories based on their race and national affiliations. Holliday (1999) assures that these labels have been used as an excuse for exercising domination on weak nations by other bigger and stronger nations. In this context, it is worth mentioning the use of the terms 'trusteeship'/'mandate' to humanize occupation of other countries. Thus, instead of referring to occupiers as occupiers, they were referred to as the ones who will take those countries by hand to make them able to run their affairs as civilized nations as soon as the trusteeship period comes to an end (e.g., British mandate over Palestine).

In summary, the 1980s and 1990s marked a period of critical examination of the dominance of Anglo-American culture in the EFL field. In addition, this era emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of EFL learners (George, 1981; Alptekin, 1984), questioned the use of native speakers as exclusive models of excellence (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; FitzGerald, 1999;

Widdowson, 1994), advocated for cultural authenticity (Kramsch, 1993), and highlighted the significance of individuality and fluidity as essential characteristics of contemporary cultures (Atkinson, 1999; Spack, 1997).

2.2.3 Teaching Culture in the 2000s and 2010s

The literature reviewed in the 2000s and 2010s continued to emphasize similar perspectives on culture as those proposed in the previous two decades. It maintained a focus on portraying culture as dynamic and ever-changing (Atkinson, 2004; Levy, 2007), while also acknowledging its multi-faceted nature (Hames-Garcia, 2003; Tudor, 2001). Furthermore, it delved into various issues related to cultural instruction in the EFL classroom, including the complexities of selecting which aspects of culture to teach, and the significant role of power dynamics in shaping interactions between interlocutors. The literature also explored the construction of stereotypes as a consequence of Western hegemony over smaller nations, and examined how these distorted perceptions can either be reinforced or challenged through EFL teaching practices.

To start with, a noteworthy discussion emerged from Risager's (2006) exploration of the relationship between language and culture. Contrary to the traditional argument, which portrays language and culture as inseparable, Risager (2006) confirms that in the case of a lingua franca like the English language, language and culture become in fact separable. She justifies her argument by referring to the multiple uses of English by various international speakers who have succeeded in gearing the language to serve new cultural meanings that are in accordance with the new contexts where the language is being used (as cited in Baker, 2009). However, it must be emphasized that this suggestion is only applicable in the case of English because it is used as a lingua franca.

In addition, the discussion related to heterogeneity as a feature of culture was taken to another level with Scollon and Scollon (2001) proposing the terms *discourse* and *interdiscourse*

communication as alternatives to the concept of *intercultural communication* (as cited in Baker, 2009). This proposal rejects what the term *intercultural* implies of people from different countries coming in contact without sufficient attention being paid to the differences among people of the same nation who also communicate using English. The same idea has made Pennycook (2007) question the validity of Kachru's Model of Concentric Circles (1985), which, according to Pennycook, paid no attention to the linguistic differences that exist in various regions of the same country. Thus, the various varieties of English spoken in India, for instance, are considered one variety when they are in fact distinct from each other (as cited in Baker, 2009).

Furthermore, Kramersch (2006) stressed the need for another kind of competence alongside the communicative competence. She argues that in today's world people need not only the linguistic knowledge and communicative strategies to become successful communicators, but also the knowledge of "what they [i.e., others] remember from the past, what they imagine and project onto the future, and how they position themselves in the present" (p. 251). This knowledge, combined with knowledge of self, form what Kramersch calls *symbolic competence*, a term that has been used to refer to the ability to make what Ashworth (2004) calls 'hermeneutics' based on one's knowledge of what words imply when used in various contexts.

To clarify even more, Kramersch uses an example in an interview conducted in relation to her book *Language as Symbolic Competence*. She says that different people would refer to *protests*, for instance, as 'demonstrations', or 'riots' based on their different personal beliefs. The word choice expresses what she calls "a category of social relations that indicates either solidarity or power or both" (Cambridge University Press - Academic, 2020). Thus, the ability to choose the right word in the right context and the ability to understand the others' ideology based on their choice of words counts as a competence that makes you a better intercultural communicator.

Kumaravadivelu (2008) illuminated the active role of EFL learners in constructing their own culture while engaging with both native and target cultures. According to the author, EFL students follow a selective approach to choose from both cultures what suits their individual personalities and leave what is unsuitable for them. This selective process results in what is referred to by Kramersch (1993, 2009) as 'third place' or 'third culture'. Kovács (2017) defines this concept as "a neutral state which allows learners to reflect on the target language culture and also on their own" (pp. 80-81). Crozet and Liddicoat (1999), on the other hand, say that "the ability to find this third place is at the core of intercultural competence" (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 134). Thus, EFL learners must demonstrate "a willingness to learn *from* other cultures, not just *about* them. Learning *about* other cultures may lead to cultural literacy; it is learning *from* other cultures that will lead to cultural liberty" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 237).

Additionally, the content and nature of culture included in EFL textbooks were discussed in relation to their quality. In this regard, Gomez Rodríguez (2015) refers to two types of culture, i.e., 'surface culture' and 'deep culture'. Hinkel (2001 as cited in Gomez Rodríguez, 2015) describes surface culture as the form of culture that is easily noticed, such as products, artifacts, and customs associated with a particular country (e.g., movies, architecture, and traditions). As opposed to surface culture, deep culture reflects the "invisible meanings associated with a region, a group of people, or subcultures that reflect their own particular sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values" (Gomez Rodríguez, 2015, p. 168).

An example of teaching deep culture in the TEFL classroom can be manifested in teaching students about the Israeli Arabs, who make almost 20% of the Israeli population. Including a text or sparking a discussion on the challenges they face as a minority can equip students with critical views and enhance their intercultural awareness. However, teaching them about the Arabic traditional food and language in Israel can still be considered as surface culture. Even though this

topic touched on marginalized people, it failed to draw the attention to a controversy issue. The reason why teaching deep culture in class should be promoted is the fact that no culture can be fixed these days (Greenblatt,1995; Levy, 2007).

Culture teaching has been also viewed as regards power and dominance. In his book *Intercultural Communication and Ideology*, Holliday (2011) looks at culture in relation to ideology. He describes the West as the central ideology, which forms the dominant and prevalent understandings of culture that are “constructed by political interest” (p. 2). The process through which the West constructs these perceptions of culture, according to the writer, is called *othering*. Othering a specific culture goes through certain steps that include contrasting the other (i.e., non-Western cultures) to self (i.e., the West) by demonizing the other culture. This process of demonization is carried out through highlighting certain negative stereotypes, which work as a justification of the attack. According to the writer, the response from the demonized culture is usually either acceptance of or defiance to this distorted image, which has been used as a justification for hegemony over the stereotyped nation under the name of helping “primitive” nations to reach civilization (Holliday, 2011).

To reverse this reality, the writer stresses the importance of giving up the essentialist view of culture, which views culture as a homogeneous national entity, and taking on a critical cosmopolitan approach to culture instead. This new approach calls for the recognition of the cultural definitions of the marginalized non-West. It also takes the ever-changing nature of culture into consideration. As a practical step to move forward to achieve the cosmopolitan approach, the writer opposes presenting cultures as opposite entities. In other words, the act of defining certain cultures as either individualistic or collectivist, for instance, does nothing but promote stereotypic thinking of other cultures, which would not have been the case if we were not exposed to these

imagined differences in the first place. Therefore, exposing students to such essentialist view of culture has been found to block other possibilities of perceiving other.

Similarly, Liddicoat (2013) has approached intercultural relationships in relation to power. According to Liddicoat, based on their status and power, interlocutors choose to be participants, ambassadors, observers, or non-participant subjects. Whereas participants are those interlocutors who engage with people from different countries using their linguistic and cultural skills, ambassadors use others' languages and cultures to pass on their own views and culture. Observers and non-participants, on the other hand, play minor roles in intercultural communication that are limited to being aware of intercultural differences (as the case with observers) to no involvement of any type in such differences as they lack the linguistic and cultural skills to do so.

The author explains that “groups with more power are more likely to be positioned either as observers or non-participants in relationships with those who have less power, while groups of roughly equal power will be more likely to have participatory relationships” (Liddicoat, 2013, p. 216). An example of that is the use of the Arabic language in Israel, which even though it is considered as an official language there, still Jewish Israelis do not consider mastering it as a priority. Thus, their fluency in Arabic is limited to swear words, without enough attention paid to mastering other linguistic areas of the language. As for the other side, which is the less advantaged one (i.e., the Palestinian minority), almost every one of them can speak Hebrew (i.e., the language of the majority) fluently.

Given the discussions presented above, one can witness the change in the issues discussed by scholars over the years from the 1960s to the 2010s. The earliest readings emphasized the need for teaching culture to improve students' fluency in the use of the foreign language (Brooks, 1969; Seelye, 1968). Subsequent literature identified the need to revise the cultural content in EFL textbooks (Weiss, 1971; Lafayette, 1978), and stressed the importance of gearing TEFL to serve

students' various needs. Additional issues emerged, including the authenticity of cultural content and context (Nostrand, 1989; Kramersch, 1988; Kramersch, 1993), questioning the use of native speakers as the sole model of excellence (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; FitzGerald, 1999; Widdowson, 1994), and recognizing individuality and fluidity as key aspects of modern culture (Atkinson, 1999; Spack, 1997). In the last two decades, scholars delved into the process through which individuals construct their own cultural maturity, which has been described as selective and constantly evolving (Kramersch, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Kovacs, 2017). They also looked into culture in relation to politics (Singh and Doherty, 2004; Byram and Feng, 2004) and power (Liddicoat, 2013) as generating forces of stereotypes.

2.3 Models of Intercultural Competence

The term *intercultural competence* (IC) is defined by Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) as “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (p. 7). At first glance, some readers might be surprised that the word ‘international’ was not included in the definition, since they might think that IC refers to the ability to communicate with people who come from different countries. However, culture is no longer considered the same as nationality, since nowadays multiculturalism is a characteristic of every society. Thus, the definition refers to the interaction between different individuals rather than different internationals. As Heyward (2002) explains, “while the term ‘international’ gives primacy to nationality as the presumed salient and significant identity construct, the more significant identity construct highlighted by the term ‘intercultural’ is culture” (p. 10).

Unlike other concepts, IC is referred to by various terms (e.g., cultural competence, global competence, multicultural competence, and intercultural maturity) due to its multidisciplinary

nature (Deardorff, 2011). Similarly, many scholars belonging to different disciplines have proposed various models of IC, out of which only five will be discussed in this section. The five models were chosen based on Deardorff's classification of IC models (2009), which covers all aspects of IC, allowing us to give a comprehensive picture of the concept. Only one sample model will be reviewed of each of the five categories of IC models proposed by Deardorff (2009). The proposed categories are described as "compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal process" (Deardorff, 2009, p. 10). The categories cover all aspects of intercultural competence: its components (compositional), interrelated concepts affecting interaction among interlocutors (co-orientational), development phases of competence (developmental), requirements from interactants involving alteration for achieving competence (adaptational), and variables associated with IC (causal process).

Thus, five examples of IC models (i.e., Arasaratnam, 2006; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Navas et al., 2005) each representing one of the previous categories, will be discussed in this section. The models were selected among other models based on their popularity and comprehensiveness of other previous models.

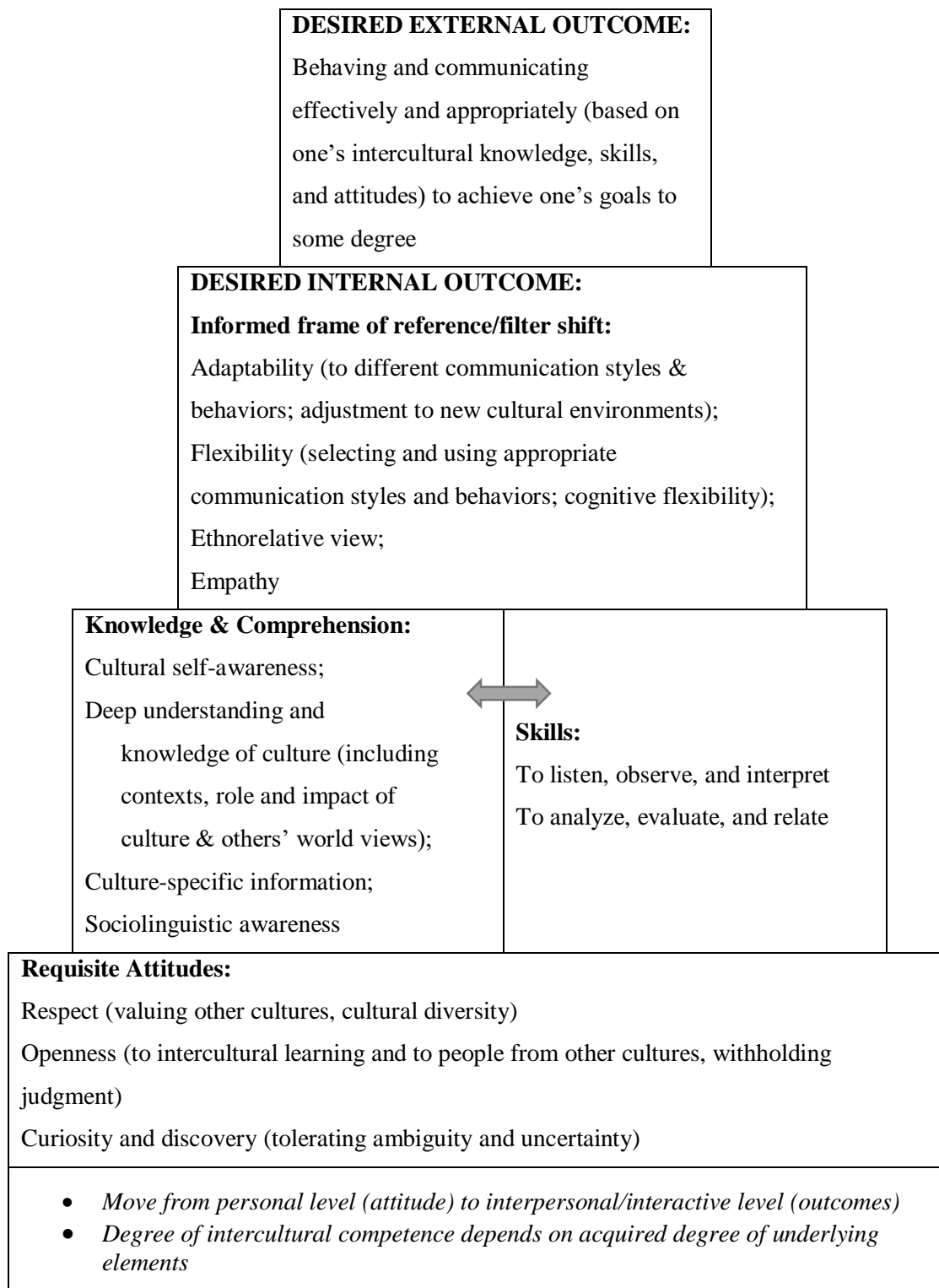
2.3.1 Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

An example of the compositional type of intercultural competence models is Deardorff's pyramid model (2006), which was created in a study that aimed to reach a consensus among top experts in the field of intercultural education on a definition and appropriate assessment criteria of intercultural competence. This, according to the author, required the identification of components of IC as a first step towards achieving the objectives of the study. Using a questionnaire and the Delphi technique, the researcher was able to collect data from 23 top experts in intercultural competence.

Among other findings, the participating experts reached a consensus on a number of requisite attitudes that must exist in order for an individual to proceed in acquiring IC (see the bottom of the pyramid in Figure 2.1 below). Other components, which include knowledge of self and other as well as skills of observation, interpretation, evaluation, and relation, were agreed on as important elements of IC (see the middle of the pyramid model in Figure 2.1). According to Deardorff (2006), acquiring the components of IC can result in internal and external outcomes. As shown in the top of the pyramid model, whereas internal outcomes include a change in the communicators' personalities (e.g., adaptation, development of empathy, etc.), external outcomes are the visible results of the application of the components of IC in intercultural situations.

Figure 2.1

Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Adapted from Deardorff, 2006, p. 254)



2.3.2 Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (ICC)

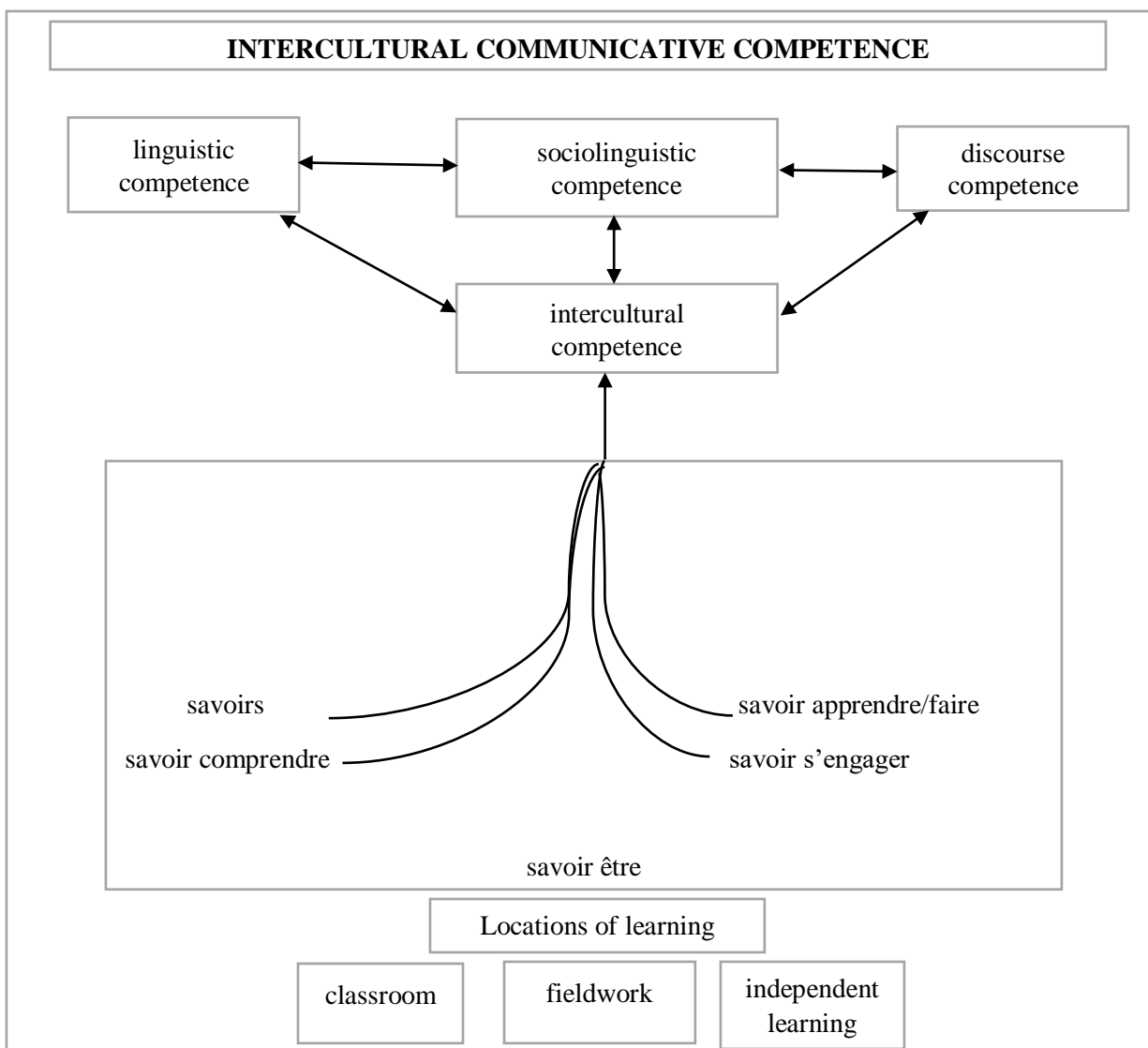
Byram's ICC model is an example of co-orientational models of IC, which cover interrelated elements affecting interaction between interlocutors. The bottom of the ICC model (see Figure 2.2 below) shows the three locations where foreign language learning occurs (i.e., classroom, fieldwork, and independent learning).

The middle part, on the other hand, shows what intercultural competence comprises of, which, according to Byram (1997), includes a number of *savoirs*: “knowledge (*savoirs*), skills (*savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire*), attitudes (*savoir être*) and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)” (p. 88). Whereas *savoirs* means “knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction” (Byram, 1997, p. 58), *savoir comprendre* and *savoir apprendre/faire* refer to “skills of interpreting and relating”, and “skills of discovery and interaction”, respectively (Byram, 1997, p. 98). As for *savoir être*, it refers to “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own” (Byram, 1997, p. 91). While *savoir s'engager*, which literally means ‘know how to get engaged’ refers to one's “ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p. 101).

Reaching to the top of the ICC model, the distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence becomes clear, with a clear emphasis on the word ‘communicative’. Thus, ICC is depicted as the combination of the *linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence*, which all share a reciprocal relationship.

Figure 2.2

Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Adapted from Byram, 1997, p. 73)



2.3.3 King and Baxter Magolda's Intercultural Maturity Model

King and Baxter Magolda's intercultural maturity model (2005) stands out as an example of the developmental type of IC models. It describes the phases of development through which IC is expected to develop from initial to mature levels (Deardorff, 2009). The model as shown in Figure 2.3 below divides progression in IC into three stages: initial, intermediate, and mature levels. In

each stage, changes occur in three different domains of development, which are specified as cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal. According to King and Magolda (2005), the cognitive dimension refers to “how one constructs one’s view and creates a meaning-making system based on how one understands knowledge and how it is gained” (p. 574). The intrapersonal dimension describes one’s awareness and conception of self, while the interpersonal dimension goes beyond that to describe self in relation to others (perception of others’ beliefs, behaviors, etc.).

Figure 2.3

King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) Intercultural Maturity Model (Adapted from Deardorff, 2009, p. 22)

| Initial Development Level | Intermediate Development Level | Mature Development Level |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Categorical knowledge ○ Naïve about cultural practices ○ Resists knowledge challenges • Intrapersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lacks awareness of social role intersections (race, class, etc.) ○ Lacks awareness of cultures ○ Externally defined beliefs ○ Differences viewed as threats • Interpersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identity dependent on similar others ○ Different views are considered wrong ○ Lacks awareness of social systems and norms ○ Views social problems egocentrically | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evolving awareness and acceptance of perspectives ○ Shift from authority to autonomous knowledge • Intrapersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evolving identity distinct from external perceptions ○ Tension between internal and external prompts ○ Recognizes legitimacy of other cultures • Interpersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Willingness to interact with divergent others ○ Explores how social systems affect group norms and relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Able to consciously shift perspectives ○ Use multiple cultural frames • Intrapersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Able to create internal self ○ Challenges own views of social identities (class, race) ○ Integrates self-identity • Interpersonal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Able to engage in diverse interdependent relationships ○ Ground relations in appreciation of differences ○ Understands intersection of social systems and practices ○ Willing to work for others’ rights |

At the initial level, words, such as lack, ignorance, resistance and dependence are used to describe individuals' intercultural status. Thus, individuals are viewed as unwilling to accept others as a result of previously constructed barriers between them and others belonging to different cultures resulting in ineffective interactions. An obvious shift occurs at the intermediate level as individuals start developing awareness and acceptance of other cultures, taking relativity into account before judging others, and showing a willingness to explore other cultural beliefs and practices. Reaching the mature level where growth in IC is exhibited at its highest degree, individuals become no longer intimidated to have their own identities and beliefs questioned. They actually start seeking opportunities where they can have cultural exchanges and get involved in discussions related to who they are easily and effectively. Respect, understanding and even advocacy to others' views and practices become characteristics of these intercultural mature individuals (see Figure 2.3 above).

2.3.4 The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2005)

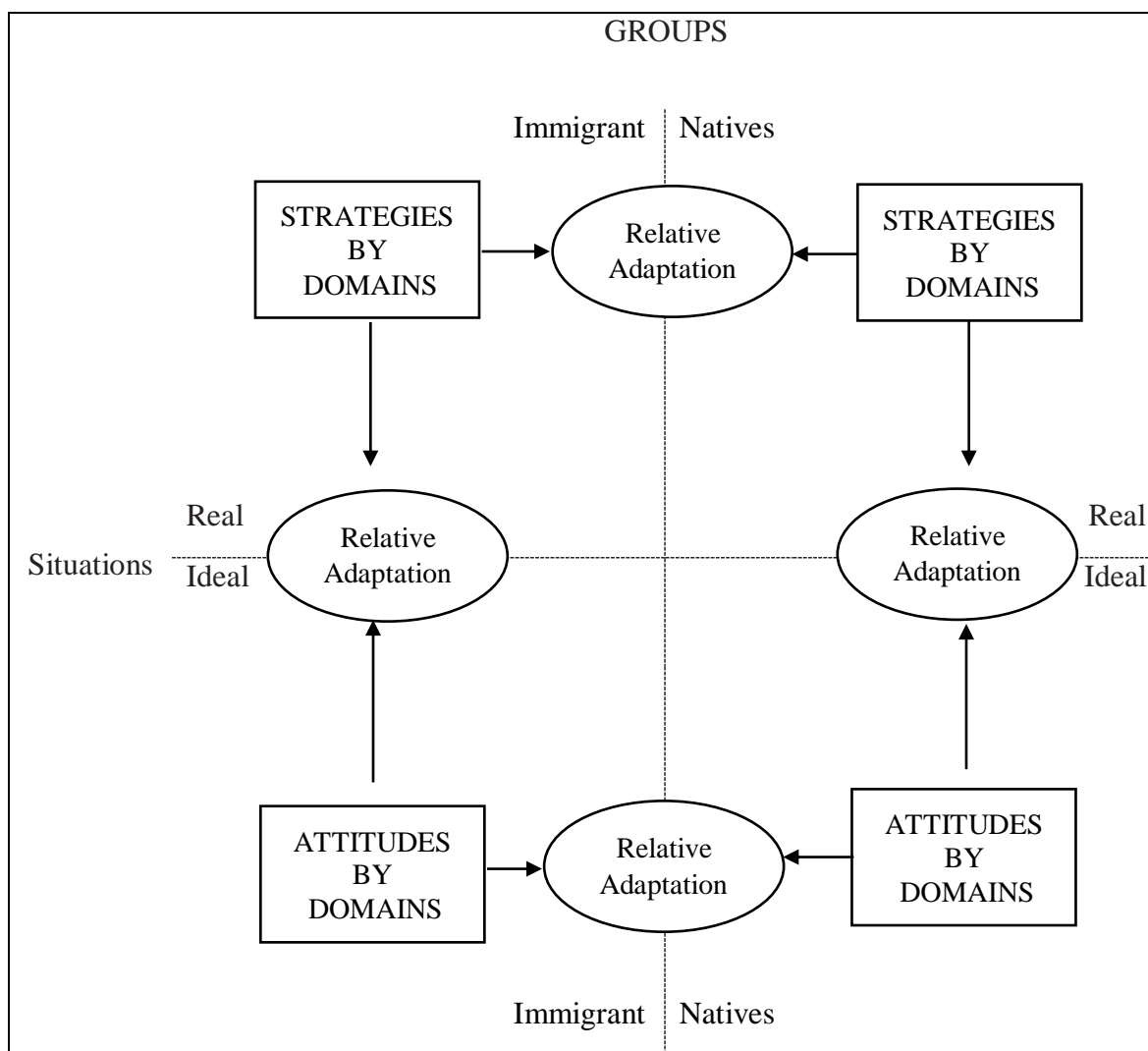
The Relative Acculturation Model (Navas et al., 2005) is an example of the adaptational type of IC models, since it emphasizes one's level of adaptation as an indicator of their IC level. It also examines the adaptation process through a bidimensional approach where interactants are of two types: immigrants and natives, thus emphasizing the international dimension in the interaction process (Deardorff, 2009).

To understand how this model works, it is necessary to explain its components first: acculturation strategies, domains, attitudes, and real and ideal situations. First, the strategies followed by the immigrants in the host culture include assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation. These strategies describe how immigrants adapt to the host culture as well as how natives view the immigrants' adaptation process. As shown in Figure 2.4 below, strategies are

included in the top section of the model (referred to as *real*), which aims to describe the actual adaptation status of immigrants. Second, *domains*, which give this model the characteristic of relativity, refer to the areas where adaptation is expected to happen (i.e., political and government system, work, economic, family social and ideological) (Navas et al., 2005). In this vein, the model emphasizes that immigrants may choose different adaptation strategies in different domains. Third, attitudes (located in the ideal section) refer to immigrants' views of how they wish to change their situation, and the natives' views on how they wish to see the immigrants think and behave in the host culture.

Figure 2.4

The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Adapted from Navas et al., 2005, P. 27)



The model was applied on a group of immigrants and natives living in Almería province in Spain with the use of two questionnaires: one was designed for the immigrants and the other for the natives (see Navas, 2005, pp. 33-35). Five response options were presented (*not at all, a little, somewhat, quite, and a lot*) for the participants to choose from. The participants' answers to both the real and ideal sections of the questionnaires were combined in order to reveal participants'

acculturation strategies and attitudes.² The model, although can be adjusted to serve other contexts, has been designed to study the acculturation process of immigrants residing in a host country, thus neglecting the fact that nationality is no longer viewed the same as culture.

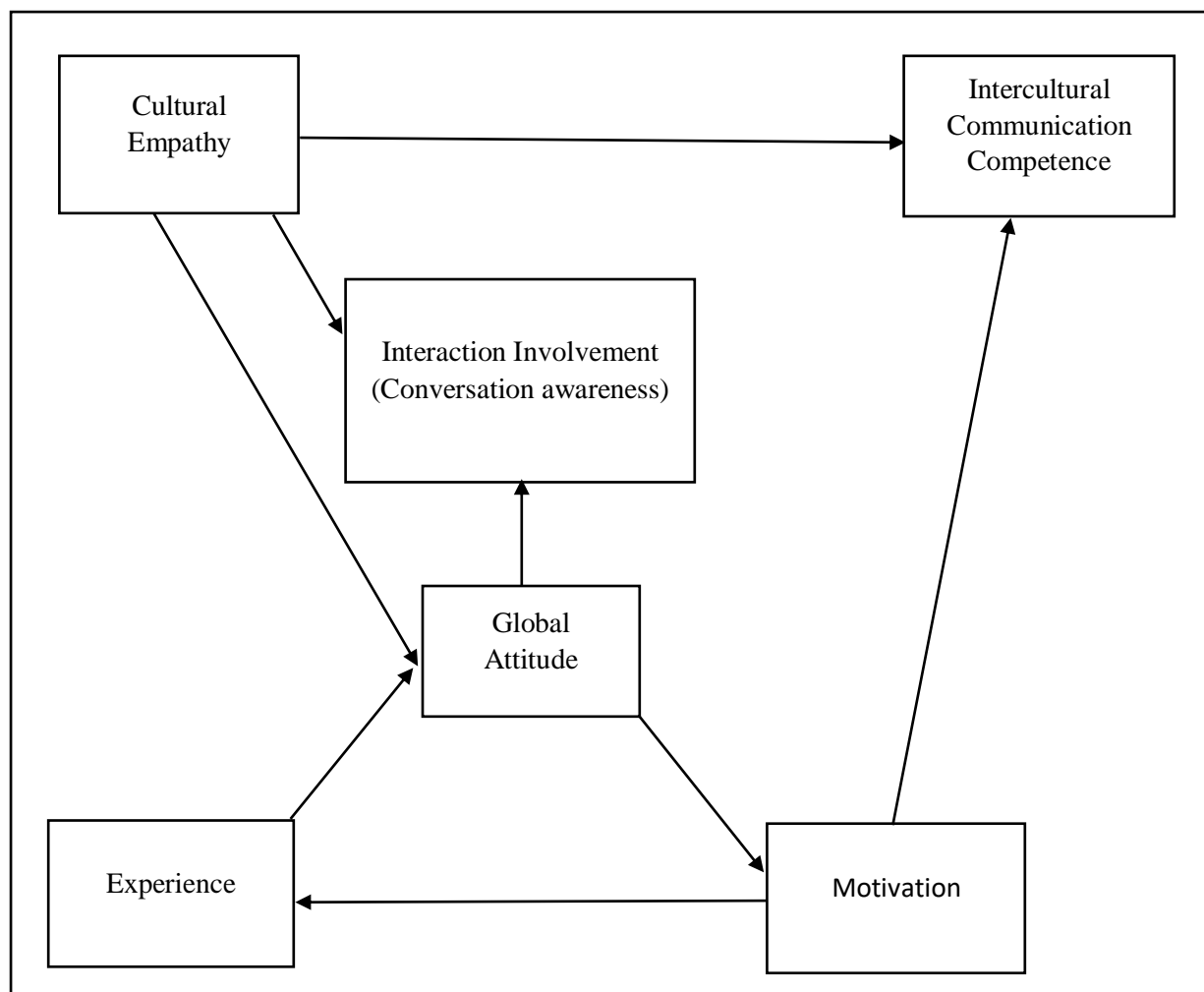
2.3.5 Arasaratnam's Model of Intercultural Communication Competence

Causal path models illustrate the association between certain independent variables and IC. An example of this type is Arasaratnam's model of intercultural communication competence, which was tested for validity using data collected from 400 participants by means of a survey questionnaire. The five tested variables are "empathy, motivation, attitude toward other cultures, experience, and listening (interaction involvement)" (Arasaratnam, 2006, p. 94). The model (see Figure 2.5 below) illustrates the direction of the relationship between the variables as proven by the study findings. Accordingly, cultural empathy has a positive association with interaction involvement, global attitude and intercultural communication competence. Experience correlates with global attitude, which is also associated with interaction involvement and motivation. Besides, motivation has been found to lead to seeking more intercultural experiences and development of ICC.

² See Navas et al. (2005, p. 30) for a detailed explanation of measuring acculturation.

Figure 2.5

Arasaratnam's Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (Arasaratnam, 2006, p. 97)



This section included a review of a number of selective models of IC. The five reviewed models covered components of IC (Deardorff's pyramid model of IC, 2006), elements facilitating and contributing to the interaction process (Byram's ICC model, 1997), developmental stages of IC (King & Baxter Magolda's intercultural maturity model, 2005), interlocutors' adaptational strategies (Navas et al.'s relative acculturation extended model, 2005), and variables associated with IC development (Arasaratnam's ICC model, 2006). In doing so, all aspects of IC have been covered reaching to a clearer understanding of the concept, as this will be of great value for the

aims and design of the current study.

It is worth noting that only three of the previous models are relevant to the current study, which aims to measure EFL textbooks and teachers' potential of promoting intercultural competence. While Byram's (1997) model can be used to decide on the cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are incorporated in the textbooks under study, Deardorff's (2006) and Arasaratnam's (2006) models may respectively help in deciding on the elements contributing to the teachers' level of IC and the variables associated with IC development. However, it is important to note that the models neither covered all variables that may have an effect on IC development nor were exclusively written to examine textbooks or evaluate teachers as regards their level of IC. Therefore, the models along with others should be used to guide rather than limit the design of the current research.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has aimed at providing the theoretical background for teaching culture in the EFL classroom. It started with a quick overview of the main definitions of culture as proposed by major scholars in the EFL field (Brooks, 1969; Debyser, 1968; Clifford, 1992; Kramsch, 2015). Then, a chronological narrative of the major discussions (covering the period from the 1960s to the 2010s) related to teaching culture in the EFL classroom was provided. The last section of the chapter covered five models of intercultural competence. The models were presented and discussed in an attempt to clarify and cast light on the concept of intercultural competence, as it will be the focus of the current study.

The next chapter will review previous studies conducted on EFL textbooks and teachers' potential for promoting IC. The literature review will be conducted to help design the current study and compare the obtained results with those of previous research at a later stage.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on the contexts, methods and outcomes of the research done on the potential of EFL textbooks and teachers for promoting students' acquisition of IC. Thus, the review aims to assess the current state of research in the field in Palestine as well as critically analyze the methods and findings of the literature in order to identify a research gap to investigate for the current dissertation. The articles reviewed were selected following Cooper's (1988) coverage scenario known as 'purposive sampling', which suggests reviewing specific articles and excluding others based on a number of criteria. Accordingly, the selected studies had to be:

- written in English,
- based on clear and identifiable methodology,
- descriptive and evaluative studies rather than experimental,
- published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and
- exclusively conducted to assess the potential of EFL textbooks or teachers for promoting IC.

The researcher followed the methodological scheme for organizing the review sections (Cooper, 1988). Accordingly, the first section includes the results of the reviewed studies on the appropriateness of EFL textbooks for promoting IC, while the second section presents the results concerning research on EFL teachers' IC. The last section presents a discussion of the results in an attempt to identify a gap in the literature and provide a proposition for a research that can remedy the identified breach.

3.1 Research into EFL Textbooks' Potential for Promoting IC

The review of the previous literature on the cultural content of EFL textbooks revealed an overwhelming interest in the field in Iran and Indonesia (almost a third of the reviewed studies took place in those countries). While the Iranian studies covered elementary, intermediate and high school textbooks (e.g., Aliakbari, 2004; Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020; Dehbozorgi et al., 2014; Mozaffarzadeh & Ajideh, 2019; Pasand et al., 2018), the Indonesian studies focused exclusively on the secondary level (e.g., Putra et al., 2020; Rosyidi & Purwati, 2017; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Sugianto & Wirza, 2021), with only one study investigating intermediate textbooks (Prihatiningsih et al., 2021).

A considerable number of studies were also conducted in Vietnamese and Turkish contexts (e.g., Arslan, 2016; Çelik & Erbay, 2013; Nguyen, 2011; Ton Nu & Murray, 2020). Other countries, such as Taiwan (Su, 2016), China (Song, 2019), Algeria (Riche, 2012), Poland (Sobkowiak, 2015), Italy (Portera, 2004), South Korea (Joo et al., 2020), and Colombia (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015) received little coverage. Besides, a relevant study was conducted in an international context, investigating 25 textbooks sampled from seven different international textbook series (Shin et al., 2011). Examining the Palestinian context, only two research papers were conducted on EFL textbooks: two intermediate (Faraj et al., 2021) and two secondary school textbooks (Alyan & Alakkad, 2022).

Concerning the number of textbooks which were investigated in the reviewed studies, very few researchers have explored entire textbook series (e.g., Su, 2016; Ton Nu & Murray, 2020), or covered more than four textbooks (e.g., Mozaffarzadeh & Ajideh, 2019; Ponte, 2019; Shin et al., 2011; Sobkowiak, 2015). Thus, the overwhelming majority of the studies focused on only few textbooks (e.g., Joo et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2011; Pasand et al., 2018; Sándorová, 2016; Setyono &

Widodo, 2019; Tran & Yah, 2020; Yuen, 2011), which did not exceed three coursebooks in most cases.

Two types of methods were employed for data collection. The first type consisted of a direct investigation of the textbooks' cultural component using content analysis (e.g., Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Pasand et al., 2018; Portera, 2004; Shin et al., 2011; Sobkowiak, 2015; Su, 2016). The second type aimed to explore teachers' opinions about the cultural content of the textbooks they use. However, this indirect approach was used only in a few studies, which implemented interviews and questionnaires as either supplementary (e.g., Amerane & Abid, 2020; Iakovina & Karras, 2022; Sándorová, 2016; Sugianto & Wirza, 2021) or main methods in the studies (e.g., Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020).

Concerning the aspects investigated to unveil the textbooks' potential for developing IC, most of the reviewed studies focused on one or two aspects of the textbooks, such as their characters, tasks, and international contacts. Thus, very few studies have been entirely successful in measuring the overall appropriateness of textbooks in promoting IC, since making such a judgement requires a more comprehensive evaluation in terms of the number of the textbooks' cultural aspects to be covered.

Regarding the research findings, the majority of studies investigating the types of cultures represented in the textbooks have shown that the target culture was predominantly represented in the textbooks (Abid, 2021; Arslan, 2016; Dehbozorgi et al., 2014; Ponte, 2019; Shin et al., 2011; Su, 2016). In contrast, less research has shown that the source culture was overrepresented at the expense of both the target culture and other international cultures (Morady Moghaddam & Tirnaz, 2023; Pasand et al., 2018; Prihatiningsih et al., 2021). However, very few studies revealed an even distribution of the three types of cultures in the textbooks they investigated (Çelik & Erbay, 2013; Sugianto & Wirza, 2021).

Research studies exploring EFL textbooks' characters have found that most characters represented a clear bias in favor of Western and American cultures (Joo et al., 2020). Besides, gender and racial bias were traced in Roohani and Molana's (2013) study, which exhibited dominance of male and white characters in the Iranian context. Similarly, studies assessing EFL textbooks' tasks revealed that most of the incorporated tasks were designed to only introduce students to basic cultural knowledge of the target culture without urging students to reflect on their own culture or interpret certain cultural representations (Ders et al., 2019; Rosyidi & Purwati, 2017; Sobkowiak, 2015).

Other research papers have also analyzed the international and intercultural issues included in EFL textbooks. Findings revealed that most of the textbooks under analysis were heavily dominated by the British culture, which normally has been presented in isolation from other cultures. Besides, intercultural comparisons and representations were scarce (García, 2005). Similar findings were reported in a study conducted by Pasand et al. (2018), which showed that very little space was allocated for tackling international and intercultural issues. In the same vein, Nguyen (2011) discovered that the intercultural content was presented between Vietnamese and Asian characters, with very few cases targeting other cultures.

EFL textbooks have also been investigated as regards the quality of their cultural content. Studies conducted by Aliakbari (2004), Espinar and Rodríguez (2019), Faraj et al. (2021), Gómez Rodríguez (2015), and Irawan and Daud (2021) revealed that the incorporated culture was predominantly celebratory and that controversial issues were rarely dealt with. Likewise, Ponte (2019) studied a number of international EFL textbooks by means of analysing the frequencies of the vocabulary items used in the textbooks. The obtained data revealed a tendency to represent lexical categories related to positive general topics of the target culture. Additionally, conflictive

and controversial issues were marginalised, resulting in exposing students to oversimplified and stereotypical images of the target culture.

3.2 Research into EFL Teachers' Perception and Practice of IC

Research studies about EFL teachers' IC were mainly conducted in non-native English-speaking countries. The literature reviewed exhibited a clear interest in this field in three countries: Indonesia (Aulia & Khaerudin, 2021; Hapsari, 2021; Hasanah & Gunawan, 2020; Kidwell, 2021; Megawati et al., 2020; Munandar & Newton, 2021), Turkey (Atay et al., 2009; Gedik & Perihan, 2020; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022; Saricoban & Oz, 2014), and Iran (Banafsheh et al., 2016; Ghavamnia, 2020; Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Shirazi & Shafiee, 2017). Other studies were also conducted in other contexts, such as Pakistan (Aziz et al., 2020), Algeria (Boudouaia et al., 2022), Ecuador (Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019), Vietnam (Hoa & Vien, 2019), Finland (Larzén-Östermark, 2008), Spain (Sercu et al., 2005), Cambodia (Nhem, 2020), Greece (Petosi & Karras, 2020), Saudi Arabia (Alqefari, 2019), China (Gu, 2015; Zou & Park, 2022), Colombia (Álvarez, 2020), and Yemen (Ahmed et al., 2019). Very few studies have had an international scope where EFL teachers from various countries were surveyed to explore similarities and differences in their perception and practice of IC (e.g., Sercu, 2006). To our knowledge, only one study (Abu Alyan, 2011) was conducted within the Palestinian context. The study targeted EFL university teachers rather than schoolteachers. Findings revealed that culture was still viewed in relation to nationality with no attention paid to multiculturalism as a characteristic of contemporary societies. Besides, teachers' practices in the classroom aimed to enhance students' linguistic competence rather than their IC.

The studies reviewed used survey questionnaires and/or semi-structured interviews in most cases as either the only or the major research instruments for data collection. While very few studies

used nation-wide surveys (Atay et al., 2009; Gu, 2015), the majority of the studies surveyed a limited number of teachers that did not exceed 100 participants (Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Ghavamnia, 2020; Kidwell, 2021; Megawati et al., 2020; Petosi & Karras, 2020). Additionally, some scholars were successful in depicting a more comprehensive picture of the teachers' perception and practice of IC using multiple methods. These methods included classroom observations, narrative frames and interviews (Munandar & Newton, 2021); classroom observations, interviews and material examination (Nhem, 2020); interviews, lesson observations, professional learning community sessions, and journal entries (Kidwell, 2021); and diaries, focus groups, and questionnaires (Young & Sachdev, 2011).

Based on the aims and methods used for data analysis, the reviewed research studies could be divided into two types: descriptive and explanatory. While descriptive research aims to give a clear image of teachers' perceptions, skills, attitudes and classroom practices related to teaching culture and IC (e.g., Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Sercu, 2006), explanatory research aims to test the effect of a number of factors, such as intercultural sensitivity and studying abroad on teachers' IC level and their culture teaching practices (e.g., Dejaeghere & Zhang, 2008). Most of the reviewed research papers, however, were found to combine both types of research in the same research papers (e.g., Banafsheh et al., 2016; Hapsari, 2021; Saricoban & Oz, 2014).

The majority of studies conducted to measure EFL teachers' perception of IC concluded that teachers have adequate knowledge of IC and positive attitudes towards culture teaching (Ahmed et al., 2019; Aziz et al., 2020; Ghavamnia, 2020; Hapsari, 2021; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022; Megawati et al., 2020; Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Petosi & Karras, 2020; Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Saricoban & Oz, 2014; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Zou & Park, 2022). Few studies, on the other hand, showed opposite findings (Gu, 2015; Hasanah & Gunawan, 2020; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005).

Less research was conducted to explore teaching practices used by EFL teachers in the classroom to teach IC. These studies have revealed that although teachers acquired a good knowledge of and positive attitudes towards incorporating IC in their lessons, their practices in the classroom were not consistent with these findings (Ahmed et al., 2019; Alqefari, 2019; Atay et al., 2009; Banafsheh et al., 2016; Megawati et al., 2020; Munandar & Newton, 2021; Nhem, 2020; Safa & Tofghi, 2021; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Few studies have shown consistency between teachers' beliefs towards and practices of IC (Gu, 2015; Hasanah & Gunawan, 2020; Kidwell, 2021; Shirazi & Shafiee, 2017).

In addition to their main investigation (i.e., teachers' beliefs about and attitudes towards IC), some of the previous studies dedicated part of their research to exploring the effect of certain factors on teachers' IC level and culture teaching practices. Results of such explanatory research studies have exhibited an apparent disparity concerning the association of some variables with teachers' perception and practice of IC. For instance, while gender was found to be positively associated with teachers' level of IC in Ahmed et al.'s study (2019), it was not the case in Saricoban and Oz's study (2014). Similarly, teaching experience revealed a positive correlation with teachers' IC (Zou & Park, 2022). However, it did not show any association in the studies conducted by Ahmed et al. (2019) and Banafsheh et al. (2016). Other variables, such as professional development training (Dejaeghere & Zhang, 2008), intercultural sensitivity (Hapsari, 2021; Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018), study abroad and overseas experience (Hismanoglu, 2011; Jular, 2007; Saricoban & Oz, 2014; Williams, 2005; Zou & Park, 2022) exhibited a positive correlation with teachers' IC level. On the other hand, academic achievement was not associated with teachers' level of IC (Ahmed et al., 2019; Saricoban & Oz, 2014).

3.3 Summary

The above literature review was conducted following a concept-centric approach, which—unlike the author-centric approach—aimed to synthesize rather than summarize previous research on the cultural content of EFL textbooks and teachers' perception and practice of IC. The review principally focused on the contexts, methods and outcomes of past research, with the aim of identifying contextual, methodological, or outcomes-oriented gaps in the literature.

Findings of the literature review showed that research on EFL textbooks regarding their potential for developing students' IC in Palestine was scarce, focusing on a few textbooks only without coverage of entire textbook series. In addition, only intermediate and secondary school textbooks were investigated without any attention being paid to coursebooks designed for primary levels. Moreover, almost all individual studies in this field covered only one or two aspects of the textbooks (e.g., tasks, characters, etc.) concerning their possible contribution to developing IC. Thus, we can say that there have not been sufficient comprehensive studies that investigated all aspects of EFL textbooks or all components of IC, which could have enabled researchers to judge the appropriateness of the investigated textbooks for promoting IC. Consequently, most of the reviewed literature—if not all—suggests rather than ensures that the investigated textbooks most probably do not have the potential of promoting IC. Finally, content analysis was used in more than ninety-five per cent of the reviewed studies as either the only or the main research method implemented to investigate the textbooks. Other methods, such as interviews with the teachers about the textbooks they use in teaching English were also used. However, investigating textbooks seems to be a more reliable method than surveying teachers' opinions about the textbooks, as teachers' perception of culture teaching and IC may be underdeveloped as suggested in some studies (Gu, 2015; Sercu, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005).

The review of research on EFL teachers' perception and practice of IC revealed that there has been only one study on EFL teachers' IC in Palestine. The study, which was conducted by Abu Alyan (2011), targeted EFL university teachers rather than schoolteachers. Besides, very few studies used nation-wide surveys (e.g., Atay et al., 2009; Gu, 2015). Thus, they usually included a limited number of participants that did not exceed a hundred participants. Various methods, such as classroom observations, interviews and surveys were used for data collection based on their suitability for the research questions. In addition to the studies' main objectives of measuring teachers' level of IC and classroom practices related to teaching culture, some studies explored possible association of certain factors (e.g., gender, teaching experience and intercultural sensitivity) on teachers' IC level and culture teaching practices. Unlike previous research on EFL textbooks, the reviewed literature on EFL teachers proved that teachers had positive beliefs and attitudes towards teaching culture. However, their classroom practices did not correspond with their beliefs.

Having conducted the above literature review on studies targeting EFL textbooks and teachers' potential for promoting IC, a number of contextual and methodological gaps were identified as follows:

1. The overwhelming majority of research conducted on EFL textbooks examined only a few individual coursebooks. Entire textbook series were rarely analyzed.
2. Studies on EFL textbooks in Palestine were scarce covering only a few intermediate and secondary school textbooks. No studies were conducted on textbooks designed for the primary level.
3. Qualitative research methods were mainly used to collect and analyze the obtained data. The mixed methods approach was rarely used.

4. Cultural aspects of textbooks (e.g., characters, intercultural contacts, etc.) were analyzed individually in separate studies. There is a need for more comprehensive studies that would take all elements of IC and textbooks' aspects into account.
5. Research on EFL teachers' perception and practice of IC in Palestine was limited to university teachers. To our knowledge, no research was conducted on Palestinian EFL schoolteachers.
6. Nation-wide studies were scarce. Contexts of studies were limited to certain schools or cities.

Driven by the aforementioned gaps in the literature, our current study aims to evaluate the cultural content of the most used EFL textbook series in Palestine (known as *English for Palestine*) in terms of its potential for promoting students' acquisition of IC. The mixed methods approach will be used to cover both quantifiable and non-quantifiable aspects of the textbooks, providing a comprehensive understanding of the culture incorporated in them. In addition, Palestinian EFL teachers' perception and practice of IC as well as the relationship the variables have with the teachers' international exposure and previous training in IC will be investigated. The study will include a representative sample of all EFL teachers who work in Palestinian state schools in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology used to conduct the current study. It describes the research approach, methods, participants, materials, sampling techniques and instruments used for data collection. The chapter then goes on to give a detailed description of the methods used to analyze the collected data. It closes with a discussion of the ethical considerations that the researcher abided by throughout the research process. It is important to note that some sections of this chapter, such as the research approach section, consist of two subsections. While the first is related to the analysis of the textbook series, the second deals with the analysis of the data collected from the surveyed EFL teachers.

4.1 Research Approach

The study implemented the mixed methods and quantitative research approaches to provide comprehensive answers regarding whether the *English for Palestine* textbook series and Palestinian EFL teachers have the potential to promote students' acquisition of intercultural competence.

4.1.1 Mixed Methods Approach

Examining the cultural content of EFL textbooks entails dealing with both quantifiable and non-quantifiable data. Raich et al. (2014) explain that “while the content, evaluations, and emotions hidden in a text are qualitative in nature, frequency, or spatial proximity of mentions are quantitative aspects of the data” (p. 738). Therefore, the mixed methods approach was deemed suitable for our research, since it “combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 123), which are both implemented in order to compensate for the weaknesses of the two approaches when performed separately. Accordingly, using the mixed

methods approach increases the validity of the research results and depicts a more comprehensive picture of the target data (Greene et al., 1989).

Regarding the specific design of the mixed methods approach, the researcher of this study used the convergent parallel design, which consists of two phases implemented concurrently with none of which depending on the other as the case with the sequential explanatory and exploratory designs (Almeida, 2018). The two phases of the design (i.e., the quantitative and qualitative analyses) were implemented to complement each other's results, forming a comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation (Creswell et al., 2004). Accordingly, the data gathered using the convergent parallel mixed methods design were both of equal weight and will be interpreted simultaneously to provide the most possible understanding of the cultural component of the EFL textbooks under investigation.

4.1.2 Quantitative Research Approach

The quantitative research approach was used to assess Palestinian EFL teachers' potential for promoting students' acquisition of intercultural competence. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe quantitative research as "an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures" (p. 41). Based on the definition, we infer that the quantitative research approach involves the use of numerical data, which are analyzed statistically in order to reach objective findings about the problem/phenomenon under investigation.

The benefits of using this research approach, according to Goertzen (2017), are the generalizability and objectivity of the findings, coverage of large populations, and the possibility of replicating the study. Due to the large sample of participants and the benefits of the quantitative

research, the researcher considered the quantitative approach most suitable to investigate the research questions related to the EFL teachers' intercultural competence.

4.2 Participants

The sample of participants included 373 Palestinian EFL teachers who teach English at state schools in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza (referred to as Palestine throughout the study). The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) equation for calculating the sample size based on the number of the original population under study (i.e., 5216). 358 was the minimum number of participants needed to meet the desired statistical constraints, with 5% of margin of error, and 95% of confidence level. To guarantee their representativeness, the participants were selected using the stratified random sampling whereby the population was divided into mutually exclusive strata (i.e., directorates of education) before they were randomly selected with help from the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

According to Sharma (2017), the stratified random sampling technique works best when the target population is made up of various groups with unequal sizes. In this case, the number of participants that are selected randomly from various groups must depend on each group size. For example, more participants were selected from the Directorate of Education in Ramallah ($n = 34$) than from the Directorate of Education in Salfit ($n = 11$). This is due to the fact that the number of EFL teachers in Ramallah is bigger than that in Salfit.

4.3 Materials

The textbooks chosen for carrying out this study were considered based on their overwhelming popularity and widespread use in Palestinian state schools. They are the only EFL textbooks that were approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Education to be used in the Palestinian state schools. Hence, they were deemed more influential than other Palestinian EFL textbooks.

The *English for Palestine* textbook series is made up of 24 textbooks. As the name suggests, the textbooks were exclusively designed to teach English to Palestinian students. They were written to cover the entire school levels, which are twelve. The coursebooks for the first ten levels are named using the phrase 'Pupil's Book' followed by the grade number and one of the letters 'A' or 'B', representing the first and second semesters, respectively. For example, *Pupil's Book 1A* and *Pupil's Book 1B* are used for the first and second semesters of the first grade, respectively. As for the eleventh and twelfth grades, there are two textbooks for each grade, and they are used both during the entire academic year. The names of the books are *Pupil's Book 11*, *Pupil's Book 11 Reading Plus*, *Pupil's Book 12*, and *Pupil's Book 12 Reading Plus* (refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive list of the titles of the textbooks).

Throughout the results chapters, the textbooks under analysis will be grouped based on either the school grade they are used for or the educational stage they belong to. The results of the quantitative analysis will refer to each grade coursebooks separately, using their abbreviated forms (refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive list of the abbreviated forms). Accordingly, the twenty-four textbooks will be arranged into twelve groups, starting with the first grade (age 6) to the twelfth grade (age 18). The titles of the first twenty textbooks have been abbreviated in the same way: using the initials of the phrase 'Pupil's Book' followed by the grade number (e.g., the first-grade textbooks are referred to as PB1). However, as the titles of the textbooks used at the eleventh and twelfth grades are different, they were abbreviated differently: the initials of the phrases 'Pupil's Book' and 'Reading Plus' were put together using the sign '&', followed by the grade number (PB&RP 11, PB&RP 12)

However, throughout the qualitative analysis, key findings will be made with regard to the educational stages. Thus, the coursebooks will be referred to as *elementary*, *upper elementary*, *secondary* and *upper secondary* textbooks (refer to Appendix A for the division of the textbooks

according to their educational stages). Each category will consist of three textbooks. For example, the first category refers to the first three coursebooks (i.e., PB1, PB2, and PB3). The rest of the *English for Palestine* textbook series is divided equally and respectively into 'upper elementary', 'secondary' and 'upper secondary' categories. In a like manner and for the same reason mentioned above, the four groups could be combined into only two categories, i.e., 'elementary' and 'secondary'. This decision was taken, since carrying out an individual analysis of each textbook would not only be impossible, but also redundant because many textbooks, especially the ones designed to teach close levels, have been observed to share almost the same features.

4.4 Research Instruments

For the purposes of this study, two types of instruments were used: a database and a survey questionnaire.

4.4.1 Database

Three databases were used to collect data from the *English for Palestine* textbook series (see pages 69, 73, & 90). All three databases were adapted in order not to collect similar data on the same cultural category unless it was necessary to answer the research questions. For instance, the textbook characters were included as a category in the database used for collecting qualitative data (see page 73), while the renowned figures (i.e., celebrities) were included as a separate category in the third quantitative database on page 90. The decision was taken because, unlike the textbook characters, figures were appropriate for being analyzed quantitatively rather than qualitatively. Thus, the researcher aimed to use the three databases to complement each other, forming a comprehensive picture of the cultural content of the textbooks under analysis. A detailed description of each database is provided in chapters 5 and 6.

4.4.2 Survey

The choice of the survey as a research tool to collect data from the Palestinian EFL teachers concerning their level of IC was driven by the need for a research instrument that would allow the researcher to collect data from a large sample of participants without having to travel to meet them in person. The choice made was not prompted by seeking convenience as much as it was a reality that was imposed on the researcher, as Gaza and East Jerusalem were unreachable destinations for political reasons. In addition to these factors, Gillham (2008) confirms that surveys are excellent research tools that “provide suggestive data for testing a hypothesis” (p. 6), which enabled examining the correlation between variables. Thus, a survey was deemed the most sensible choice as regards to the type of data needed and the constraints imposed. Accordingly, a twenty-six-item survey was created to collect the required data (see Appendix B for a full version of the survey). Six experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language validated and approved the survey before it was sent to the selected participants. The survey questionnaire was composed of the following five sections:

- Section 1 (Teachers' profile): Teachers' age, qualifications, years of service, overseas experiences, and international contacts.
- Section 2 (Teachers' knowledge of IC): Their understanding of intercultural competence and culture in the TEFL context, and type of cultural content to address in the classroom.
- Section 3 (Teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture): Their views on whether there should be a broader incorporation of the local Palestinian culture in the textbooks, an inclusive Anglo-American cultural content, and a wider representation of international cultures.

- Section 4 (Teachers' culture teaching practices): Use of methods, techniques, supplementary materials, extracurricular activities, and assessment techniques to teach and assess cultural content in the EFL classroom.
- Section 5 (Teachers' training in IC): Previous training in teaching culture and their general opinion on teaching culture.

In section 1, participants were requested to provide their personal details, including their age, academic qualifications and years of service. Additionally, if applicable, they were asked to provide specific information about their overseas experiences and international contacts. In sections 2 and 3 they were asked to express their opinions on nine statements using a five-point Likert scale: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither disagree nor agree*, *agree* and *strongly agree*. Since section 4 was designed to measure the frequency of teaching practices related to culture teaching rather than the level of agreement, the five-point Likert scale provided for this purpose presented different answer options, i.e., *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often* and *always*. The last section (section 5) consisted of direct questions about their previous training in teaching culture.

4.5 Data Collection

The data for this research study were collected from two main resources: the *English for Palestine* textbook series and from questionnaire answers provided by the selected sample of Palestinian EFL teachers.

4.5.1 Textbook Data

First, some initial decisions were taken concerning what features a text should have in order to be considered a cultural component. Thus, all literary works (poems, novels, plays, etc.) were considered cultural elements, with an exception of chants that have been designed especially for educational purposes unless they referred to cultural aspects (e.g., a chant about Al-Aqsa Mosque,

PB4 B, P. 7). Besides, any text that referred to concrete cultural issues (e.g., tourist attractions, geographical references, etc.) or abstract culture, such as the values and beliefs specific to a particular culture, were coded as cultural elements as well. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect the data from the textbooks under investigation.

The quantitative data were obtained in two different ways: either by measuring the space that the cultural component occupied, or by implementing simple counts of frequencies. As for the first quantitative method of data collection, getting accurate measurement of the space that the identified cultural elements occupy in the textbooks was difficult to achieve by using traditional tools (e.g., a ruler). For this purpose, an online software that measures space on PDF files was used. The PDF measuring tool, as it is referred to on the website, is powered by PDFTron and can be accessed on the internet free of charge. Thus, each textbook in PDF format was uploaded to the website in order to measure the space that the target cultural elements occupy. For the entire process to be completed, we followed a number of steps. First, the entire size of each textbook was calculated in cm^2 . Then, the volume of the cultural content presented in textual format was also calculated in cm^2 . Next, the total number of square centimeters were converted into lines for both the total space of textbooks and the total volume of cultural items. This process has been done by assuming that each page contains a specific number of lines. Therefore, each line was also made of a specific number of square centimeters, which enabled the conversion of square centimeters into lines to be accurate. Lastly, we got the percentages that indicate the proportion of the cultural content in each textbook in relation to the total space of the textbooks.

However, the previous method was not suitable for collecting some cultural components, such as the textbooks' renowned figures. Thus, multiple frequencies of the figures' gender, occupation, and nationality were counted. In cases where multiple mentions of the same figure

under the same topic were found, it was counted only once. However, if the figure was mentioned again under another topic, it was counted twice.

The collection of qualitative data was performed through a close examination of the *English for Palestine* textbooks. The target cultural components (e.g., characters' sex roles) were inspected several times in order to highlight tendencies and make sense of the data in relation to the research questions. Then, findings were related to their educational stages (i.e., elementary, upper elementary, secondary and upper secondary), and prepared to be included in the analysis.

4.5.2 Survey Data

The survey completion took place during a period of time that started in April and lasted until May 2022. First, Google Docs was used to create the survey. Then, individual invitations including the survey link were sent to the selected participants. Among the 373 recipients of the survey link, only 13 teachers did not fill in the survey, while the remaining 360 teachers completed and submitted the form successfully.

4.6 Data Analysis

Various methods of data analysis were used to obtain the results of the data collected from the *English for Palestine* textbooks and the survey participants. Both descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were used to analyze the data.

4.6.1 Analysis of Textbook Data

The results related to the cultural content of the *English for Palestine* textbook series were obtained by means of the content analysis method. The analysis was guided by the categories of the databases, which were used to collect the data from the textbooks under investigation. In other words, the categories of the databases were used as themes under which the results were organized.

The results obtained from the first two databases (see pages 69 & 73) included a description of the tendencies and repeated patterns related to the cultural themes of the databases. Examples from the textbooks were provided to support the obtained results. As for the results obtained from the third database (see page 90), two methods were used to highlight differences and similarities in the collected data. Some results were obtained by comparing the measured space allocated for cultural elements to the total space of the textbooks. In other cases, where the measuring space was deemed unpractical, simple counts of frequency of cultural elements were applied, and the resulting numbers were compared in reference to each other. For example, the renowned figures in the textbooks were grouped according to their gender. The final results were presented in tables and bar charts in order to make the presentation of the findings clear and easy to follow for the reader.

According to Drisko and Maschi (2016), the content analysis can be defined as an approach whose use ranges from description of the literal meaning of texts to interpretation of their embedded messages. However, among the other designs of content analysis is the qualitative content analysis, which as stated by Vaismoradi et al. (2016), is more suitable for the type of research that aims to gain an image of “the explicit description of the content of communication with a limited reflection on its implicit meaning” (p. 101). Accordingly, the content analysis method was deemed appropriate for the type of the data (i.e., textual data) and the aim of the analysis (i.e., description of the cultural content).

4.6.2 Analysis of Survey Data

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics, v. 25. Two types of statistical analysis were run to answer the research questions concerning the Palestinian EFL teachers' level of IC.

Descriptive statistics was the first analysis that was run. Thus, the mean and standard deviation values were calculated in order to measure Palestinian EFL teachers' level of IC.

Additionally, simple counts of frequencies and percentages were used to highlight the differences between the teachers as regards their overseas experiences, international contacts and previous training in teaching culture. The use of mean and standard deviation was determined based on the type of question as well as the type of scale of measurement used for the Likert scale questions (Boone & Boone, 2012; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). While we had an ordinal scale of measurement (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, etc.), the research question about EFL teachers' level of IC could be answered by computing the composite score of a group of Likert-type items as a whole. According to Boone and Boone (2012), in this case, the mean must be measured for central tendency along with the standard deviation for the variability of frequencies. Concerning the simple counts of frequencies of yes/no questions, since there was only one question and not a cluster of yes/no questions, there was no necessity of conducting further statistical procedures.

The second type of statistics used was inferential statistics. The Chi-square test of independence was run to investigate whether there was a statistically significant relationship between international exposure and training in teaching culture on the one hand, and teachers' beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices related to IC and teaching culture, on the other hand. The choice of the Chi-square test of independence (developed by Pearson, 1900) to inspect the variables for correlation was determined based on the types of variables that were tested for possible correlation. According to Franke et al. (2011), the Chi-square test of independence is used when both variables are categorical and belong to a single sample, which makes it different from the Chi-square test of homogeneity, which is used when the variables being tested belong to two different samples. Other correlation tests, such as the Pearson correlation coefficient, were not chosen because they are used with other types of data (i.e., parametric data).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations constitute an essential part of a research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They describe the researcher's responsibilities towards the research participants, data and intended audience (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The researcher confirms that he has taken into account all ethical considerations related to data, audience and survey participants, including all the procedures concerning the protection of human subjects as listed in Gajjar (2013) and Connelly (2014). Accordingly, the survey was sent to the Ethics Committee Concerning Research into People, Society and the Environment (Comitè Ètic d'Investigació en Persones, Societat i Medi Ambient) from Rovira i Virgili University, which has approved the survey (approval number: CEIPSA-2021-TD-0026) before it was sent to the selected participants (refer to Appendix C for the approval of the ethics committee). The ethics committee made sure the survey participants' rights of voluntary participation and withdrawal at any stage of the study were guaranteed. In addition, they were provided with all the necessary information about the conduct of the survey on the first page of the survey, followed by a mandatory field where they had to give consent if they wanted to take part in the research.

4.8 Summary

This chapter gave a full description of the methodological approaches, methods, participants, materials, sampling techniques and instruments used for data collection and analysis of the present research study.

To explore whether the *English for Palestine* textbook series has the potential for promoting students' acquisition of IC, the convergent parallel mixed methods approach was employed. Three databases were adapted to proceed with the data collection process. While the first two databases (see pages 69 & 73) were used to cover the qualitative cultural aspects, the third database (see page

90) targeted the quantitative aspects of the textbooks. Qualitative data were collected through a deep examination of the categories mentioned in the first two databases in order to reveal trends and patterns in the cultural content. On the other hand, quantitative data were collected by either counting the number of times a cultural element recurred (e.g., figures' nationalities), or measuring the space allocated for the target cultural component in square centimeters (e.g., space covered with micro-culture). Whereas the quantitative findings were presented in tables and graphs, the qualitative results were presented under certain themes, supported with examples from the textbooks.

To explore the potential of Palestinian EFL teachers for promoting students' acquisition of IC, the researcher followed the quantitative research approach. Accordingly, a nation-wide survey was created using Google Docs and distributed to 373 Palestinian EFL teachers, who were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Emails containing a link to the survey were sent to the selected participants to ask them to take part in the study. 360 Palestinian EFL teachers completed the survey successfully. The IBM SPSS Statistics, v. 25 program was used to analyze the collected data. While the mean and standard deviation values were calculated to measure the teachers' level of IC, the Chi-square test of independence was run to investigate whether there was a correlation between international exposure and training in teaching culture on the one hand, and teachers' perception and practice of IC, on the other hand. Finally, all the ethical considerations were taken into account while conducting all the aforementioned procedures.

The following three chapters will present the obtained findings. Chapters 5 and 6 will include the findings related to the analysis of the *English for Palestine* textbook series, while chapter 7 will present the findings regarding the potential of Palestinian EFL teachers for promoting students' acquisition of IC.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOKS

This chapter aims to provide a preliminary description of the syllabus, main linguistic components and cultural aspects of the *English for Palestine* textbook series. A qualitative analysis of the EFL textbooks will be carried out at two levels. The first level aims to provide an overall description of the syllabus/syllabi, language variety/varieties, lexicon and phonological representations used in the textbooks under study. The purpose of this preliminary analysis is to find out whether the status of English as a lingua franca has been taken into consideration while deciding on the dialectal, lexical and phonological choices to be included in the textbooks. This proves essential to this piece of research, as promoting intercultural communication requires a syllabus with an international scope (Nault, 2006). A deeper analysis of cultural elements occurs at the second level of the analysis where cultural aspects are classified into three dimensions (i.e., micro, macro and intercultural). This second analysis is conducted in order to have a clearer insight into the textbooks' elements (e.g., characters and texts) in terms of their cultural appropriateness. Excerpts from the textbooks will be displayed to provide real examples in order to make the analysis more comprehensible.

5.1 General Overview of the Textbooks

In this section, an adapted version of Gray's (2006) framework is used to describe the syllabus and the dialectal, lexical and phonological components of the *English for Palestine* textbook series in connection to their potential for promoting a wider range of intercultural linguistic representations. The adapted version of the framework, as shown in Figure 5.1 below, retains the first part of the original version and excludes the other part, referred to as "skills content" (see Gray, 2006, p. 85). The decision was made considering the relevance of the database categories to the research question related to this part of the study, which can be formulated as follows:

- To what extent is culture treated as an essential element in the syllabus and the linguistic components of the *English for Palestine* textbook series?

Figure 5.1

Gray's Framework for Describing the Cultural Content of EFL Textbooks (Adapted from Gray, 2006, p. 85)

| Elements of Content | Representational Repertoire |
|---------------------|---|
| Syllabus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of syllabus does the coursebook follow? • What purposes/contexts of use (if any) does this presuppose? |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which varieties of English are represented (British, North American, etc.)? • Are there any representations of L2 varieties of English? • How are they represented? • Is the grammar of spoken English distinguished from written grammar? |
| Phonology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a model of pronunciation? • Which aspects of pronunciation are addressed (e.g., segmental/suprasegmental features)? • Is phonological variation represented? |
| Lexis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which lexical fields are taught? • What purpose does the lexis serve? |

5.1.1 Syllabus

A close examination of the third page for all the twenty-four textbooks under analysis (i.e., the syllabus page) and the organization of the material in each unit have revealed that the textbook syllabi can be classified into four types. The first eight textbooks designed to teach grades 1 to 4 (i.e., PB1, PB2, PB3, and PB4) follow a pure lexical syllabus, which identifies a list of a target lexicon to be taught in each unit. The next six textbooks, designed for grades 5 to 7 (i.e., PB5, PB6,

and PB7), embrace a mixture of the lexical and grammatical syllabi whereby the whole coursebooks are built around predetermined lexical and grammatical items. The next six coursebooks, i.e., PB8, PB9 and PB10, follow a hybrid syllabus that is made of a mixture of grammatical and functional features. The last type of syllabus that has been adopted for grades eleventh and twelfth textbooks is a skill-based one that incorporates language components, which go in line with the targeted reading, speaking, listening and writing skills.

What is of note here is that no space has been specially allocated in both the syllabi and the textbooks' units for any direct cultural references. It is also clear that none of the textbooks follow a competency-based syllabus that uses competencies as the basis according to which the targeted language systems can be determined. As a result, it can be said that culture has been integrated into a pure language-based course, which allocates a secondary role for culture.

5.1.2 Language, Phonology and Lexis

A thorough examination of the entire *English for Palestine* textbook series revealed that the incorporated English variety is entirely standard British English (forthcoming RP). No clear effort was made to help students differentiate or even notice the difference between spoken and standard English even when the texts needed to include some aspects of spoken English to sound more authentic as in the case of dialogues.

Representations of other English varieties were not detected throughout the entire textbook series, except for some incidents where there were a couple of references to how words such as 'football' is said in American English. Even when the characters were supposed to be North Americans, their accent was kept British (see *Pupil's Book 8B*, p. 52). British accents were also not referred to at all. Surprisingly, all textbook characters including the Palestinian ones speak a pure RP, which makes them very difficult to be distinguished from the other British characters when

heard in listening activities. This seems to be a planned approach, as *Teacher's Book 10* reads “the audio CDs contain native-speaker recordings of all listening texts and dialogues in the Pupil's Book, to give a clear model for all language structures, key vocabulary and letter sounds” (Beare, 2014, p. 5). The same quoted sentence is repeated in the other teacher's books.

Additionally, examination of the listening materials intended to teach pronunciation reveals that RP is used as the only model of pronunciation throughout all the textbooks. Cases of phonological variation were not detected neither at the level of UK accents nor at the level of other international English varieties. Pronunciation exercises cover both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, which are differently distributed throughout the primary and secondary textbooks. The intensity of segmental over suprasegmental features is clearly represented in PB1, PB2, and PB3. The next four pupil's books (i.e., PB4 and PB5) pay less attention to both aspects of pronunciation. However, suprasegmental features receive more attention than segmental aspects in the pupil's books 6 to 11. The last two textbooks, which are designed to teach pupils in the twelfth grade, contain almost no reference to any segmental or suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation. This may be justified by the fact that the general secondary education certification examination (known as Tawjihi) does not cover listening and speaking skills. Therefore, PB12 and RP12 are mainly designed to enhance reading and writing skills.

Regarding the lexical choice, the teacher's books made for the first twenty textbooks (designed for grades 1 to 10) state that the choice of the lexicon was determined based on the high-frequency level of vocabulary items. However, in the last four textbooks designed for the secondary level, the choice of the lexicon is governed by the topics of the textbooks units, which are determined in line with students' interests and appropriateness for their age. As for the way lexis is introduced, new vocabulary is presented first before the target text is tackled at the primary and

elementary levels. In contrast, vocabulary at the secondary level is presented in context, which normally takes the form of reading passages and texts.

The findings in this section reflect a tendency of looking at RP as the only model of English that should be acquired by EFL learners, which renders the textbooks less communicative in terms of the use of real-life English accents and varieties.

5.2 Analysis of the Textbooks' Cultural Content

So far, we have provided a general overview of the syllabus types as well as the dialectal, lexical and phonological components of the *English for Palestine* textbook series. This was necessary to get a preliminary image of the textbooks' readiness for developing intercultural competence before we proceed with a more comprehensive evaluation. In this section, an adapted version of Risager's (1991) framework is used to conduct a qualitative analysis of the textbooks under study. The framework, as it appears in Figure 5.2 below, examines the cultural content at three levels. Whereas the micro level looks at small-scale cultural aspects (e.g., textbook characters and the material elements), the macro level covers broader cultural issues, which may include cultural topics related to social structures, historical and geographical facts, and political issues. The intercultural level, on the other hand, evaluates international aspects as they appear in the textbooks. These cross-cultural aspects can stretch from comparisons between two or more cultures to cover all sorts of intercultural representations and relations. Thus, the following qualitative analysis attempts to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent can the micro and macro cultural representations in the *English for Palestine* textbook series help students form authentic, deep, non-stereotypical, and critical views about their own culture and the target culture?

- What international comparisons, mutual representations, and mutual relations are present in the textbooks?

Figure 5.2

Risager's (1991) Framework for Describing Cultural Content (Adapted from Gray, 2006, p. 66)

| Dimensions | Cultural Aspects |
|---|---|
| The micro level – phenomena of social and cultural anthropology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the social and geographical definition of characters • material environment • situations of interaction • interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems. |
| The macro level – social, political, and historical matters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broad social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economic, political etc.) • broad socio-political problems (unemployment, pollution etc.) • historical backgrounds. |
| International and intercultural issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparisons between the foreign country and the pupil's own • mutual representations, images, stereotypes • mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, co-operation and conflict. |

5.2.1 The Micro Level

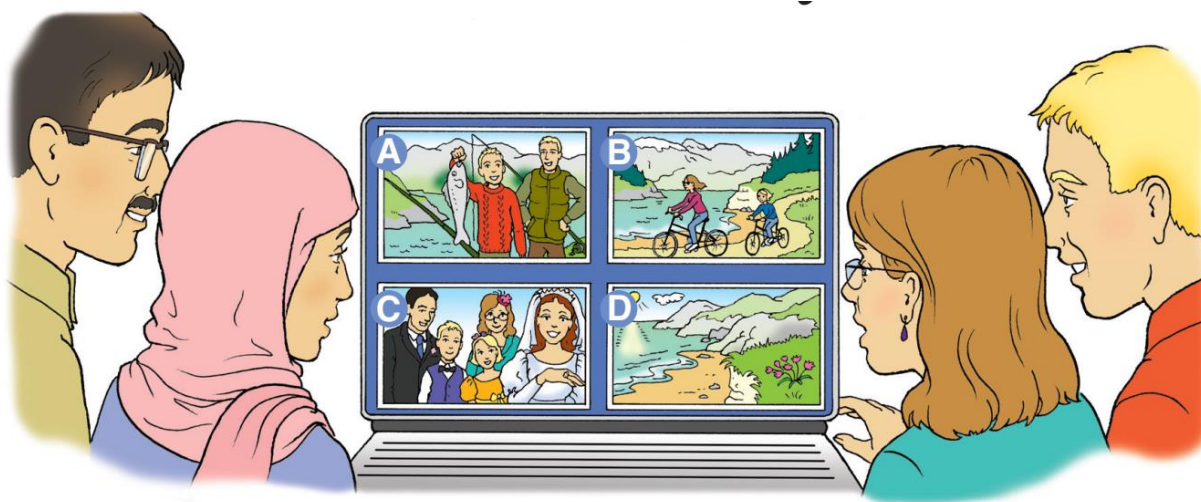
A description of the characters' social classes, sex roles and nationalities as they appear in the textbooks will be provided in the following paragraphs. However, it is worth mentioning that while the characters' social and geographical characteristics are recognizable at the secondary level, they are hardly definable in the elementary textbooks.

The characters' social class starts to be exposed in the upper elementary textbooks, which have eight main characters along with other secondary characters. The main characters are Palestinian twins (Omar and Rania) and their parents, and two British siblings (Amy and Ben),

who are also accompanied by their parents. While Ben's father works as an engineer in Ramallah, the occupation of Omar's father remains unknown. However, the way he is presented and the relation that he and his family have with a British family, who certainly belong to the middle class, are all indicative that he is most likely a middle-class man (see Figure 5.3 below). On the other hand, building the textbooks' content around certain characters becomes less common at the secondary level. The focus is still on people belonging to the middle class, along with other classes being represented. A radical change occurs at the upper secondary level, with no fixed characters and a wider representation of all social classes.

Figure 5.3

Characters in the Upper Elementary Textbooks, Pupil's Book 5B (Arnold, 2012, p. 9)



Despite the fact that both genders along with their different age groups are to some extent represented equally in all the textbooks, gender bias seems to be present in most of the textbooks. While women are represented doing out-of-home occupations, they seem to have not only retained their stereotypical domestic work but also limited to certain out-of-home jobs. For example, in the elementary level women are depicted as housewives, teachers and nurses (see

Pupil's Book 3A, p. 10), but not as farmers, policewomen or drivers, which are limited to male characters (see Figure 5.4 below). Besides, in the upper elementary textbooks, the main characters' mothers are continuously depicted cooking and setting the table (see *Pupil's Book 6A*, pp. 43, 48 & 56). However, this changes as we move towards the upper secondary level, as they become depicted in a wider range of out-of-home occupations. For instance, women are depicted farming in *Pupil's Book 11* (p. 129) as well as working in factories (see Figure 5.5 below).

Figure 5.4

Example about Female Characters in Stereotypical Roles, Pupil's Book 3A (Arnold, 2011, p. 10)

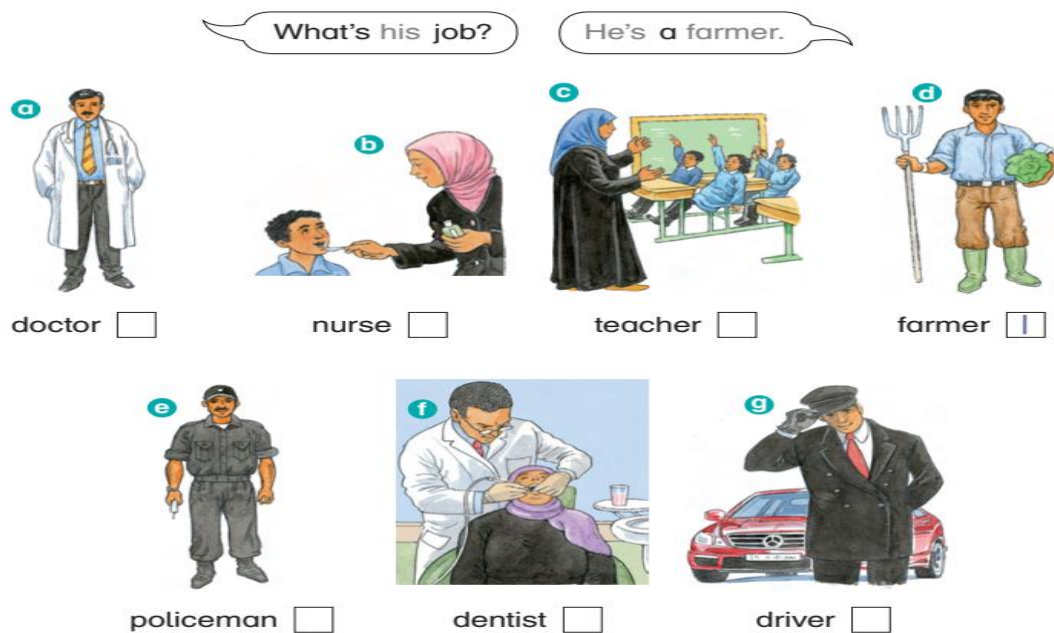


Figure 5.5

Example about Female Characters in Non-Stereotypical Roles, Pupil's Book 11 (Baxter, 2015, p. 26)



Regarding the characters' nationalities, whereas the elementary, upper elementary and secondary textbooks are extensively full of characters that belong to the first and second cultures (i.e., the Palestinian, American and British cultures), the upper secondary textbooks include not only characters from English-speaking countries, but also other European, African and Middle Eastern countries. Thus, the tendency to include not only the native English-speaking countries (i.e., the USA and the UK), but also other international countries becomes most noticeable at the highest educational level, i.e., the upper secondary. This could be attributed to the belief that secondary students are more capable to relate to a wider range of countries than younger learners.

Concerning the physical appearance of the textbooks' characters, throughout the elementary and upper elementary textbooks, Palestinian characters were all depicted in line with what an average Palestinian looks like, i.e., a person with tanned or white skin color and brown or black hair. British characters, on the other hand, were always depicted with a fair skin complexion

and blonde hair. Moving to the secondary level, the emphasis is still reserved for British and Palestinian characters, depicted with the same typical traits as mentioned above. However, some British and American characters were portrayed, though insignificantly, with different physical features.

Characters' positive and neutral feelings have been prioritized over negative feelings throughout the entire textbook levels. Even when negative feelings, such as anger, hatred or fear, are represented in the textbooks, they are always replaced with positive feelings at the end of the dialogues. Broader representation of authentic feelings is found in the literature included in the upper secondary textbooks. However, since these feelings are not ascribed to the textbook characters, they are not expected to have a significant effect on students' perception of the represented feelings.

Characters express their opinions on a variety of topics. However, their preoccupations are of minor value, such as where to spend their next holidays, what to eat and how to do their school projects. Deep topics related to sociopolitical questions, for instance, are rarely treated and when they are, they are superficially approached. For example, the United Nations' role in solving international conflicts is approached several times without referring to the monopoly of the organization by certain dominant countries, which renders the organization incapable of interfering in conflicts whose sides are major powers, such as the USA and Russia.

Situations of interaction are of two types, as suggested by Risgaer (1991): scenario-directed and service-oriented. Whereas conversations taking place at home, school or outside with friends or acquaintances without a service being involved are referred to as scenario-directed, service-oriented situations are those which are prompted by a "dyadic service" (p. 185), such as ordering a meal, booking a hotel room, etc. Overall, the scenario-directed situations are largely used throughout the *English for Palestine* textbooks, with very little coverage of service-oriented

situations. The scenario-directed situations are mainly related to family, school and friendship affairs. Pupil's books 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, however, include some service-oriented situations, such as ordering food at a restaurant, asking and giving directions, visiting a doctor, and enrolling at a school. The textbooks designed for grades 11 and 12, on the other hand, are mainly based on reading texts, which involve no dialogues. Thus, they belong neither to the service-oriented nor to the scenario-directed situations.

The most eye-catching feature of the textbooks' environment is the use of colors, which have been utilized to organize the content of the textbooks into separate units marked with different colors. There is also a focus on Palestinian tourist attractions and symbols from the very first textbook page, i.e., the cover page, which, in each textbook, depicts a Palestinian tourist attraction or a national symbol. For example, PB4's cover page depicts Al-Ibrahimi Mosque, and PB11 uses a Palestinian embroidered dress as a background image for its cover page.

In brief, it can be said that the textbooks' environment reflects a celebratory approach to culture presentation whereby tourist attractions along with national symbols from the local and target cultures are highlighted. In addition, the characters' feelings, attitudes, and views are mostly positive and their perceived problems are mainly trivial.

5.2.2 The Macro Level

Providing social facts about foreign societies in EFL textbooks is usually done either by assigning a certain space at the end of textbooks' chapters (they can be included in the mother tongue) to directly address these facts, or by embedding them within various types of texts (see Lafayette's approach to teaching culture, 1978). As for the first method, it does not seem to be implemented in the textbooks under study. Even though a couple of cultural boxes exist in the upper secondary level, they seem to be unplanned and very scarce to the extent that they are hardly noticeable.

Concerning the other method, that is embedding sociocultural facts within texts, social facts are rarely tackled in the elementary and upper elementary levels, as the incorporated texts appear to be tailored to the age group of the intended students, necessitating language simplification. The secondary and upper secondary levels, on the other hand, incorporate more sociocultural facts within the texts. The themes range from greeting habits (tackled in *Pupil's Book 7A*, p. 6) to literacy rates in Palestine as it appears in PB11 (p. 33). Once again, the treated social facts do not seem to be approached critically. Thus, they usually do not go further than mentioning them without looking into their roots or implications.

The question of what culture to teach in the EFL classroom has gained more momentum in the last few decades. Focusing on the light side rather than the dark side of culture as Oxford (1995) suggests, does not reveal a realistic picture of foreign cultures. Therefore, the sociopolitical problems of a certain culture must be touched on so that students would realize that there is no such thing as 'the best' or 'the worst' culture, but rather different cultures with different perspectives. Examples of sociopolitical problems that can be tackled in the EFL classroom are homelessness, sexual harassment, mass shooting, military and economic hegemony, etc. However, age groups must be taken into consideration when choosing and approaching dark cultural topics.

Surprisingly, there is only one single social problem that was addressed throughout the textbooks which are designed to teach grades one to eight. This fact shifts at the upper secondary level with around ten social and political problems are tackled. Although some of the social problems (e.g., health problems related to excessive consumption of fast food and lack of exercising) cannot be described as deep social problems, others are found to be deep and in line with the target age group's interests (e.g., loneliness and fitting in in social groups). Political problems, on the other hand, are exclusively limited to the Palestinian cause, which is approached through the inclusion of a related series of historical events at the upper secondary level only.

Historical backgrounds are not provided separately to introduce the actual educational texts. However, historical information about political, economic and social issues is incorporated in the various reading texts at the upper secondary level only. No historical background information was provided at the other school levels.

Additionally, the textbooks contain some false representations about life in Palestine. For example, Palestinians and tourists are depicted traveling freely by car from the West Bank to Gaza with no restrictions of any type (see *Pupil's Book 5A*, p. 56 & *Pupil's Book 5B*, p. 40). This does not represent reality, as Israel has been imposing a blockade on Gaza since 2007, which is before the creation of the *English for Palestine* textbook series. Another unrealistic representation of life in Palestine appears in *Pupil's Book 9A* (pp. 4 & 11) and *Pupil's Book 10A* (p. 7). The books show the main characters traveling abroad through Arafat International Airport in Gaza, which is not real because the airport has ceased operation since 2001. The reality is that Palestinians who live in Gaza need to cross the borders with Egypt first before they can travel from Egyptian airports, while Palestinians who live in the West Bank use Jordanian airports to travel to other countries. That said, one might justify the former false representation due to the necessity of simplification, which is required at the elementary level. However, the latter case cannot be justified, as the target age group is secondary, rendering realistic representation to be the best choice in this context.

To sum up, the findings reached at the macro level reflect a superficial representation of the social, political, and historical topics that are included in the textbooks. Additionally, some false representations of the sociopolitical situation in Palestine are also included in the textbooks. These two factors are likely to affect the appropriateness of the cultural aspects listed under the macro level.

5.2.3 International and Intercultural Issues

International and intercultural issues encompass comparisons between different cultures, mutual representations of cultures, and intercultural relations, including cultural power, dominance, cooperation, and conflict. To start with, intercultural comparisons play a major role in opening students' eyes on similarities and differences between their own culture and the other foreign cultures. Comparisons can cover issues related to the Palestinian and British cultures, or they can reach beyond that to cover a wide range of international cultures. They can also touch upon deep cultural issues or be limited to superficial facts.

Overall, there is a steady increase in the number and quality of comparisons as we move towards the higher levels. Throughout the entire elementary textbooks, there are only a couple of comparisons that bring forward direct information about school timing and weather in Palestine and the UK. An example on this can be seen in *Pupil's Book 4B*, which shows two pictures depicting a school in the UK and in Palestine. The pictures show a swarm of Palestinian pupils walking through what seems to be a school owned by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and another picture of a British school where children are reading and playing quietly with a beautiful scenery behind them (see Figure 5.6 below).

Figure 5.6

Example about Misrepresentation of Local Culture, Pupil's Book 4B (Arnold, 2011, p. 18)



In Britain ...

- 1 school starts at 8:30 / 8:45
- 2 school finishes at 3:00 / 3:30.
- 3 break starts at 10:45 / 11:45.
- 4 break finishes at 11:00 / 12:00.

In Palestine ...

- 5 school starts at 7:00 / 8:00.
- 6 school finishes at 1:30 / 1:45.
- 7 break starts at 10:15 / 10:45.
- 8 break finishes at 10:45 / 11:15.

The number and intercultural scope of the comparisons begin to change at the secondary and upper secondary levels. Starting with PB7 A and ending with RP12, countries such as China, Russia, Bangladesh, Finland and Algeria along with Palestine or the UK become the centre of intercultural comparisons. Around ten comparisons are included in the secondary textbooks. The comparisons cover a wide range of social (wedding customs), educational (education systems), economic (time concept) and political (government and political systems) topics. The topics of the comparisons are of a low-level type, which cover mainly contrastive information, with very little to no attempt to compare attitudes and values of different cultures (see Figure 5.7 below). Similar to the rest of the incorporated comparisons, this example states mere facts of how weddings are celebrated in various countries. The last two lines in the text stress the difference in wedding customs around the world in a sentence that reads, "Round the world, wedding customs are very

different, but they are all for the same purpose: to put a man and a woman on the road to a happy future as husband and wife” (*Pupil’s Book 8B*, 2013, p. 44). Although the sentence stresses the shared purpose of various wedding customs, it also exaggerates the differences in wedding customs, which are actually not significantly different.

Figure 5.7

Example about Superficial Comparisons of International Wedding Customs, Pupil’s Book 8B (Macfarlane, 2013, p. 44)

What a wedding!

Everyone loves a wedding, but people celebrate weddings in a thousand different ways. Here are some of the most interesting customs.


Before the wedding: In the Philippines, the bride and her assistants must all wear the same dresses. They do this to stop bad spirits from finding the bride and carrying her away.

At the wedding: A groom in Spain gives his bride her wedding ring and then a little money in order to show that he will work hard for everything they need.

At the wedding party: In many countries, the bride and groom both hold the knife in order to cut the wedding cake together. This shows that they will be a good team. In Scotland, people only eat half of the cake at the wedding. They keep the other to eat when the first child arrives.

After the wedding: In Palestine, the bride sticks some bread dough to the front door of her new home. This is to show that she and her husband will stay together all their lives.

Round the world, wedding customs are very different, but they are all for the same purpose: to put a man and a woman on the road to a happy future together as husband and wife.



Mutual representations are discussed from a nationality point of view. In other words, the main concern here is to find out how self is contrasted to the other at the international level. Mutual representations can take the form of images and stereotypes about various cultures. Stereotypes in the EFL textbooks could be direct or indirect. Direct stereotyping is usually a straightforward claim

about self or other, whereby certain characteristics are attributed to them. An example on direct stereotyping is the claim that Americans are monolingual. Indirect stereotypes, on the other hand, can take the form of visuals or be embedded indirectly in the texts without explicit references being made. Such stereotypes usually need a scrutinizing eye to be recognized.

Direct stereotypes are spotted only in three occasions. The first one occurred in PB9 B when the main character Hadeel, who has just arrived from the USA to visit her aunt in Palestine, referred to the Palestinian neighbours as more helpful than the American ones back in the USA. Addressing her aunt, who is cooking for their neighbour because she is going through a tough time, she says “If something like that happens back home, neighbours don’t usually help as much. You seem to have a closer community here” (*Pupil’s Book 9B*, 2014, p. 4). Aunt Nada, the Palestinian character, replied with a simple confirmation to what had Hadeel said, which reflected a simplified and non-critical way of thinking. One more stereotype is included in the same textbook, which describes how time is perceived in different cultures. The idea is presented in connection to business training only with no reference to the cultural roots of such differences or sparking a discussion in the post-reading questions over the validity of such stereotypes, which would have surely enabled students to think about themselves and others in a more critical way than just taking things for granted. It is worth mentioning that invitations to discuss the validity of such stereotypes are not found at all throughout the entire textbook series.

Indirect stereotypes, on the other hand, are related to the depiction of both Palestine and Britain as mono-ethnic societies. While this claim could be acceptable about the Palestinian society, it is not the case for the British society, which is multi-ethnic without question. This representation is indirectly introduced to the students by means of illustrating the textbooks’ main characters, who are supposed to be British, with blonde hair and a fair skin complexion, with no references to any type of other British person who would have different hair and skin colours.

Another visual that reinforces the view of Africa as a poor conflict zone (depicted in Figure 5.8 below), which represents African people as refugees who receive donations from volunteers. The picture shows a group of African people who seem to have fled a war (referred to as 'a man-made disaster' in the textbook) while being helped by white people.

Figure 5.8

Example about Reinforcement of Students' Previous Perception, Pupil's Book 9B (Macfarlane, 2014, p. 79)

There has been fighting in Africa, and hundreds of families have been leaving their homes to find safety. Volunteers are helping to build a camp for the victims of this man-made disaster.

- 1 A large plane is dropping food over the camp.
Food is being dropped over the camp by a large plane.
- 2 People are carrying bags of food to somewhere safe.
Bags of food are being carried somewhere safe.
- 3 Two engineers are setting up equipment to provide clean water.
- 4 Two more engineers are looking at plans for a new road.
- 5 People are building simple homes for the families who are arriving.
- 6 A nurse is checking babies and young children.
- 7 People are cutting up wood to use for cooking.
- 8 A newspaper reporter is asking people questions.



A close inspection of the coursebooks under study revealed that the textbooks used at the elementary and upper elementary levels depict only mutual relations that are based on cooperation at the characters' level rather than at the level of countries. This trend seems to change at the secondary level with PB9 tackling almost three cases of cooperation, which take place at the international level. The cases are about saving the oceans, helping war victims and doing community work. Some other references about early Muslim conquests of Jerusalem and Spain are also found in the same level. The references are straightforward, providing only facts of the heroic

deeds of the Muslim leaders. Pride of the Muslim history is clearly shown in the dialogues, which describes the Muslim rule in Andalusia and Jerusalem as a golden age.

The upper secondary level, on the other hand, includes more texts on international cooperation, conflict and dominance issues. While cooperation issues are still tackled the most, topics related to conflict and dominance received less coverage. Texts on international cooperation covered sports (construction of a skate park by the British group SkatePal, RP11, p. 18), political (mediation in international conflicts by the United Nations, PB10 B, p. 75) and scientific domains (British/Palestinian joint research, PB10 A, p. 4). Conflict topics, on the other hand, included the devastating effects of Israeli settlements on the Palestinian landscape, Palestinian refugees around the world and the Nakba (i.e., the permanent displacement of Palestinians in 1948). Topics related to Americanization and decision taking in the International Olympic Committee formed examples on power and dominance relations.

The comprehension questions following the reading texts about cooperation and power issues are of the content and language-question types. Very few questions are of the affect-question type, which aim at assessing students' feelings and attitudes towards the information in the reading texts (Freeman, 2014). Such questions of low value do not offer much for the development of students' critical thinking.

Overall, the current findings show that the intercultural aspects under analysis were not represented adequately, rendering the textbooks to be less likely to enhance students' competence in cross-cultural communications.

5.3 Summary

The analysis showed that (1) the *English for Palestine* textbook series follow a pure language-based syllabus, which allocates a secondary role for culture. Additionally, (2) the dialectal, lexical

and phonological components in the textbooks were exclusively designed to teach only one English variety, i.e., RP, with no attention paid to getting students acquainted with other varieties. This reflects a widespread belief that views English as a property of native speakers. It thus, ignores the particularity of English as a lingua franca, which entails the need for a wider international approach. At the micro level, (3) characters express celebratory views about their cultures. Their attitudes are mostly positive, and their perceived problems are mainly trivial. Besides, female characters are portrayed performing stereotypical roles related to domestic housework and a limited range of jobs in the elementary, upper elementary and secondary textbooks. It is unlikely that such representations can help students acquire critical thinking skills, which are essential for carrying out successful communication. At the macro level, (4) in addition to the superficial nature of the social, political, and historical topics that are included in the textbooks, there have been other false representations of life in Palestine, which could have been used to introduce deep cultural topics if they had been presented correctly. As for the international and intercultural issues, (5) the textbooks lack representation of deep topics, rendering the international comparisons to be of low value. Similarly, mutual representations are found to promote stereotypical descriptions of both self and other. Mutual relations, on the other hand, have been restricted to cover issues related to cooperation at the elementary, upper elementary and secondary levels. Very few cases where issues related to conflict and power are covered in the upper secondary level. This could be justified, since the target age group does not allow for a wider representation of such topics. However, the incorporated topics should have been done at a deeper level.

In the chapter that follows, a quantitative analysis of the textbooks will be conducted in an attempt to assess the textbooks' potential for promoting IC. Thus, the purpose is to cover all the cultural aspects present in the textbooks, leading to more a comprehensive description of the textbooks' potential for promoting students' IC.

CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOKS

This chapter will present the results of the quantitative analysis of the cultural content of the *English for Palestine* textbook series. The analysis was conducted in order to evaluate the textbooks in terms of their potential for promoting the acquisition of intercultural competence (IC) from a quantitative angle. The chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first section will provide a detailed description of the database used to collect the textbook data whereas the second section will present the findings regarding the textbooks' potential for promoting IC. The findings section will be divided into five parts, which will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- How are the renowned figures in the textbooks represented as regards to their nationalities, occupational roles and gender?
- How is the cultural component of the textbooks distributed over the three dimensions of culture? How deep and realistic are the international and intercultural topics?
- How is the cultural content distributed over the local, target and foreign cultures?
- What intercultural contacts are embedded in the textbooks (i.e., their situations, types and the quality of their topics)?
- What perspectives and cultural tasks are assimilated in the textbooks?

6.1 Description of Textbook Database

The database used to collect data from the *English for Palestine* textbook series was adapted from Sercu's (2000) study.³ The categories of the database were designed to help conduct a comprehensive analysis of EFL textbooks' cultural content in terms of its effectiveness in developing students' IC (see Figure 6.1 below). This database was deemed suitable for this research

³ The study aimed to assess the potential of Flemish German language textbooks in facilitating the acquisition of IC among adolescent pupils in Flanders.

because it covers all components of IC (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness) as specified by Byram (1997). It also encompasses all the quantifiable cultural aspects of the textbooks under study.

Figure 6.1

An Adapted Version of Sercu's (2000) Database (pp. 263-264), Demonstrating the Cultural Elements That Will be Quantitatively Analyzed in This Research

| |
|--|
| Location |
| 1.1 Title of book |
| 1.2 Unit |
| 1.3 Period |
| 1.4 Page |
| Renowned figures (celebrities) |
| 2.1 Nationality |
| 2.2 Gender |
| 2.3 Occupation |
| Dimensions of culture represented |
| 3.1 Micro level |
| 3.2 Macro level |
| 3.3 International and intercultural issues |
| Countries represented |
| Intercultural contacts |
| 5.1 Type of intercultural contact |
| 5.2 Type of background for intercultural contact |
| 5.3 Type of intercultural situation |
| Didactic approach |
| 6.1 Point of view of authors |
| 6.1.1 Multiperspectivity – monoperspectivity |
| 6.1.2 Qualitative direction of point of view |
| 6.2 Task types |
| 6.3.1 Educational potential of tasks |
| 6.3.2 Main objective of tasks |
| 6.3.3 Level of co-operation required |
| 6.3.4 Other task characteristics |
| -address pupils' prior knowledge about the foreign culture |
| -address pupils' attitudes towards the foreign culture |
| -address pupils' own cultural frame of reference |
| Space |

The first category in the database (i.e., *location*) was created to help locate the collected data, which makes the retrieval of all cultural references easily accessible. This can be of great significance at later stages when retrieval of data is required to verify the results. The second category, that is *renowned figures (celebrities)*, aims at presenting a description of all the textbooks' figures, including their gender, nationalities and occupations. It should be highlighted that this category has been treated differently in the current research than it was approached by Sercu (2000) in her aforementioned study. While Sercu treated both the textbooks' characters and renowned figures as one category, the focus in the current quantitative analysis was on the figures only. However, the characters were included in the qualitative analysis in the previous chapter. This decision was taken based on the difficulty of determining the nationalities and occupations of the textbooks' characters in most cases.

The *cultural dimensions* field, on the other hand, classifies culture as represented in the textbooks under certain categories, i.e., the micro level, the macro level, and the international and intercultural issues. The micro level refers to the type of culture that presents individuals' everyday life, which includes their "real emotions, attitudes, values and perceived problems" (Sercu, 2000, p. 254). The macro level provides a broader representation of a certain culture that includes "broad social facts about contemporary society, and broad socio-political problems, preferably in their historical contexts" (Sercu, 2000, p. 254). As for the dimension of *international and intercultural issues*, it refers to topics that cover comparisons between foreign and local cultures as well as mutual representations of and relations between different cultures (Risager, 1991).

The fourth category, referred to as *countries represented*, aims to give a clear image of the countries represented in the textbooks. Thus, it seeks to give a description of the representation of native English-speaking countries compared to non-native English-speaking countries. This is

deemed important, because it helps gain insight into the international scope of the textbooks under study, which is an important aspect of IC.

Another aspect, which suggests whether the textbooks incorporate a solid ground for promoting IC, is the aspect of *intercultural contacts*. This aspect suggests that the chances of students developing their intercultural skills are expected to get higher when more references of cross-cultural contacts are included in the textbooks. To give a clear description of such references the 'type of intercultural contacts' (e.g., an international potluck, a college fair, etc.) along with their 'background information' (e.g., nationalities of interlocutors) will be provided. It also provides information on whether the stated intercultural situation allows a serious cross-cultural exchange to occur, such as misunderstandings or comparisons between first, second and third cultures.

The last field (i.e., *didactic approach*) was mainly adopted to measure the type of attitudes and skills that the authors aimed to develop throughout the target textbooks. Therefore, it was deemed important to study the authors' viewpoints, which were classified into either mono-perspectival or multi-perspectival. Besides, references to the target culture were classified into either 'negative' or 'not negative'. In this context, Sercu (2000) comments that "coding themes as either 'positive', 'neutral' or 'negative' was not workable since codes were not mutually exclusive" (p. 265). Therefore, 'neutral' and 'positive' references were marked 'not negative'. Examples on negative references may address issues related to homelessness, obsessive consumerism, etc.

Concerning the second part of the last category, i.e., *task types*, it seeks to evaluate the educational potential of cultural tasks for promoting pupils' IC. This aim could be realized by assessing the level of involvement required from pupils to successfully accomplish the target tasks. In this context, Hoa (2011) recommends the need for the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains to be tackled in order for EFL students to successfully internalize certain cross-cultural

attitudes and skills. Thus, there was a need for creating a specific scheme, which could give a reliable description of the cultural tasks. Accordingly, four categories have been suggested to serve this need: 'apperception', 'reproduction', 'processing' and 'application'. The first three categories belong to the "receptive-reproductive operations", while the last one reflects the "higher order productive operations" (Sercu, 2000, pp. 293-294). The four categories have been created in accordance with De Corte et al.'s (1981) cognitive and Krathwohl et al.'s (1970) affective learning taxonomies.

For the collected data to make sense, it was important to assign specific 'weights' to certain sets of data. Thus, data in the written, aural and visual formats were given significance using 'line,' which was deemed to be more suitable than other 'weights', such as 'word'. This terminology was considered more suitable for the current analysis because while other types of studies investigated cultural vocabulary incorporated in EFL textbooks, the present study aimed to evaluate the potential of all elements of the EFL textbooks under study, which in addition to words include both visuals and listening materials. Therefore, 'line' was considered a more appropriate and neutral 'weight' for the sought task.

6.2 Findings of the Quantitative Analysis

The presentation of the findings of the quantitative analysis will follow the same sequential order as in the database shown in Figure 6.1 above. In other words, the findings will be presented in five sections, which cover the textbooks' renowned figures, cultural dimensions, countries represented, intercultural contacts, and the didactic approach, respectively. Throughout this chapter, data will be presented in tables and bar charts in order to make the presentation of the findings clear and easy to follow for the reader.

6.2.1 Renowned Figures

Manual calculation of frequencies was applied to reveal the number of the textbooks' figures. Multiple frequencies of the same name under the same topic were counted as a single occurrence. However, if the figure was mentioned again under another topic, it was counted twice. As for their occupations and nationalities, they were either obtained from the textbooks if they were mentioned, or retrieved from reliable sources on the Internet.

Table 6.1 below shows the distribution of figures in each textbook by nationality. Overall, there is a trend towards incorporating a bigger number of international figures in the secondary level textbooks. Whereas there is no mention of any figures in the textbooks created for the first four grades (i.e., PB1, PB2, PB3 and PB4), PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12 incorporated 31 and 35 figures, respectively. A closer look at Table 6.1 reveals even more in terms of the figures' nationalities. Starting with PB5 and progressing upwards, more than half of the incorporated figures are predominantly of Palestinian, British, or American nationalities, except for PB9 and PB10, which feature a higher number of figures from other nationalities. Across the textbooks, representation of figures from the local (Palestinian), target (British and American), and other cultures was either balanced, as in the case with PB5, PB7, and PB10, or skewed towards British and American figures (evident in the textbooks created for grades 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12). Figures from the Middle Eastern and European regions are also present but to a lesser extent. In summary, the data indicate a prevalence of Palestinian and English-speaking nationalities (American, British, Irish, South African, Australian, and Canadian) in the textbooks compared to other nationalities.

Table 6.1

Distribution of Figures by Nationality

| Country | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Palestine | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| USA | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 6 |
| UK | | | | | | 2 | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 15 |
| Ireland | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| S. Africa | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 2 |
| Australia | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Canada | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| France | | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | |
| Russia | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Morocco | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| Egypt | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Brazil | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| KSA | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Turkey | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Greece | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Syria | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| India | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Poland | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Italy | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| Jordan | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Finland | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Germany | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Belgium | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Portugal | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

The figures have also been examined in relation to gender representation. Table 6.2 below shows the textbooks' figures distributed according to their gender. Overall, the number of male figures is far exceeding that of females in all the textbooks that include figures, except for PB8,

which has incorporated an equal representation of both sexes (i.e., 4 for each group). The gender disparity reaches its peak in the final four secondary textbooks. In PB9 and PB&RP 12, only a tenth of the depicted figures were female, while about a quarter represented females in both PB10 and PB&RP 11.

Table 6.2

Distribution of Figures by Gender

| Gender | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Male | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 24 | 32 |
| Female | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 |

Regarding the occupational roles of the depicted figures, as shown in Table 6.3 below, there is a noticeable increase in diversity as the textbooks progress to the secondary educational levels. This progression is logical, considering that the number of figures featured in secondary textbooks is significantly larger than in primary textbooks, allowing for a broader range of professional choices to be addressed. Moreover, as students mature, their ability to comprehend and relate to various occupations grows. The occupations *littérateur*, *politician*, *athlete*, *scientist* and *economist* were represented the most throughout the textbooks, with recorded frequencies of 35, 20, 11, 11, and 8, respectively.

Table 6.3

Distribution of Figures by Profession

| Occupation | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Litterateur | | | | | 1 | | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 14 | 10 |
| Politician | | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Athlete | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | 8 |
| Scientist | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Economist | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 1 |
| Explorer | | | | | | 5 | | | | | | |
| Musician | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | 3 |
| Actor | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| TV star | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Doctor | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Engineer | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Psychologist | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Academic | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Director | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Pilot | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Artist | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Ornithologist | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |

Having tried to answer the question of how female and male figures compare in terms of their occupational roles, the occupations were distributed according to the gender of the figures in Table 6.4 below. Overall, the ratio of all occupations for male figures to those for female figures is 1:4.57. This shows that female figures are underrepresented compared to male figures. Whereas almost one-half of female figures are represented as litterateurs (i.e., 9 out of 20), the overwhelming majority of male figures are litterateurs (25), politicians (19), athletes (11), scientists (9), and economists (8). The number of male politicians and economists exceeds that of females, reaching to nineteen politicians and eight economists for males compared to only two female politicians and

no female economists. This observation holds significance as these occupations are associated with positions of power. Therefore, the limited representation of females in these roles indicates a prevailing male dominance in positions of direct influence. Throughout the textbooks, females are represented only one time as an explorer, a musician, an actor, a TV star, a doctor and an academic. Two female scientists are also represented in the textbooks compared to nine male scientists. In sum, in addition to the high representation of the occupations for male figures, men are represented in more diverse occupational roles than females (i.e., 13 to 9), which is indicative of female underrepresentation concerning occupational roles.

Table 6.4

Distribution of Occupations by Gender of Figures

| Occupation | Male Figures | Female Figures | Total Number of Figures |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Litterateur | 25 | 9 | 34 |
| Politician | 19 | 2 | 21 |
| Athlete | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| Scientist | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| Economist | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| Explorer | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Musician | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Actor | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| TV star | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Doctor | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Engineer | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Psychologist | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Academic | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Director | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Pilot | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Artist | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Ornithologist | 1 | 0 | 1 |

6.2.2 Cultural Dimensions

Attempting to measure the quality of the culture represented in the textbooks, the entire cultural content (i.e., C1, C2 and other international cultures) was distributed over three categories, referred to as micro, macro and intercultural.

As observed in Table 6.5 below, nearly all of the textbooks assigned almost more than 90% of their total culture to address cultural topics belonging to the micro and macro levels, except for PB1, which lacks any cultural elements altogether. A closer look at Figure 6.2 below reveals that culture represented on the micro-level seems to be the dominant trend for PB2, PB3, PB4, PB5, PB6, PB&RP 11, and PB&RP 12. On the other hand, PB7, PB8, PB9 and, PB10 have represented more culture at the macro level than the other textbooks have (55.63%, 56.33%, 53%, and 52.33%, respectively). An obvious underrepresentation of intercultural aspects has been noticed, reaching around 12.34% and 11.25% for PB5 and PB&RP 12, and hitting its lowest rate (i.e., 0%) for Pupil's books 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8.

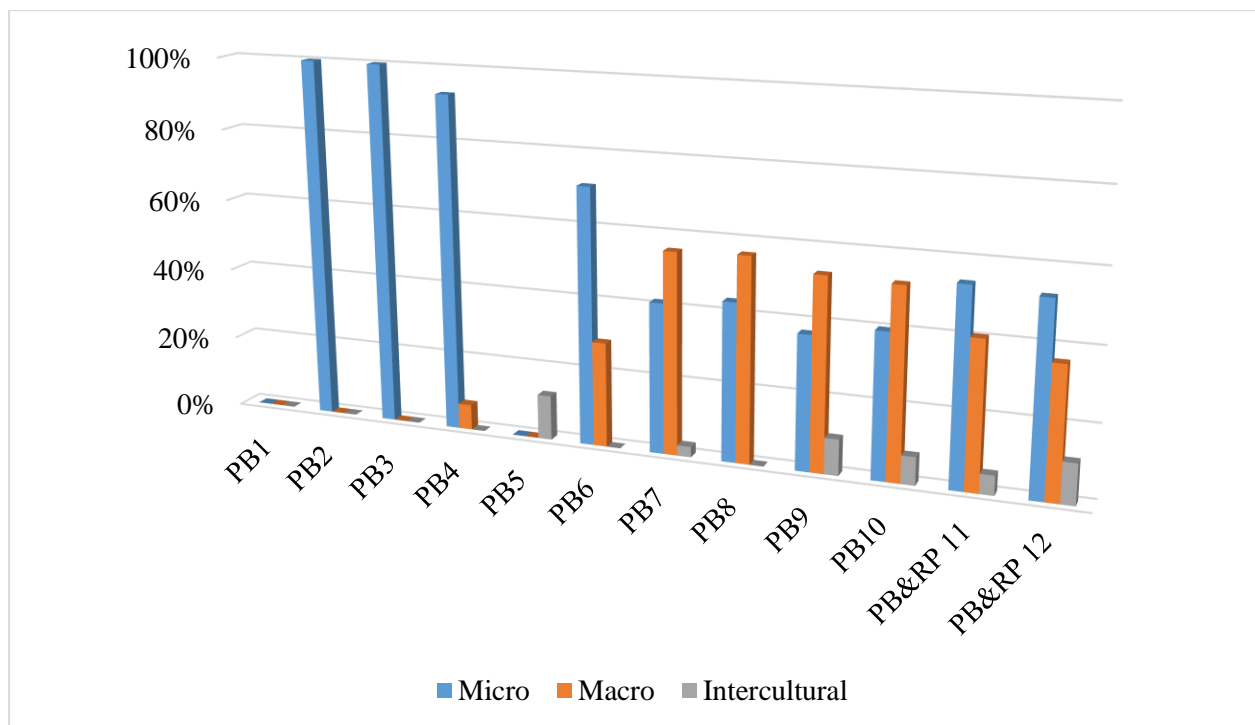
Table 6.5

Distribution of Culture over Dimensions of Culture

| Cultural Dimensions | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|----------|----------|
| Micro | 0 | 100 | 100 | 93 | 87.6 | 71.0 | 41.4 | 43.6 | 37.5 | 39.9 | 54 | 52.5 |
| | % | % | % | % | 5 % | 7 % | 8 % | 6 % | 9 % | 6 % | % | 0 % |
| Macro | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28.9 | 55.6 | 56.3 | 53.7 | 52.3 | 40.5 | 36.2 |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | 3 % | 3 % | 5 % | 3 % | 9 % | 4 % |
| Intercultural | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.0 | 12.3 | 0 | 2.87 | 0 | 8.64 | 7.70 | 5.3 | 11.2 |
| | % | % | % | % | 4 % | % | % | % | % | % | 9 % | 5 % |
| Total in Lines | 0 | 6 | 61 | 58 | 96 | 115 | 233 | 320 | 407 | 581 | 700 | 765 |

Figure 6.2

Distribution of Culture over the Three Dimensions of Culture



To get a clearer image of the integrated international and intercultural issues, it was important to see how deep their topics were. The analysis revealed, as shown in Table 6.6 below, that twenty-four topics out of the total number of the tackled intercultural topics, that is twenty-eight, belong to surface culture. The four remaining topics touched on deep cultural aspects. Almost all the textbooks included only intercultural topics of the surface culture type, except for PB&RP 12, which included three deep intercultural topics compared to four surface topics.

Table 6.6

Classification of Intercultural Issues into Surface and Deep Topics

| No. of Intercultural Topics | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Surface | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Deep | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

The topics of international and intercultural issues were also inspected for representing a realistic or unrealistic image of life. To achieve this, the intercultural topics were categorized into positive/neutral and negative categories. An overwhelming dominance of positive and neutral topics over negative ones in all the textbooks is clearly shown in Table 6.7 below. Except for PB1, PB2, PB3, PB6, and PB8, which have no intercultural content, the rest of the schoolbooks have included a higher number of positive/neutral topics. Notably, the only two textbooks to incorporate negative topics are PB9 and PB10. However, the negative topics are insignificant, as there is only one negative topic in PB9 and two in PB10.

Table 6.7

Classification of Intercultural Issues into Positive/Neutral and Negative Topics

| No. of Intercultural Topics | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Positive/Neutral | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Negative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

6.2.3 Countries Represented

This section seeks to give an elaborate analysis on how the cultural content is distributed over culture types (i.e., local, target, and foreign cultures). Therefore, only the cultural content that is related to specific cultures will be measured. In other words, any cultural reference that does not relate to a certain culture will not be calculated as part of the targeted culture in this section, unless otherwise indicated. It is also important to mention that only culture presented in textual format was measured. This decision was made because it was almost impossible to relate a big number of visuals to certain cultures except for those visuals linked to tourist or geographical sites. Additionally, it was thought that mixing both formats would serve no purpose for the present analysis.

The distribution of cultural content over culture types aimed to reveal to what extent the textbooks have been successful in avoiding extensive inclusion of English culture instead of choosing an international approach that could depict a balanced representation of first, second and international cultures. While trying to achieve this aim, some challenges were encountered. First, the characteristics that a text should have to be classified as a cultural component of first, second or foreign culture had to be stated. The decision was made to consider nationality as the basis for culture classification. Thus, a text about Islam, for instance, was not considered as part of Palestinian culture, unless it contained some information related to Palestine, such as the status of Jerusalem as a Holy Place. Second, repeated cultural content was calculated again as the aim was to measure the space covered by culture rather than the number of cultural topics.

Table 6.8 below shows that the textbooks created for grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 have an overwhelming amount of Palestinian, British and American culture (100%, 82%, 91%, 99%, 77%, and 63%, respectively). A similar pattern is observed in PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12, where around 76% and 82%, respectively, of their culture-specific content is dedicated to local and target

cultures. However, this is not the case with the rest of the textbooks (i.e., PB8, PB9 and PB10), which have shown somewhat a fairer distribution over the local, target and foreign cultures.

Table 6.8

Distribution of Culture over Culture Types

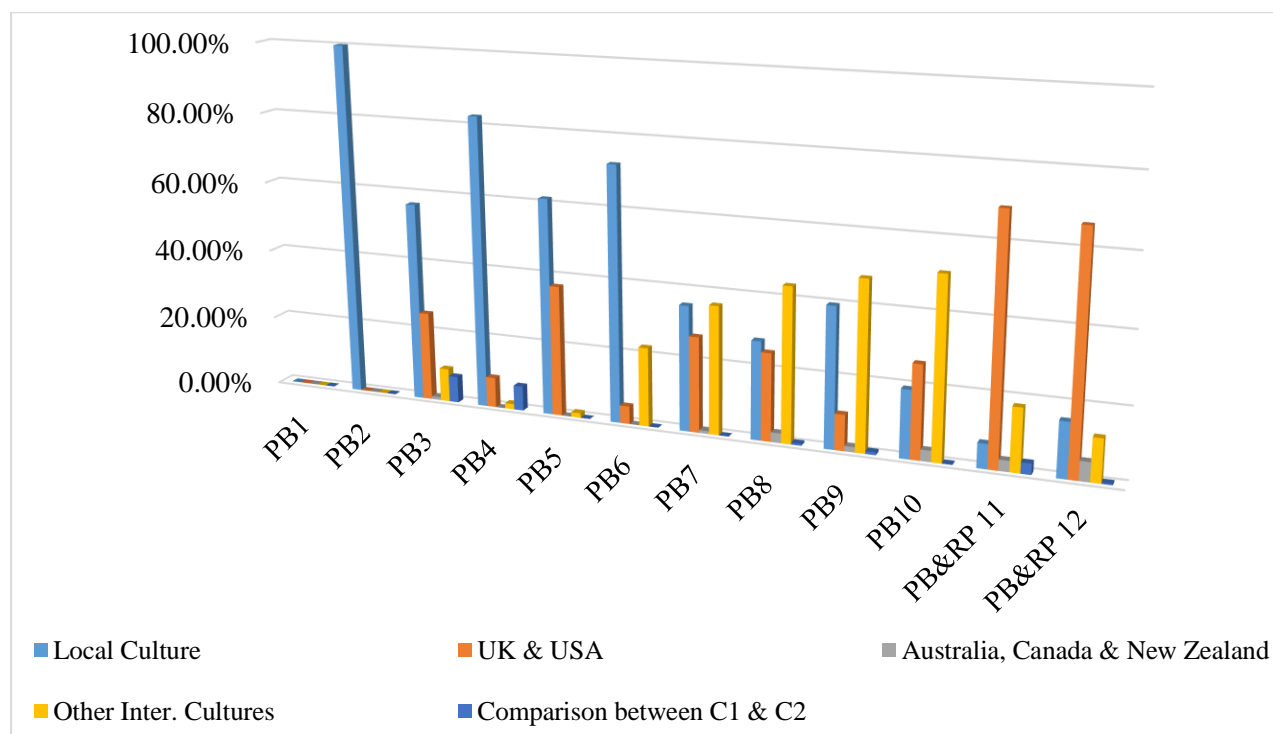
| Culture Types | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| Local Culture | 0.00 % | 100 % | 56.6 % | 82.7 % | 61.5 % | 72.4 % | 35.5 % | 27.9 % | 39.6 % | 19.2 % | 6.9 % | 15.5 % |
| UK & USA | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 25.3 % | 8.6 % | 37.1 % | 5.0 % | 27.1 % | 24.9 % | 10.1 % | 26.4 % | 68.9 % | 66.3 % |
| Australia, Canada & New Zealand | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 0.83 % | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 0.83 % | 2.77 % | 1.53 % | 3.17 % | 3.11 % | 5.48 % |
| other Inter. Cultures | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 9.57 % | 1.53 % | 1.31 % | 22.5 % | 36.4 % | 43.7 % | 47.7 % | 50.9 % | 17.8 % | 12.2 % |
| Comparison between C1 & C2 | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 7.55 % | 7.09 % | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 0.00 % | 0.55 % | 0.80 % | 0.18 % | 3.13 % | 0.40 % |
| Total Space in Lines | 0 | 6 | 61 | 58 | 69 | 73 | 194 | 270 | 322 | 764 | 829 | 668 |

Examining each type of culture individually (as demonstrated in Figure 6.3 below), it becomes evident that PB2, PB3, PB4, PB5, and PB6 allocated more than half of their culture-specific space for the local culture (100%, 56%, 82%, 61%, and 72%, respectively). In contrast, PB7, PB8, PB9, and PB10 emphasized other foreign cultures with percentages ranging from 36.40% for PB7 to 50.96% for PB10. However, PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12 have assigned more space for the target culture (68.91% and 66.35%, respectively).

Furthermore, other countries where English is spoken as the first language, including Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, have been found to be underrepresented, with their presence ranging from nearly zero in most textbooks, to 5.48% in PB&RP 12. This indicates that English is still considered either as the property of Britain and the USA or as a means for Palestinians to convey their cultural message, without adequate attention to other international cultures.

Figure 6.3

Distribution of Culture over Culture Types



6.2.4 Intercultural Contacts

This section aims to give a detailed analysis of intercultural contacts as they appear in the *English for Palestine* textbook series. The analysis covers the situations of intercultural contacts (i.e., who meets who), their types (e.g., living in the C2, school visits, etc.) as well as the quality of their topics (deep vs surface culture). The importance of this section stems from the fact that, as stressed

by Abid and Moalla (2020), the more intercultural contacts students are exposed to, the greater the chance to develop intercultural communication skills.

Table 6.9 below provides a comparison between the primary and secondary school levels in terms of the number and types of situations of intercultural contacts. Overall, the number of intercultural contacts incorporated throughout the entire series is very small (only 112), with almost 80% of them taking place between a Palestinian and an English native speaker (i.e., a British or American). The overwhelming majority of intercultural contacts are featured in PB5, PB6, PB7, PB8, PB9, and PB10. While PB7, PB8 and PB9 cover more than two intercultural situations, the rest have been found to either have no intercultural situations at all or have only one situation. Intercultural contacts involving Palestinians or English native speakers interacting with other internationals are underrepresented (approximately 7%).

Table 6.9

Situations of Intercultural Contacts

| Situations of intercultural contacts | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Palestinian meeting a British/American | | | 3 | 4 | 14 | 22 | 9 | 13 | 12 | 11 | | 2 |
| Palestinian meeting Australian/Canadian/ New Zealander | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Palestinian meeting other nationalities | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Other nationalities meeting each other | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| American/British meeting other nationalities | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Palestinian meeting Palestinian in the USA, UK or Palestine | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Unknown | | | | | | | 4 | 1 | 4 | | | |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 22 | 14 | 20 | 21 | 12 | 0 | 2 |

To gain a deeper understanding of the integrated intercultural contacts, it was important to evaluate the quality of the cultural aspects within those interactions. To do so, the cultural aspects were classified into surface or deep culture. Whereas cultural aspects including food, geographical sites, tourist sites, holidays, etc. were considered as surface culture, those aspects that reflect controversy issues, attitudes, beliefs, and values, etc. were classified as deep culture.

The analysis, depicted in Table 6.10 below, revealed that all of the cultural aspects were found to resemble surface culture, except for three cases where deep cultural aspects were touched

on. No significant differences were found across different school levels, except for the number of aspects of surface culture, which pile up around the middle of the graph (see Figure 6.4 below).

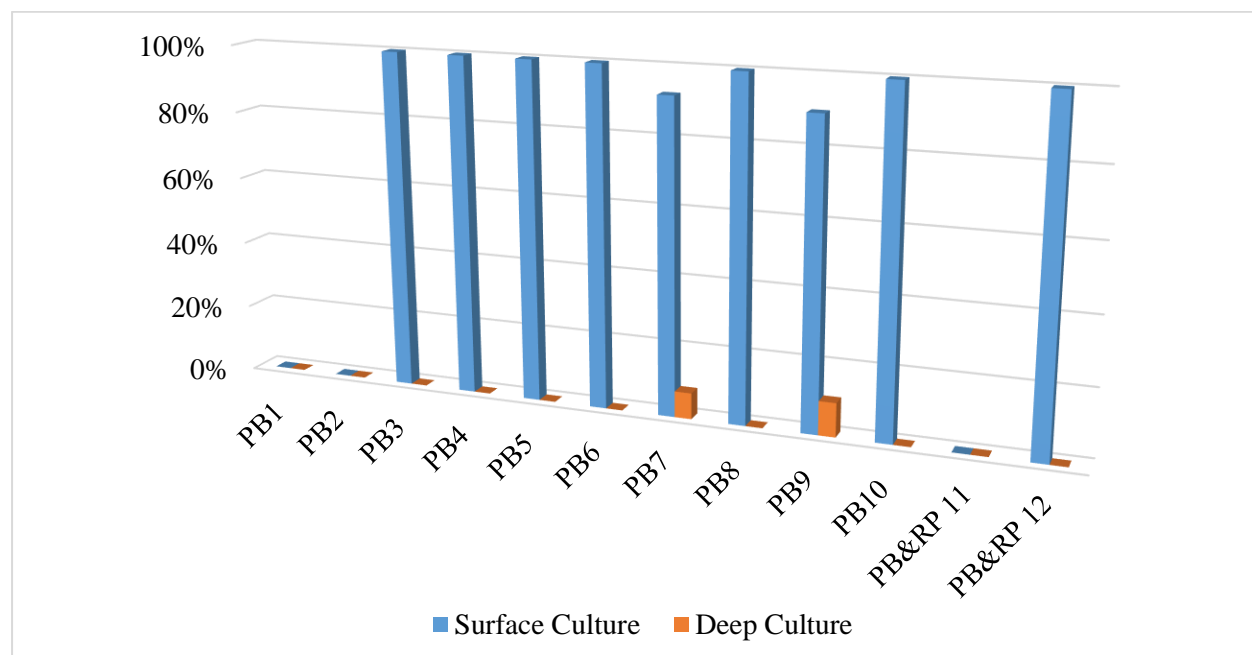
Table 6.10

Classification of Intercultural Aspects into Surface or Deep Culture

| No. of Surface/ Deep Culture Topics | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Surface | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 22 | 13 | 20 | 19 | 12 | 0 | 2 |
| Deep | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Figure 6.4

Classification of Intercultural Aspects into Surface or Deep Culture



Having inspected intercultural contacts in regard to their quality and situations of interaction, they will now be examined from a topic point of view. An overall look at the distribution of intercultural contacts over a variety of topics, as shown in Table 6.11 below, reveals that the highest levels of topic diversification occur in Pupil's Books 7, 8, 9, and 10 (distributed over 4, 6, 5, and 6 topics, respectively). Conversely, the lowest diversification level is observed in PB1, PB2, and PB&RP 11, where no topics are covered due to the absence of intercultural contacts. The rest of the textbooks (i.e., PB3, PB4, PB5, PB6, and PB&RP 12) start from representing one topic only as the case with PB6, to representing two topics (PB4, PB5, and PB&RP 12), reaching to three topics in PB3.

Table 6.11

Distribution of Intercultural Contacts over Topics

| Topics of Intercultural Contacts | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-----------|-----|-----------|-----------|-------|----------|----------|
| Living in the C1 | | | | 3 | <u>12</u> | <u>22</u> | | | | | | |
| Living in the C2 | | | | | | | | <u>13</u> | <u>12</u> | 2 | | 1 |
| Visiting Friends/Relatives | | | 1 | | | | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | |
| Penpal Correspondence | | | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 1 |
| Tourism | | | | | | | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | |
| Business Visits | | | | | | | 1 | | | 3 | | |
| Meeting for 1 st time at Events | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| School Visits | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| Online Discussion | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| Unspecified | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |

Regarding the intensity of topic representation, 'living in the C1 and C2' were the most represented topics with 65 times distributed over the two categories (37 for living in the C1 and 28 for living in the C2). 'Visiting friends/relatives' and 'pen pal correspondence' were represented

with very close frequencies, reaching to 13 times for the former topic and 12 times for the later one. Less frequently depicted were the topics of 'tourism' and 'business visits,' which were mentioned 10 times and 4 times, respectively. The least represented topics were 'meeting for the first time at events,' 'school visits,' and 'online discussions,' with only two references each.

Combining the data related to quality, situations and topics of intercultural contacts, the textbooks under investigation were found to extensively incorporate aspects of surface culture, exhibiting a low level of diversification in terms of situations and topics.

6.2.5 Didactic Approach

This section explores the perspectives presented in the cultural texts and the types of cultural tasks used in the textbooks. The section takes its importance from the fact that cross-cultural attitudes stand out as a major component of IC. Therefore, a fair representation of negative and positive aspects of culture, as well as the inclusion of multiple perspectives would help students form a realistic view of their own culture and the target culture.

6.2.5.1 Authors' Point of View

To give a clear image of the incorporated perspectives, the textbooks' cultural content was classified into either mono-perspectival or multi-perspectival. While mono-perspectival refers to any cultural text, which approaches a certain issue from a single point of view, multi-perspectival presents more than one view on the same cultural topic. For example, depicting a certain celebrity as an undisputed character would render the text as mono-perspectival. However, presenting him as a controversial character results in considering the text multi-perspectival. It is worth mentioning that not all the cultural content was considered applicable to be classified in terms of perspectivity. Self-introduction dialogues, which appear more often in the primary textbooks, and literature were considered inapplicable, since these types of texts did not present distinct perspectives.

To investigate the authenticity of the represented culture even more, the cultural representations were classified as either negative or positive. Whereas negative representations included any negative aspects of the culture such as issues related to racism, kidnapping, high unemployment rate, etc., positive representations are made of either neutral or celebratory aspects. This includes festivals, tourist attractions, high employment rates, etc. Neutral aspects were counted with positive ones, as our aim was only to depict an image of the degree of realism in the representation of culture. We believe that a real picture of both local and foreign cultures, where negative and positive aspects are depicted, would enable students to form critical views on self and other.

Table 6.12 and Figure 6.5 illustrate that the first six textbooks lack cultural content with a multi-perspectival view. Similarly, the percentages of multi-perspectival content for the remaining textbooks remain relatively low compared to the prevalence of mono-perspectival cultural content. PB9 stands out with the highest percentage of multi-perspectival culture at 33.2%. The distinction between primary and secondary textbooks in terms of their inclusion of perspectives is evident. However, all textbooks fall short in effectively promoting multiperspectivity.

Table 6.12

Distribution of Palestinian Culture over Perspectives

| Perspectives | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&R | PB&R |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | P 11 | P 12 |
| Mono- | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 99.1 | 95.7 | 66.7 | 91.5 | 79.5 | 73.6 |
| Perspectival | % | % | % | % | % | % | 4 % | 0 % | 4 % | 1 % | 0 % | 9 % |
| Multi- | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.85 | 4.29 | 33.2 | 8.48 | 20.4 | 26.3 |
| Perspectival | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | 5 % | % | 9 % | 0 % |
| Total in | 0 | 0 | 5 | 47 | 41 | 51 | 67 | 83 | 112 | 135 | 70 | 117 |
| Lines | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 6.5

Distribution of Palestinian Culture over Perspectives

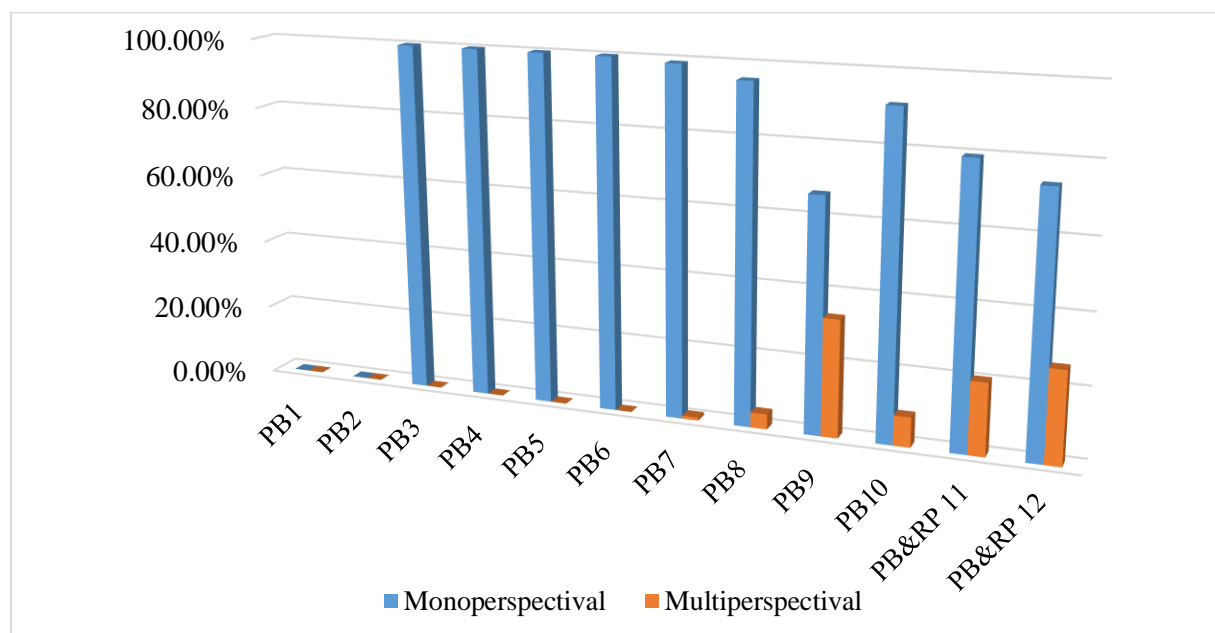


Table 6.13 and Figure 6.6 below show similar findings for perspectives on foreign cultures. However, PB6 and PB&RP 12 have recorded higher percentages of culture with a multiperspectival view, reaching to 96.08% and 63.3%, respectively. This difference, however, does not change the fact that the textbooks are still incompetent in promoting multiperspectivity, as the total space dedicated to foreign cultures is only 17 lines for PB6. This means that the percentage 96.08% is too little to make a tangible change in students' attitudes. Fortunately, the size of the space allocated for foreign cultures in the rest of the last six set of textbooks seem to be much larger than the space allocated in the textbooks created for primary levels. This is indicative of a higher chance of promoting multiperspectivity in spite of the high percentages of the culture with a monoperspectival view.

Table 6.13

Distribution of Foreign Cultures over Perspectives

| Perspectives | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Mono- Perspectival | 0 % | 0 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 3.91 % | 61.2 5 % | 85.5 4 % | 78.8 0 % | 69.6 5 % | 64.7 0 % | 36.6 0 % |
| Multi- Perspectival | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 96.0 8 % | 38.7 4 % | 14.4 5 % | 21.1 9 % | 30.3 4 % | 35.2 9 % | 63.3 9 % |
| Total in Lines | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 24 | 17 | 120 | 182 | 180 | 336 | 278 | 314 |

Figure 6.6

Distribution of Foreign Cultures over Perspectives

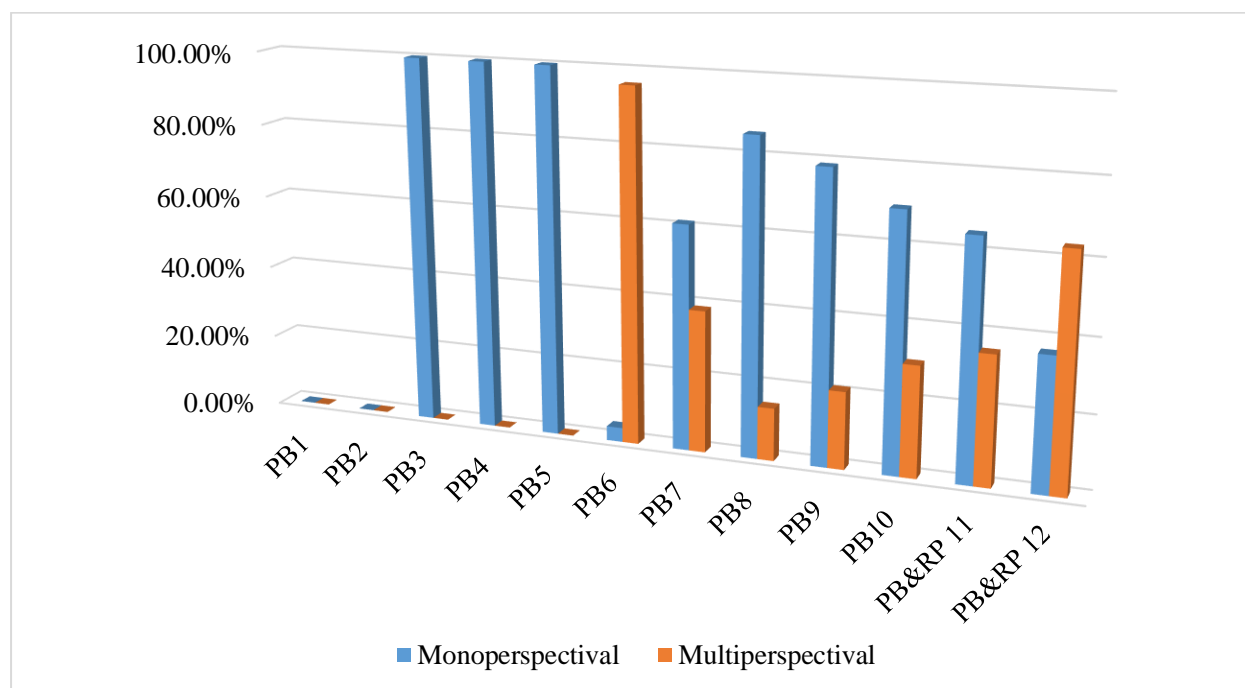


Table 6.14 below shows the distribution of the incorporated Palestinian culture over positive/neutral and negative topics. An overwhelming dominance of positive and neutral topics over negative topics in all textbooks is clearly illustrated in Figure 6.7 below. The percentages are

excessively high as they reach 100% for all textbooks except for PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12, which have devoted 73.76% and 80.74%, respectively, of their space specified for culture to covering positive and neutral topics. Negative topics, on the other hand, are only covered in grades 11 and 12 textbooks, with low levels reaching to 26.29% and 19.25%, respectively.

Table 6.14

Positive/Neutral and Negative Representations of Palestinian Culture

| | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB 10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|----------------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Positive/ Neutral | 0 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 73.7 % | 80.7 % |
| Negative | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 26.2 % | 19.2 % |
| Total in Lines | 0 | 6 | 37 | 50 | 43 | 53 | 69 | 86 | 112 | 135 | 54 | 117 |

Figure 6.7

Positive/Neutral and Negative Representations of Palestinian Culture

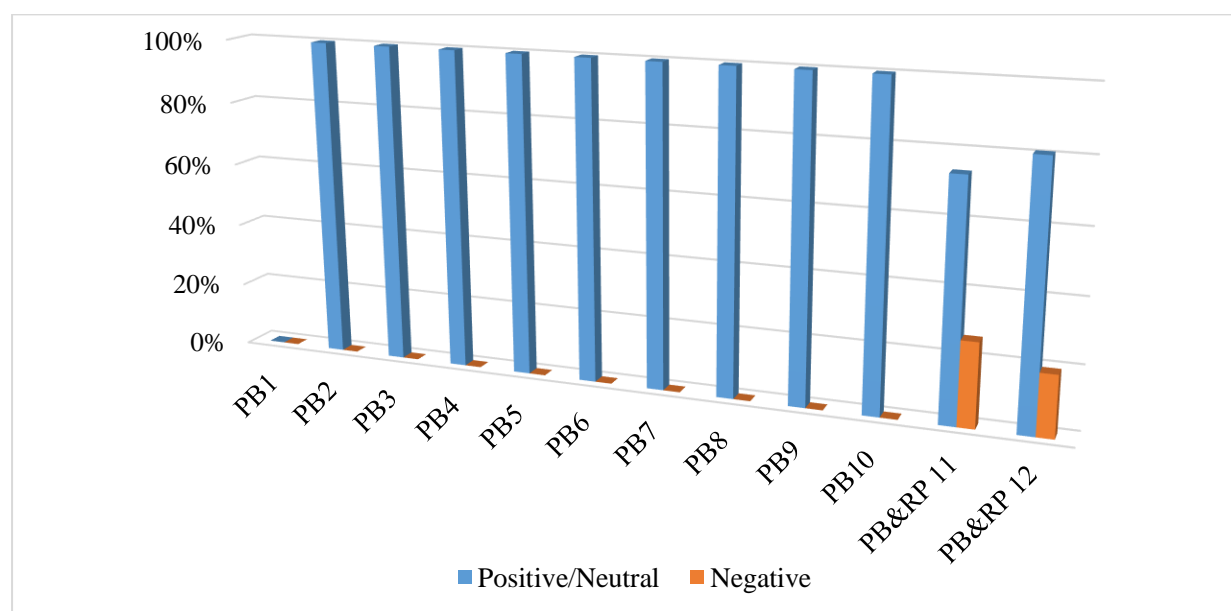


Table 6.15 and Figure 6.8 below show similar findings about foreign cultures. Except for PB1 and PB2, which have no cultural content, all coursebooks experienced very high percentages in favor of positive and neutral topics. PB7, PB9 and PB10 are the only textbooks to assign less than 100% of their overall space allocated for foreign cultures to tackle positive and neutral topics. The percentages are still high though, reaching 83.53%, 96.25% and 75.94%, respectively.

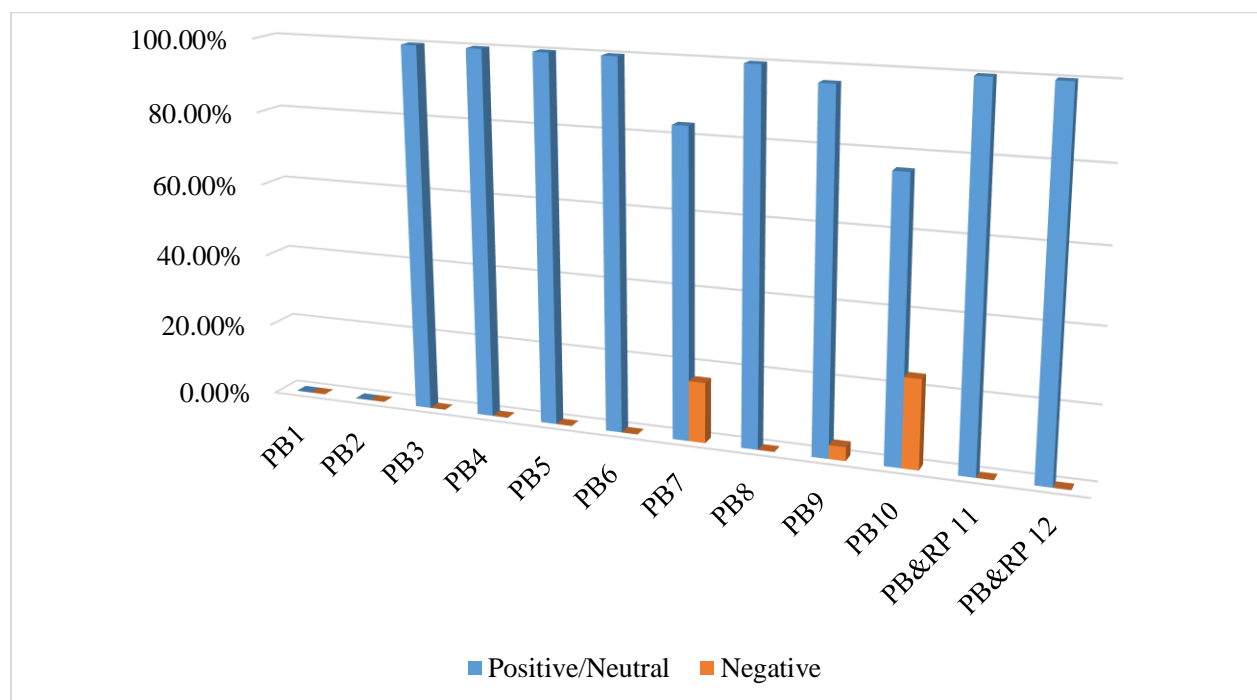
Table 6.15

Positive/Neutral and Negative Representations of Foreign Cultures

| | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB10 | PB&RP 11 | PB&RP 12 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Positive/ Neutral | 0 % | 0 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % | 83.5 3 % | 100 % | 96.2 5 % | 75.9 4 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| Negative | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 16.4 6 % | 0 % | 3.74 % | 24.0 5 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Total in Lines | 0 | 0 | 24 | 8 | 27 | 20 | 125 | 197 | 201 | 352 | 365 | 314 |

Figure 6.8

Positive/Neutral and Negative Representations of Foreign Cultures



Given the above observations, the textbooks seem to be incapable of depicting a real picture of the Palestinian and foreign cultures. Their failure to reflect multiperspectivity along with a balanced representation of negative and positive topics is likely to hinder students' perception of their own culture and the other cultures represented in the textbooks.

6.2.5.2 Task Types

Whereas the previous sections aimed at giving an overview of culture with regard to its amount, type and quality, this final section aims to evaluate the practical side of the coursebooks, which is best embodied in the type of cultural tasks. Hence, a classification model made of four categories has been proposed based on the level of involvement required from students to successfully accomplish the target tasks. The categories are referred to as 'apperception', 'reproduction', 'processing' and 'application'.

The first category, i.e., apperception, includes all the tasks that aim to grab students' attention to cultural information by using direct tasks, which range from mere reading to answering comprehension questions. The second category encloses tasks that require students to repeat the cultural information either with or without some controlled change that has already been given to students in the form of pre-made sentences. The third category, on the other hand, goes a bit further as it presents students with indirect ways to deal with the cultural information at hand. Therefore, the tasks can include words, such as “analyze”, “organize”, “select”, “classify”, “discriminate”, “differentiate”, “order”, “arrange”, “outline”, “calculate”, “match”, etc. As for the last category, which is the only one that involves a higher-order thinking skill (i.e., application), it requires students to apply the cultural knowledge, attitudes or skills in a new situation. Asking students to talk about the Palestinian political system after they have learnt about the British political system can be a very good example of this type of tasks.

The data, as shown in Table 6.16, reveal that the overwhelming majority of tasks incorporated in all the textbooks aimed at developing lower-order thinking skills, since they fall under the first three categories (i.e., apperception, reproduction, and processing). The rest of the tasks (almost 3%) fall under the application category. What is even more striking is that 11 out of 12 textbooks have allocated more than half of their tasks for the most basic category, i.e., apperception (see Figure 6.9 below). PB&RP 11, on the other hand, were the only textbook that contained higher frequencies of processing tasks (46.57%).

Table 6.16

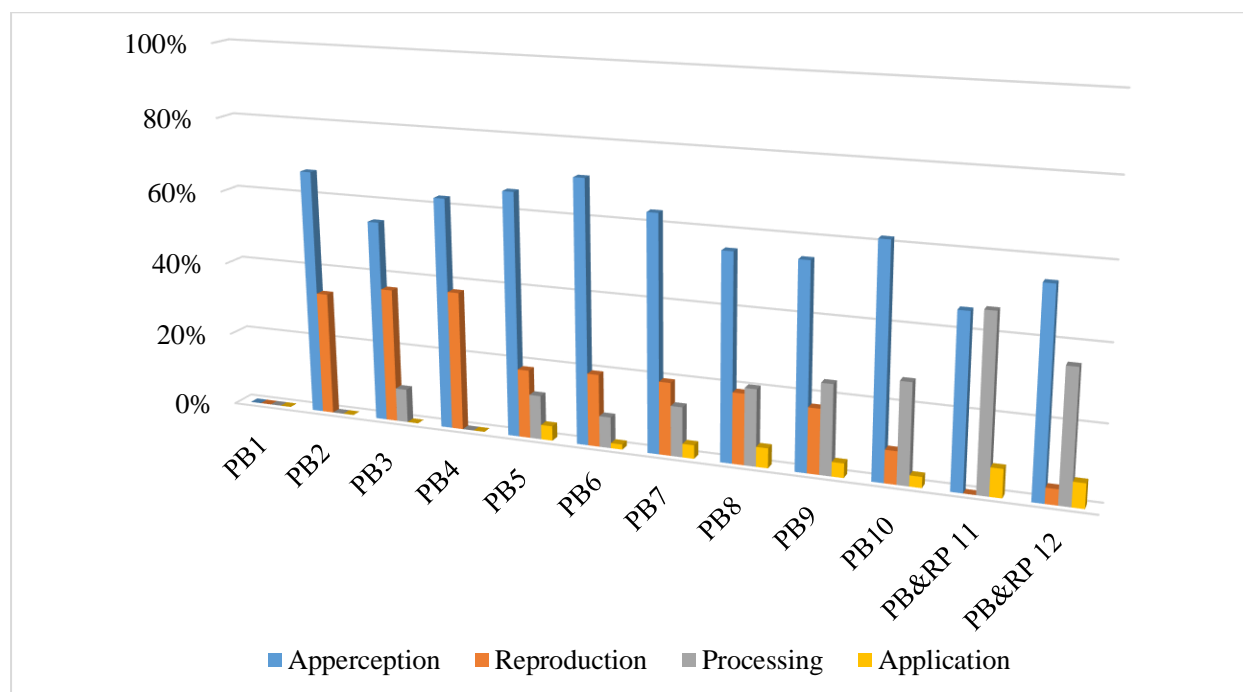
Distribution of Cultural Tasks over Task Types

| Task Types | PB1 | PB2 | PB3 | PB4 | PB5 | PB6 | PB7 | PB8 | PB9 | PB | PB&RP | PB&RP |
|-------------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Apperceptio | 0 | 66.6 | 54.5 | 62.5 | 65.7 | 70.8 | 63.4 | 55.3 | 54.8 | 61.6 | 45.8 | 54.4 |
| n | % | 6 % | 4 % | % | 8 % | 3 % | 1 % | 0 % | 0 % | 2 % | 9 % | 3 % |
| Reproductio | 0 | 33.3 | 36.3 | 37.5 | 18.4 | 19.4 | 19.5 | 18.9 | 17.3 | 8.72 | 0 | 4.14 |
| n | % | 3 % | 6 % | % | 2 % | 4 % | 1 % | 3 % | 0 % | % | % | % |
| Processing | 0 | 0 | 9.09 | 0 | 11.8 | 8.33 | 13.4 | 20.4 | 24.0 | 26.7 | 46.5 | 34.9 |
| | % | % | % | % | 4 % | % | 1 % | 5 % | 3 % | 4 % | 7 % | 1 % |
| Application | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.94 | 1.38 | 3.65 | 5.30 | 3.84 | 2.90 | 7.53 | 6.50 |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Total | 0 | 6 | 22 | 16 | 76 | 72 | 82 | 132 | 104 | 172 | 146 | 169 |

This indicates that the textbooks are less likely to promote the acquisition of IC, especially for the first four primary levels, which have no application tasks at all. In fact, primary students seem to be viewed as unready for culture teaching compared to their secondary counterparts, who are exposed to more cultural content. However, this exposure is still insufficient in terms of its potential for promoting the acquisition of IC.

Figure 6.9

Distribution of Cultural Tasks over Task Types



6.3 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an evaluation of the *English for Palestine* textbook series in terms of its potential for promoting Palestinian students' acquisition of IC. In preparation for the actual quantitative analysis, an elaborate description of the adapted textbook database and the abbreviations of the textbooks' titles as they would appear in the chapter were introduced first.

The findings of the quantitative analysis revealed that the majority of the incorporated figures belong to either C1 or C2, with little attention paid to non-native English-speaking nationalities. From a gender perspective, the number of male figures highly exceeded that of female figures. Biases against females were depicted as regards the figures' occupational roles, especially in the ones considered influential in decision-making and economic power. Additionally, all the textbooks have assigned almost more than 90% of their overall culture to address cultural topics

belonging to the micro and macro levels, which reflected an obvious underrepresentation of international and intercultural issues. As for the countries represented, it was found that PB2, PB3, PB4, PB5, PB6, PB7, PB&RP 11 and PB&RP 12 focused mainly on Palestinian, British and American cultures, while PB8, PB9 and PB10 showed a fairer distribution of their cultural content over the local, target and foreign cultures.

The textbooks were also found to incorporate a small number of intercultural contacts (only 112), with almost 80% of them taking place between a Palestinian and an English native speaker (i.e., a British or American). Their topics resembled mainly surface culture and did not tackle a large variety of topics. Besides, all the textbooks were lagging behind in terms of promoting multiperspectivity except for PB6 and PB&RP 12, which often incorporated a multiperspectival viewpoint in depicting the target culture. In addition, the cultural topics were mainly of the celebratory type, which does not help students to form a realistic image of their culture and the target one. Finally, the vast majority of the incorporated cultural tasks did not reach the application phase, which rendered them to be of less value in developing students' higher-order thinking skills.

The following chapter will present the results of the survey data analysis, which measured Palestinian EFL teachers' potential for promoting students' acquisition of IC.

CHAPTER 7: SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The main purpose of this research study was to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the *English for Palestine* textbook series and the Palestinian EFL teachers in terms of their potential for promoting students' acquisition of Intercultural Competence (IC). While the previous two chapters investigated the *English for Palestine* textbook series, this chapter aims to explore Palestinian EFL teachers' perception and practice of IC as well as the relationship the variables have with the teachers' international exposure and previous training in IC. To achieve this purpose, a twenty-five-item survey was created and distributed to 373 participants. 360 participants completed the survey successfully. The survey is composed of the following five sections (see Appendix B for a full version of the survey):

- Section 1 (Teachers' profile): Teachers' age, qualifications, years of service, overseas experiences, and international contacts.
- Section 2 (Teachers' knowledge of IC): Their understanding of IC and culture in the TEFL context, and type of cultural content to address in the classroom.
- Section 3 (Teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture): Their views on whether there should be a broader incorporation of the local Palestinian culture in the textbooks, an inclusive Anglo-American cultural content, and a wider representation of international cultures.
- Section 4 (Teachers' culture teaching practices): Use of methods, techniques, supplementary materials, extracurricular activities, and assessment techniques to teach and assess cultural content.
- Section 5 (Teachers' training in IC): Previous training in teaching culture and their general opinion on teaching culture.

Thus, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the Palestinian EFL teachers' perceptions, attitudes and teaching practices related to teaching culture and IC?
2. What are the Palestinian EFL teachers' levels of international exposure and training in IC?
3. To what extent can the teachers' current level of IC and culture teaching practices be associated with international exposure and previous training in IC?

This chapter consists of four main parts. The first section specifies participants' age groups, academic qualifications, and their years of service as English teachers. The second section reports on Palestinian English teachers' beliefs, perspectives and classroom practices related to teaching culture and IC. The third section describes the Palestinian EFL teachers as regards to their overseas experiences, international contacts and previous training in IC. The fourth section presents the results of a Chi-square test of independence, conducted to investigate the potential impact of international exposure and intercultural training on teachers' knowledge level of IC, attitudes, and their practices of teaching culture. Finally, a concluding summary is provided to sum up the main findings of the current survey analysis.

7.1 Teachers' Profile

The sample of participants includes 360 Palestinian English teachers who work at governmental schools and use the *English for Palestine* textbook series to teach English. They are diverse as regard to their age groups, academic qualifications and years of service as shown in Table 7.1 below. The majority of the participants are aged 25 to 35 years (37.2%; $n = 134$) and 36 to 45 years (32.2%; $n = 116$). 82 (22.8%) teachers are aged 46 to 55 years, while a very small number of participants are aged under 25 years (3.6%; $n = 13$) and over 55 years (4.2%; $n = 15$). Regarding their academic qualifications, 262 (72.8%) participants have BA in English Studies (the highest

number out of the overall number of participants), followed by holders of Master's degree (22.8%; $n = 82$). Very few participants have a postgraduate diploma (2.5%; $n = 9$), PhD (1.1%; $n = 4$), CELTA (0.6%; $n = 2$) and two-year diploma (0.3%; $n = 1$). Interestingly, the received data concerning the participants' years of service show a close distribution of the participants over the specified categories (see Table 7.1 below). 78 (21.7%) participants have served 1 to 5 years, 77 (21.4%) teachers served 11 to 15 years, 73 (20.3%) have taught English for over 20 years, 70 (19.4%) more informants have been in the job from 6 to 10 years, while the remaining 62 (17.2%) have a teaching service of 16 to 20 years.

Table 7.1

Participants' Age, Academic Qualifications and Years of Service (N = 360)

| Variable | Category | N | % |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----|------|
| Age | Below 25 | 13 | 3.6 |
| | 25-35 | 134 | 37.2 |
| | 36-45 | 116 | 32.2 |
| | 46-55 | 82 | 22.8 |
| | Over 55 | 15 | 4.2 |
| Academic qualifications | CELTA | 2 | 0.6 |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | 9 | 2.5 |
| | BA in English | 262 | 72.8 |
| | Master's | 82 | 22.8 |
| | PhD | 4 | 1.1 |
| | Other (Two-Year Diploma) | 1 | 0.3 |
| Years of service | 1-5 | 78 | 21.7 |
| | 6-10 | 70 | 19.4 |
| | 11-15 | 77 | 21.4 |
| | 16-20 | 62 | 17.2 |
| | Over 20 | 73 | 20.3 |

7.2 Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Teaching Practices Related to IC

Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the survey were designed to assess Palestinian EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices related to teaching culture and IC. In sections 2 and 3, participants were asked to express their opinions on 9 statements using a five-point Likert scale: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither disagree nor agree*, *agree* and *strongly agree*. Since section 4 was designed to measure the frequency of teaching practices related to culture teaching rather than the level of agreement, the five-point Likert scale provided for this purpose presented different answer options, i.e., *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often* and *always*. For clarity, it is important to mention that agreement with the statements related to the knowledge section (items 8, 9, 10 and 11) indicates a high level of knowledge of IC and vice versa. However, to raise the reliability of the survey responses, a reverse approach was followed in the attitudes section (items 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16). Hence, while agreement with the first three statements of this section indicates negative attitudes, agreement with the last two statements indicates positive attitudes. On the other hand, more frequent use of teaching practices in section 4 (items 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22) indicates that teachers teach culture in their classrooms more often.

Three tables and three graphs are used to show the exact distribution of the answers as well as their mean and standard deviation values. Saricoban and Oz's (2014) framework (Table 7.2) is used to interpret the means as *high*, *moderate* or *low*. While the ranking refers to the level of IC in the survey parts 2 and 3 (i.e., the parts intended to measure the teachers' level of IC), it refers to the frequency of culture teaching practices in the EFL classroom in part 4. Accordingly, the mean scores between 1.0–2.4 are indicative of low level of IC/limited use of culture teaching techniques, while the mean scores between 3.0–5.0 indicate a high level of IC/constant employment of teaching practices (see Table 7.2 below).

Table 7.2

Criteria for Assessment of IC Level and Use of Culture Teaching Techniques (Saricoban & Oz, 2014)

| Answer Options | Mean | Level/Frequency |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Strongly agree/Always | 4.5–5.0 | High |
| Agree/Often | 3.5–4.4 | |
| Neither disagree nor agree/Sometimes | 2.5–3.4 | Moderate |
| Disagree/Rarely | 1.5–2.4 | Low |
| Strongly disagree/Never | 1.0–1.4 | |

In addition, two other open-ended questions (questions 23 & 26) were incorporated into the survey to enable teachers to freely express their opinions and practices concerning teaching culture and IC. These questions provide an opportunity for teachers to elaborate on their views and experiences in their own words. The responses to these open-ended questions will be analyzed and integrated into the relevant sections of this chapter. By doing so, we aim to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding IC.

7.2.1 Teachers' Knowledge of IC

In order to describe the Palestinian EFL teachers' knowledge in IC, the number of answers for the survey statements 8, 9, 10 and 11 along with their mean and standard deviation values were included in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3

Descriptive Statistics for Palestinian EFL Teachers' Knowledge Level of IC

| Statements | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level of Agreement |
|----------------|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Statement 8 | N | 41 | 252 | 42 | 14 | 11 | 3.83 | .796 | 4 |
| | % | 11.3% | 70% | 11.7% | 3.9% | 3.1% | | | |
| Statement 9 | N | 91 | 213 | 16 | 22 | 18 | 3.94 | .995 | 4 |
| | % | 25.3% | 59.2% | 4.4% | 6.1% | 5% | | | |
| Statement 10 | N | 49 | 216 | 42 | 37 | 16 | 3.68 | .982 | 4 |
| | % | 13.6% | 60% | 11.7% | 10.3% | 4.4% | | | |
| Statement 11 | N | 24 | 206 | 91 | 32 | 7 | 3.58 | .821 | 4 |
| | % | 6.7% | 57.2% | 25.3% | 8.9% | 1.9% | | | |
| Weighted Mean | | | | | | | 3.7556 | | |
| Std. Deviation | | | | | | | | .60462 | |

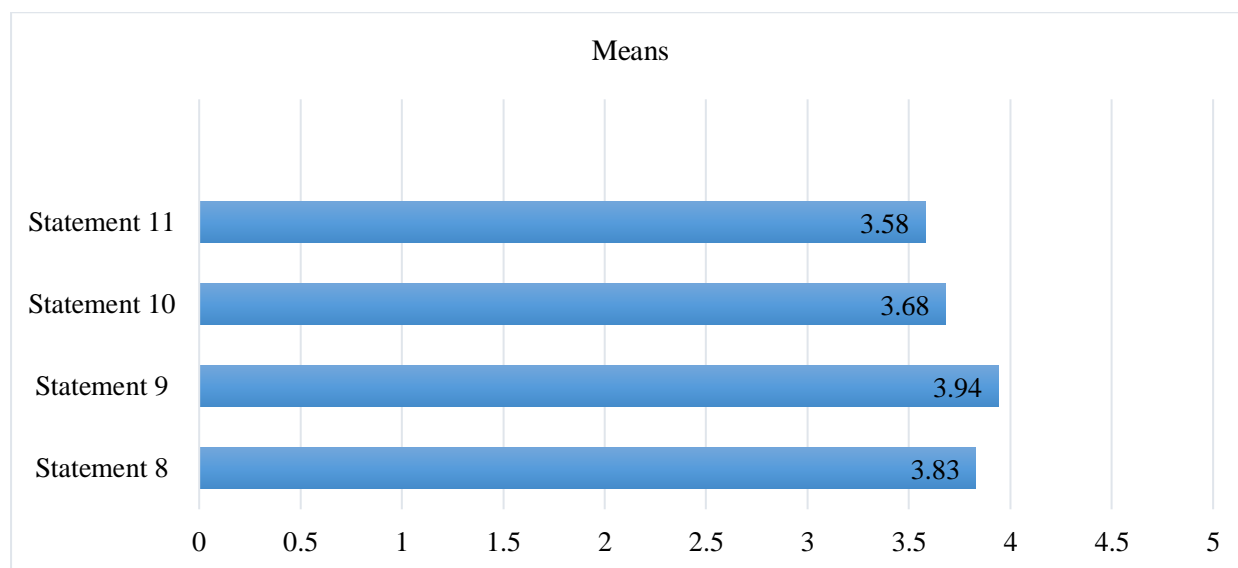
Looking at the mean values in the seventh row in Table 7.3 above, it is clear that item 9 received the highest agreement rate, with the mean score ($M = 3.94$) and standard deviation ($SD = .995$). The statement asked the participants whether the cultural content of EFL textbooks must include the invisible cultural aspects (i.e., norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values) along with the visible side of culture (e.g., literature, monuments, etc.). 18 participants (5%) strongly disagreed, 22 (6.1%) disagreed, 16 (4.4%) neither disagreed nor agreed, 213 (59.2%) agreed and 91 (25.3%) strongly agreed. Item 8, which asked the participants to self-report on their IC knowledge by responding to the statement “I am aware of what ‘intercultural competence’ implies, i.e., intercultural awareness, skills, attitudes, and knowledge” came second, with the mean value ($M = 3.83$) and standard deviation ($SD = .796$). The majority of participants have expressed their agreement, with 252 (70%) out of 360 choosing *agree*, and 41 (11.3%) choosing

strongly agree. 11 participants (3.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 14 teachers (3.9%) disagreed, and 42 (11.7%) expressed neutral stance. Statement 10 came third, with the mean value ($M = 3.68$) and standard deviation ($SD = .982$). The participants were asked whether they viewed culture as dynamic and ever-changing rather than fixed. 16 participants (4.4%) strongly disagreed, 37 (10.3%) disagreed, 42 (11.7%) neither disagreed nor agreed, 216 (60%) agreed and 49 (13.6%) strongly agreed. The last item in this section (i.e., item 11) asked the teachers whether they agreed with the necessity for a deeper approach to culture teaching that goes beyond superficial representation of celebratory cultural aspects. The informants had varying responses with an overwhelming majority agreeing with the statement, i.e., 206 participants (57%). The rest of the answers were distributed as follows: 24 (6.7%) strongly agreed, 91 (25.3%) neither disagreed nor agreed, 32 (8.9%) disagreed and only 7 (1.9%) strongly disagreed.

Looking at the weighted average ($M = 3.7556$) and the overall standard deviation ($SD = .60462$), it is clear that the teachers' overall level of agreement is high in all the four items. According to the criteria shown in Table 7.2 above, this indicates that the Palestinian English teachers have adequate knowledge of IC. For a clearer illustration of the mean values see Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1

Mean Scores of the Statements Related to Teachers' Knowledge of IC



7.2.2 Teachers' Attitudes Towards IC and Teaching Culture

The third part of the survey, which is made of items 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, was developed to measure participants' attitudes towards culture teaching and IC. It is important to mention here that while agreement with statements 12, 13 and 14 indicated negative attitudes, agreement with items 15 and 16 was indicative of positive attitudes towards culture teaching and IC. In answer to item 13, which emphasizes the need for exclusive representation of British culture in EFL textbooks justified by the fact that English is the native language of British people, only 6 participants (1.7%) strongly agreed and 34 (9.4%) agreed. Strong disagreement, on the other hand, was expressed by 109 (30.3%), while 181 (50.3%) only disagreed. The remaining 30 teachers (8.3%) neither disagreed nor agreed. The item received the highest mean score ($M = 3.98$) with a standard deviation ($SD = .957$) among the other items in this part (refer to Table 7.4 below).

Next, item 15 was ranked as the second statement to indicate positive attitudes, with a mean value ($M = 3.86$) and a standard deviation ($SD = .793$). When asked about the necessity for a wider representation of other international cultures in the *English for Palestine* textbooks, the majority of participants showed agreement, with 239 (66.4%) responding with *agree* and 51 (14.2%) responding with *strongly agree*. Very few numbers of participants showed disagreement, with only 8 (2.2%) strongly disagreeing and 16 (4.4%) only disagreeing, while 46 (12.8%) neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement.

Similarly, the responses to item 16 showed that the majority of participants were largely in favor of promoting positive attitudes about international cultures in the EFL classroom ($M = 3.64$ and $SD = .904$). While 248 (68.8%) teachers (37 strongly agreed and 211 agreed) expressed their agreement with the statement, only 44 (12.2%) participants (32 disagreed and 12 strongly disagreed) did not agree. The rest, i.e., 68 (18.9%) neither disagreed nor agreed. The next high-ranking item was 14 ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.109$), which aimed to investigate whether the participants perceived English as a property of English-speaking countries. 56 answers (15.6%) were recorded as *strongly disagree*, 169 (46.9%) as *disagree*, 37 (10.3%) as *neither disagree nor agree*, 87 (24.2%) as *agree* and 11 (3.1%) as *strongly agree*.

The item with the least mean value ($M = 1.83$) and standard deviation ($SD = 1.1$) was statement 12, which asked the informants to show their agreement level on the inclusion of more Palestinian cultural aspects in the EFL textbooks. While agreement with the statement was overwhelmingly expressed, with 172 (47.8%) strongly agreed and 138 (38.3%) agreed, the disagreement level was very low, with only 26 answers (7.2%) marked as *strongly disagree* and 9 (2.5%) as *disagree*. The rest, i.e., 15 answers (4.2%) were marked as *neither disagree nor agree*.

As for the collective evaluation, the weighted mean ($M = 3.3567$) and overall standard deviation ($SD = .42184$) as shown in Table 7.4 below indicate that teachers' attitudes towards culture teaching and IC are moderate (refer to Table 7.2 above). The illustration of the means, as shown in Figure 7.2 below, indicates that the teachers support more inclusion of the Palestinian culture in the EFL series (item 12). However, they do not agree on the exclusive representation of British culture in the books (item 13) and emphasize the need for a more intercultural representation (item 15).

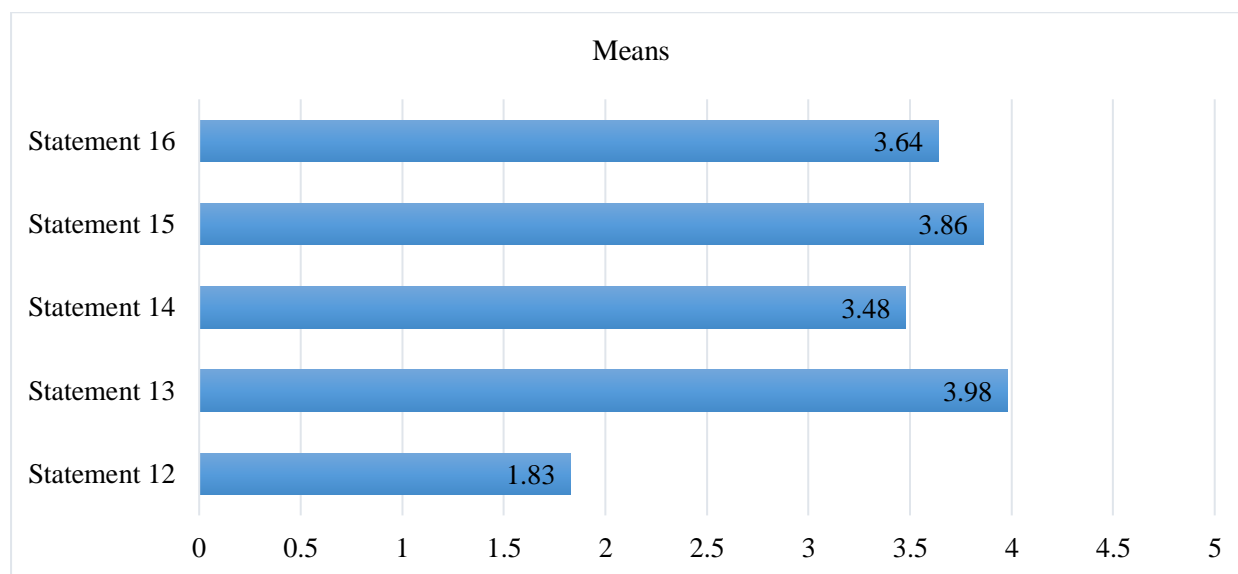
Table 7.4

Descriptive Statistics for Palestinian EFL Teachers' Attitudes Level Towards IC

| Statements | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level of Agreement |
|----------------|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Statement 12 | N | 172 | 138 | 15 | 9 | 26 | 1.83 | 1.115 | 2 |
| | % | 47.8% | 38.3% | 4.2% | 2.5% | 7.2% | | | |
| Statement 13 | N | 6 | 34 | 30 | 181 | 109 | 3.98 | .957 | 4 |
| | % | 1.7% | 9.4% | 8.3% | 50.3% | 30.3% | | | |
| Statement 14 | N | 11 | 87 | 37 | 169 | 56 | 3.48 | 1.109 | 3 |
| | % | 3.1% | 24.2% | 10.3% | 46.9% | 15.6% | | | |
| Statement 15 | N | 51 | 239 | 46 | 16 | 8 | 3.86 | .793 | 4 |
| | % | 14.2% | 66.4% | 12.8% | 4.4% | 2.2% | | | |
| Statement 16 | N | 37 | 211 | 68 | 32 | 12 | 3.64 | .904 | 4 |
| | % | 10.3% | 58.6% | 18.9% | 8.9% | 3.3% | | | |
| Weighted Mean | | | | | | | 3.3567 | | |
| Std. Deviation | | | | | | | | .42184 | |

Figure 7.2

Mean Scores of the Items Related to Teachers' Attitudes Towards IC



In addition to the statements mentioned above, participants were asked to freely give their opinions on teaching culture and IC. In response to the question (see Appendix B for a full version of the survey), participants provided various reactions. Out of the 360 teachers surveyed, only 219 chose to answer the question. Among the respondents, only 9 expressed neutral/negative perception towards teaching about foreign cultures, while the majority (213 respondents) held positive views. It is worth noting that 76 of the responses included praising statements such as "it is good," "great," etc., without providing further elaboration. In contrast, 143 answers offered more detailed opinions and insights about teaching culture.

Upon close examination of the answers, it becomes evident that teaching culture was primarily perceived as a means of enhancing students' knowledge of foreign cultures and contributing to the acquisition of linguistic competence. Additionally, the perception of culture was often limited to superficial aspects such as food, clothing, and tourist attractions. There was a noticeable lack of emphasis on the role of teaching culture in minimizing cultural

misunderstandings and improving students' communication skills, as these aspects were rarely mentioned in the responses.

Some teachers expressed neutral stances, which were related to their concern that students may absorb foreign cultural ideas that are not suitable for their own culture. These teachers fear that exposure to foreign cultures might lead to changes in Palestinian traditions and values. Interestingly, some teachers advocated for a special focus on teaching the source culture, viewing it as a safeguard against the infiltration of foreign cultural ideas into their own culture. This approach is seen as a way to maintain the integrity of Palestinian traditions and values.

Despite the variations in perspectives, the majority of teachers displayed a positive outlook and acknowledged the importance of teaching culture in the EFL classroom. It is apparent that teachers recognize the value of cultural content in enriching students' language learning experiences and fostering their cultural awareness.

7.2.3 Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices

The results of part four of the survey aimed to provide insight into how often specific culture teaching practices are present in the EFL classroom. To do so, the participants were asked to respond to six statements using five answer choices: *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often* and *always*. The statements in this section were 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22. The collected data is presented in Table 7.5 below, along with means and standard deviations for each statement.

Table 7.5

Descriptive Statistics for Palestinian EFL Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices

| Statements | | Always | Often | Someti mes | Rarely | Never | Mean | Std. Deviatio n | Level of frequenc y |
|----------------|---|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Statement17 | N | 72 | 138 | 126 | 20 | 4 | 3.71 | .888 | 4 |
| | % | 20% | 38.3% | 35% | 5.6% | 1.1% | | | |
| Statement 18 | N | 28 | 107 | 144 | 68 | 13 | 3.19 | .953 | 3 |
| | % | 7.8% | 29.7% | 40% | 18.9% | 3.6% | | | |
| Statement 19 | N | 47 | 89 | 113 | 87 | 24 | 3.13 | 1.124 | 3 |
| | % | 13.1% | 24.7% | 31.4% | 24.2% | 6.7% | | | |
| Statement 20 | N | 12 | 71 | 138 | 96 | 43 | 2.76 | 1.010 | 3 |
| | % | 3.3% | 19.7% | 38.3% | 26.7% | 11.9% | | | |
| Statement 21 | N | 26 | 93 | 162 | 58 | 21 | 3.12 | .964 | 3 |
| | % | 7.2% | 25.8% | 45% | 16.1% | 5.8% | | | |
| Statement 22 | N | 69 | 120 | 122 | 37 | 12 | 3.55 | 1.020 | 4 |
| | % | 19.2% | 33.3% | 33.9% | 10.3% | 3.3% | | | |
| Weighted Mean | | | | | | | 3.2435 | | |
| Std. Deviation | | | | | | | | .64372 | |

As shown by the data, the first item (# 17), which asked the participants to report on how often they paid attention to the cultural dimension of the texts included in the English textbooks and used it as an opportunity to teach culture, received the highest mean value ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .888$). More than one third of the participants (38.3%; $n = 138$) answered with *often*. Additionally, 72 (20%) said they always paid attention to cultural issues, while very few answered with *never* (1.1%; $n = 4$) and *rarely* (5.6%; $n = 20$). The rest (35%; $n = 126$) answered with *sometimes*. Item 18, which asked the informants whether they used supplementary materials to teach intercultural aspects, received the third highest mean value ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .953$). The most frequently occurring response was *sometimes*, which was selected by 144

informants (40%). The answer choices *always*, *often*, *rarely* and *never* were selected less frequently: (7.8%; $n = 28$), (29.7%; $n = 107$), (18.9%; $n = 68$) and (3.6%; $n = 13$), respectively.

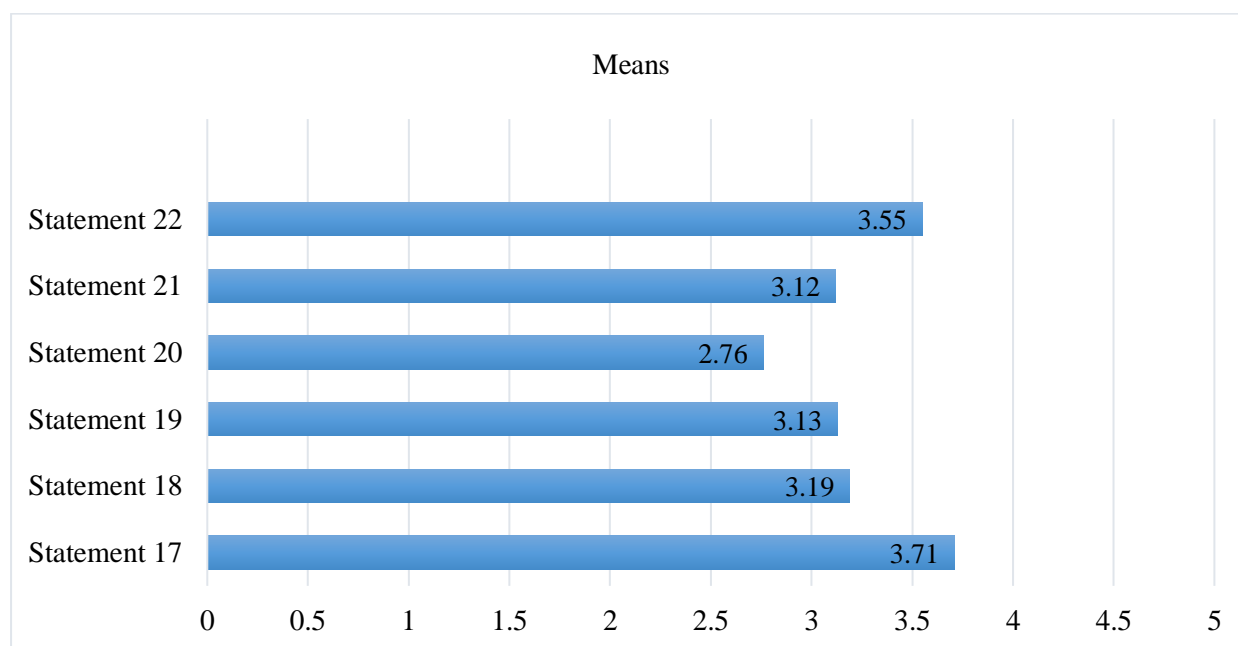
Similar to the previous item, statement 19 ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.124$), which aimed to disclose how often teachers organized extracurricular activities aiming to get students acquainted with other cultures, received the most frequent answer of *sometimes* from 113 (31.4%) participants. 47 answers (13.1%) were recorded as *always*, 89 (24.7%) as *often*, 87 (24.2%) as *rarely* and 24 (6.7%) as *never*. On the other hand, item 20 was ranked the least frequently practiced technique ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.010$). When asked how often they assessed students' cultural competence, only 12 (3.3%) teachers said that they always tested students on that skill. The majority of the teachers, i.e., 138 (38.3%) reported that they only sometimes did it. 71 (19.7%) informants answered with *often*, and 96 (26.7%) with *rarely*. The remaining 43 (11.9%) said that they have never done it. In addition, item 21 ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .964$) asked the participants if they used the discussion strategy in their classrooms to refute stereotypes about foreign cultures. Similar to previous statements, the majority of teachers, i.e., 162 (45%) answered with *sometimes*. 93 (25.8%) answered with *often*, 58 (16.1%) answered with *rarely*, 26 (7.2%) answered with *always*, and 21 (5.8%) answered with *never*. The last statement in this section asked the participants how often they encouraged their students to reflect on their own cultural beliefs and practices as well as those of others. This item, along with item 17, received the highest ranking (i.e., 4) compared to the rest of the current part items, whose frequency level was 3. The answers were distributed as follows: 69 participants (19.2%) answered with *always*, 120 (33.3%) with *often*, 122 (33.9%) with *sometimes*, 37 (10.3%) with *rarely*, and only 12 (3.3%) responded with *never*.

Overall, only one third of the items (i.e., 2) received a high ranking, as their mean scores were higher than 3.5, which is the point beyond which a mean value indicates a high frequent

use of culture teaching techniques. The rest four items indicated a moderate frequency, which rendered the weighted mean ($M = 3.2435$, $SD = .64372$) to reflect a moderate frequency in the use of culture teaching techniques by the Palestinian English teachers (refer to Figure 7.3 below for visual illustration).

Figure 7.3

Mean Scores of the Items Related to Culture Teaching Practices



In addition to the methods mentioned in the survey, participants were requested to mention other methods or strategies they use to teach culture than the ones stated above (see Question 23 in Appendix B). Out of the 360 teachers surveyed, only 62 responded to this question. Among the respondents, 18 teachers mentioned that they do not use any additional methods, while the remaining 44 teachers shared some of the methods and techniques they use to teach culture in their classrooms.

The methods provided included role-plays, presentations, guest speakers, YouTube videos, organizing cultural events, holding virtual meetings with internationals, and assigning projects and

research tasks to explore foreign cultures. Despite the fact that the mentioned methods are valuable for teaching culture and promoting IC, the low participation in the question suggests that some teachers may have limited knowledge of a broader range of methods used for intercultural teaching.

7.3 Teachers' International Exposure and Intercultural Training

Having answered the first research question in the previous section, we now turn to explore the second and third research questions, which aim to inspect the teachers' overseas experiences, international contacts and culture teaching training as well as their potential impact on teachers' IC level and their culture teaching practices. In order to do so, the participants were asked to respond with *yes* or *no* to three questions (# 4, 6 and 24), which were each followed with an open-ended question (# 5, 7 and 25; see Appendix B). The analysis of the six questions was completed using percentages and frequencies of the participants' responses. Additionally, a Chi-square test was run to explore the relationship between the three aforementioned variables on the one hand, and the participants' IC level and classroom practices on the other hand.

Table 7.6 below shows the frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to questions 4, 6 and 24. Among the 360 participants, only 43 (11.9%) reported having stayed in a foreign country for work or study, while the remaining 317 (88.1%) had not had such experience. Those who responded with *yes* were asked to mention the country/countries they had visited and their stay period (question 5). The collected data reveals that the USA was the most visited country (15 teachers), followed by the UK (6 teachers). European countries were also among the visited destinations, with 10 teachers reporting visits to Germany, France, Denmark, Spain and Netherlands. Additionally, 12 teachers reported staying in six Arab countries (i.e., KSA, Jordan, UAE, Qatar, Libya, and Kuwait), mainly to work in the education sector. Finally, 6 more teachers have also stated visiting India, Turkey, Japan, Malaysia and China. As for their stay period, 22

teachers reported staying in a foreign country for more than a year, while the remaining 21 teachers spent only a few weeks or months.

When asked whether the participants maintained regular contact with any international friends or relatives, 102 (28.3%) teachers responded with *yes*, while 258 (71.7%) denied (see Table 7.6). Those who confirmed were asked to respond to question 7, which inquired about their friends' nationalities and how often they got in contact with. Among the reported responses, the USA and the UK were the most mentioned nationalities (40 and 22 times, respectively), followed by European nationalities (e.g., Germany, France, Spain and Italy), which were mentioned 37 times. Arab nationalities were also mentioned 20 times, followed by Canadian and Australian nationalities, each mentioned 4 times. Additionally, Russia and New Zealand were referred to twice each. Other countries, such as Tajikistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Bosnia, Japan, Belarus, Armenia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, and China, were named only once.

Regarding teachers' responses to question 24, only 59 (16.4%) participants stated they had received training in teaching culture, while the remaining 301 (83.6%) were not trained in teaching culture (see Table 7.6 below). When asked about the training providers, 13 teachers referred to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, 10 to the British council, 11 to various local and foreign universities, 3 to local organizations, and 2 to Amideast (American nonprofit organization in the Middle East and North Africa).

Table 7.6

Teachers' Overseas Experiences, International Contacts and Culture Teaching Training

| Questions | | Yes | No |
|--|---|-------|-------|
| Q 4. Have you ever stayed in a foreign country to study or work? | N | 43 | 317 |
| | % | 11.9% | 88.1% |
| Q 6. Do you have any international friends/acquaintances that you keep in touch with regularly? | N | 102 | 258 |
| | % | 28.3% | 71.7% |
| Q 24. Have you received any training workshops on how to teach cultural aspects in the EFL classroom (e.g., from the Palestinian Ministry of Education or other entities)? | N | 59 | 301 |
| | % | 16.4% | 83.6% |

7.4 Impact of International Exposure and Training on Teachers' IC

The Chi-square test of independence was run to investigate whether there is a statistically significant relationship between international exposure and training in teaching culture on the one hand, and teachers' beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices related to IC and teaching culture on the other hand. The choice of the Chi-square test of independence (developed by Pearson in 1900) to inspect the variables for correlation was determined based on the types of variables being tested for possible correlation. According to Franke et al. (2011), the Chi-square test of independence is used when both variables are categorical and belong to a single sample, which makes it different from the Chi-square test of homogeneity, which is used when the variables being tested belong to two different samples. Other correlation tests, such as Pearson correlation coefficient, were not chosen to investigate the variables for potential correlation, since they are used with other types of data (e.g., parametric data). Having decided on the right correlation test, three null hypotheses along with their alternative hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H_{01} : There is no relationship between teachers' level of IC knowledge and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

H_{A1} : There is a relationship between teachers' level of IC knowledge and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

H_{02} : There is no relationship between teachers' attitudes towards IC and teaching culture and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

H_{A2} : There is a relationship between teachers' attitudes towards IC and teaching culture and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

H_{03} : There is no relationship between teachers' implementation of teaching culture and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

H_{A3} : There is a relationship between teachers' implementation of teaching culture and their international exposure and received training in teaching culture.

Results of the Chi-square test of independence (Table 7.7) for the relationship between teachers' knowledge of IC and their overseas experiences, international contacts, and training in teaching culture show that there is a significant association between the variables, $\chi^2(4, N = 360) = 10.32, p = 0.035$ (overseas experiences), $15.65, p = 0.004$ (international contacts), and $12.75, p = 0.013$ (training). Since all the three p values are lower than 0.05, which is the criterion for significance, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and accept the alternative one (H_{A1}), which assumes that Palestinian English teachers are more likely to have greater knowledge of IC when they have more international exposure and culture teaching training.

Table 7.7

Association between Teachers' Knowledge of IC and Their International Exposure and Training

| | | Overseas experiences | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|---|
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Knowledge of IC | S. Disagree | 7 | 0.5 | 45 | 3.1 | 52 | 3.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 10.32$ $p = 0.035$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 14 | 1.0 | 91 | 6.3 | 105 | 7.3 | |
| | Neutral | 13 | 0.9 | 178 | 12.4 | 191 | 13.3 | |
| | Agree | 103 | 7.2 | 784 | 54.4 | 887 | 61.6 | |
| | S. Agree | 35 | 2.4 | 170 | 11.8 | 205 | 14.2 | |
| | | International contacts | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Knowledge of IC | S. Disagree | 19 | 1.3 | 33 | 2.3 | 52 | 3.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 15.65$ $p = 0.004$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 20 | 1.4 | 84 | 5.8 | 104 | 7.2 | |
| | Neutral | 49 | 3.4 | 142 | 9.9 | 191 | 13.3 | |
| | Agree | 243 | 16.9 | 645 | 44.8 | 888 | 61.7 | |
| | S. Agree | 77 | 5.3 | 128 | 8.9 | 205 | 14.2 | |
| | | Training in teaching culture | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Knowledge of IC | Never | 5 | 0.3 | 47 | 3.3 | 52 | 3.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 12.75$ $p = 0.013$ $n = 360$ |
| | Rarely | 15 | 1.0 | 90 | 6.3 | 105 | 7.3 | |
| | Sometimes | 18 | 1.3 | 173 | 12.0 | 191 | 13.3 | |
| | Often | 155 | 10.8 | 732 | 50.8 | 887 | 61.6 | |
| | Always | 43 | 3.0 | 162 | 11.3 | 205 | 14.2 | |

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Unlike the previous findings, the results in Table 7.8 below show that there is no significant association between teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture and their overseas experiences and received training in teaching culture, $\chi^2(4, N = 360) = 8.34, p = 0.080$ (overseas experiences), and

2.81, $p = 0.590$ (training). However, the third independent variable, i.e., international contacts, has a significant association with teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture, $\chi^2(4, N = 360) = 20.07$, $p < 0.001$. Based on the calculated p values, we partially accept the null hypothesis (H_02) concerning overseas experiences and training. However, we only accept the part of the alternative hypothesis (H_{A2}) which is about the effect of international contacts on teachers' attitudes. As a result, teachers are more likely to have positive attitudes towards teaching culture if they are in contact with other international people. However, their attitudes do not seem to improve with overseas experiences and training in teaching culture.

Table 7.8

Association between Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Culture and Their International Exposure and Training

| | | Overseas experiences | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------|-----|------|-------|------|---|
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Attitudes towards teaching culture | S. Disagree | 31 | 1.7 | 178 | 9.9 | 209 | 11.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 8.34$ $p = 0.080$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 32 | 1.8 | 275 | 15.3 | 307 | 17.1 | |
| | Neutral | 16 | 0.9 | 180 | 10.0 | 196 | 10.9 | |
| | Agree | 93 | 5.2 | 716 | 39.8 | 809 | 44.9 | |
| | S. Agree | 43 | 2.4 | 236 | 13.1 | 279 | 15.5 | |
| | | International contacts | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Attitudes towards teaching culture | S. Disagree | 67 | 3.7 | 142 | 7.9 | 209 | 11.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 20.07$ $p < 0.001$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 71 | 3.9 | 236 | 13.1 | 307 | 17.1 | |
| | Neutral | 52 | 2.9 | 144 | 8.0 | 196 | 10.9 | |
| | Agree | 214 | 11.9 | 595 | 33.1 | 809 | 44.9 | |
| | S. Agree | 106 | 5.9 | 173 | 9.6 | 279 | 15.5 | |
| | | Training in teaching culture | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Attitudes towards teaching culture | Never | 32 | 1.8 | 177 | 9.8 | 209 | 11.6 | $\chi^2(4) = 2.81$ $p = 0.590$ $n = 360$ |
| | Rarely | 50 | 2.8 | 257 | 14.3 | 307 | 17.1 | |
| | Sometimes | 25 | 1.4 | 171 | 9.5 | 196 | 10.9 | |
| | Often | 138 | 7.7 | 671 | 37.3 | 809 | 44.9 | |
| | Always | 50 | 2.8 | 229 | 12.7 | 279 | 15.5 | |

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Another Chi-square test of independence was run to see if there is a correlation between teachers' classroom practices related to teaching culture and the same three independent variables

mentioned above. The results in Table 7.9 below show that the three independent variables have a significant relationship with teachers' classroom practices, $\chi^2(4, N = 360) = 13.44, p = 0.009$ (overseas experiences), $23.49, p < 0.001$ (international contacts), and $76.37, p < 0.001$ (training). As a result, the null hypothesis (H_03) was rejected and the alternative one (H_A3) was accepted, which confirms that exposure to international cultures and receiving adequate training in teaching culture will lead teachers to implement culture teaching in their classes more often.

Table 7.9

Association between Teachers' Culture Teaching Practices and Their International Exposure and Training

| | | Overseas experiences | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|---|
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Culture teaching practices | S. Disagree | 19 | 0.9 | 98 | 4.5 | 117 | 5.4 | $\chi^2(4) = 13.44$ $p = 0.009$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 48 | 2.2 | 318 | 14.7 | 366 | 16.9 | |
| | Neutral | 73 | 3.4 | 729 | 33.8 | 802 | 37.1 | |
| | Agree | 91 | 4.2 | 530 | 24.5 | 621 | 28.7 | |
| | S. Agree | 27 | 1.3 | 227 | 10.5 | 254 | 11.8 | |
| | | International contacts | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Culture teaching practices | S. Disagree | 26 | 1.2 | 91 | 4.2 | 117 | 5.4 | $\chi^2(4) = 23.49$ $p < 0.001$ $n = 360$ |
| | Disagree | 102 | 4.7 | 267 | 12.4 | 369 | 17.1 | |
| | Neutral | 194 | 9.0 | 608 | 28.1 | 802 | 37.1 | |
| | Agree | 193 | 8.9 | 424 | 19.6 | 617 | 28.6 | |
| | S. Agree | 97 | 4.5 | 158 | 7.3 | 255 | 11.8 | |
| | | Training in teaching culture | | | | Total | | χ^2 test of independence |
| | | Yes | | No | | | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Culture teaching practices | Never | 6 | 0.3 | 111 | 5.1 | 117 | 5.4 | $\chi^2(4) = 76.37$ $p < 0.001$ $n = 360$ |
| | Rarely | 31 | 1.4 | 335 | 15.5 | 366 | 16.9 | |
| | Sometimes | 108 | 5.0 | 692 | 32.0 | 800 | 37.0 | |
| | Often | 134 | 6.2 | 489 | 22.6 | 623 | 28.8 | |
| | Always | 75 | 3.5 | 179 | 8.3 | 254 | 11.8 | |

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

7.5 Summary

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to assess Palestinian EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices related to teaching culture and IC. The findings showed that teachers had a high level of knowledge of IC with weighted average ($M = 3.7556$) and overall standard deviation ($SD = .60462$). However, both their attitudes ($M = 3.3567$, $SD = .42184$) and use of culture teaching practices ($M = 3.2435$, $SD = .64372$) were found to be moderate. Moreover, the responses to the open-ended questions, intended to elicit more detailed information about the same elements, suggested that participants held conventional views on teaching culture and showed limited application of strategies meant to teach IC.

Additionally, frequencies and percentages were used to disclose teachers' overseas experiences, international contacts, and received training in teaching culture. The findings showed that a small number of Palestinian EFL teachers had been to other countries or received training in teaching culture, and almost one third of them had international contacts. Moreover, the Chi-square test of independence was run to test whether teachers' beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices were correlated with their level of international exposure and previously received training in teaching culture. The findings suggested that while teachers' knowledge of IC and culture teaching practices were positively correlated with international exposure and training in teaching culture, teachers' attitudes were only correlated with international contacts, showing a negative association with overseas experiences and training in teaching culture.

Having completed the three analysis chapters, which aimed to assess the *English for Palestine* textbook series and Palestinian English teachers concerning their potential for promoting students' acquisition of IC, the results will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the research findings presented in chapters five, six, and seven, which aimed to measure the potential of the *English for Palestine* textbook series and Palestinian EFL teachers in promoting intercultural competence. The chapter relates the findings to the theoretical framework of teaching culture and previous research on IC, while also considering their implications within the context of teaching English as a foreign or second language. The chapter is composed of three sections. The first section, 8.1. EFL textbooks, discusses the findings related to the textbook analysis. The second section, 8.2. EFL teachers, explores the results concerning EFL teachers' level of IC and the variables associated with it. Lastly, the third section provides a summary of the main implications of the research findings as presented in the chapter.

8.1 EFL Textbooks

To answer the first main research question, which aimed to investigate whether the *English for Palestine* textbooks have the potential for promoting intercultural competence among EFL learners, it was necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of all the cultural elements in the textbooks that contribute to the development of IC. For this purpose, eight sub-questions were formulated (see pages 6 & 7) to examine several elements of the textbooks, including the syllabus, cultural representations at different levels (micro, macro, and international), characters, renowned figures, intercultural contacts, represented countries, perspectives, and cultural tasks.

First, the syllabi, language varieties, lexicon, and phonological representations included in the textbooks were examined to determine their capacity for fostering students' IC. The findings indicated that the various syllabi present in the textbooks were exclusively tailored to enhance language competence, particularly in the standard British accent known as *Received Pronunciation* (RP), which was also the sole English variety taught and employed as a model for pronunciation

practice. Moreover, the choice of the lexicon was determined based on the high-frequency level of vocabulary items, as well as the topics of the textbooks' units. Consequently, it can be inferred that the inclusion of culture within the textbooks occurred arbitrarily without prior planning.

Second, three of the research sub-questions (RQs b, c, & e, see pages 6 & 7) aimed to investigate the cultural component of the textbooks as distributed over the three dimensions of culture (micro, macro, and international). The aim was to compare their proportions in relation to each other, as well as examine the authenticity and depth of their topics. The prevalent trend observed in all the textbooks was the dominance of cultural representation on both micro and macro levels, while the international and intercultural aspects appeared to be predominantly underrepresented. Furthermore, the international and intercultural issues in the textbooks contained cases of misrepresentation, underrepresentation and stereotypes. Besides, the topics covered predominantly maintain a superficial and positive nature, resulting in a deficiency in promoting the vital skills of discovery, interpretation, and critical thinking that are necessary for fostering IC.

Third, the sub-question addressing the renowned figures (refer to RQ d, page 7) aimed to investigate the figures' nationalities, occupational roles, and gender to determine whether the incorporated figures reinforce Anglo-American dominance and gender bias, or if they contribute to a more balanced representation of a diverse international cultures and gender roles. The results showed a prevalence of Palestinian and English-speaking nationalities in the textbooks compared to other nationalities. In addition, a significant imbalance between male and female figures was displayed across the textbooks, with the number of male figures surpassing that of females in all cases except in PB8. Concerning the occupational roles, the overall ratio of male to female figures across all occupations was 1:4.57, highlighting a male dominance, especially in influential occupations.

Fourth, research sub-questions f and g (refer to page 7) aimed to provide insights into the culture types (local, target, and foreign cultures) and intercultural contacts incorporated in the textbooks. Concerning the cultures represented, among the twelve textbooks examined, only three (PB8, PB9, and PB10) displayed a relatively balanced distribution of the incorporated cultural references across local, target, and foreign cultures. The remaining textbooks tended to over-represent Palestinian, British, and American cultures. In addition, the number of intercultural contacts incorporated throughout the entire series was relatively small (only 112). Remarkably, nearly 80% of these interactions involved a Palestinian individual and a native English speaker (British or American). It was also found that the majority of the topics involved in the intercultural contacts revolved around surface culture, while only a few instances delved into deeper cultural topics.

Fifth, the last research sub-question (RQ h, page 7) was formulated to investigate the perspectives and cultural tasks incorporated in the textbooks. The results showed that the textbooks as a whole fell short in effectively promoting multi-perspectivity. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of tasks in all the textbooks aimed at developing lower-order thinking skills, since they fell under the first three categories (i.e., apperception, reproduction, and processing). The rest of the tasks (almost 3%) fell under the application category.

Taking the answers of the previous research sub-questions into account, it becomes apparent that the *English for Palestine* textbooks lack substantial potential for promoting IC among EFL learners. Consequently, six themes, which represent the main patterns in the findings, will be discussed in relation to their implications for IC development.

8.1.1 Linguistic Competence in RP

The findings related to the examination of the syllabus and the linguistic components suggest that the textbooks were mainly created to promote language proficiency in RP. No evidence of a planned approach to tackle other English varieties was traced. Relating this finding to the theoretical framework, the textbooks seem to embrace outdated views of the English language, depicting it as a property of native English speakers (Strevens, 1992; Widdowson, 1994). Such views, according to Alptekin (1984) and Krasnick (1982), fail to recognize the particularity of English as a lingua franca, which entails reconsidering classroom practices in accordance with students' current needs.

The insistence on teaching RP as the most correct variety in the EFL classroom raises several negative consequences. First, it is almost impossible for EFL learners to master a native-like accent without becoming native speakers themselves (Cook, 1999; Saville-Troike, 1989). This may result in making students refrain from learning the language, as the task seems impossible. Second, the focus on RP may stigmatize other varieties of English as primitive, insignificant, or fatuous (Farrell & Martin, 2009; Holborow, 1999) leading to undermining their significant role in facilitating intercultural communication. Third, the fact that stereotyping based on one's accent exists may lead to discrimination in the workplace or other areas of life (Tollefson, 2002). This made Carter (1997) propose that requiring students to learn RP is a "form of social enslavement" (as cited in Holborow, 1999, p. 150).

On the other hand, incorporating other accents in the EFL classroom makes the material more authentic, as this simulates real-life situations, where students hear and use various English accents. In this context, Lindblom (2005) claims that ignoring other varieties of the English language "erases cultural differences that make students and their perspectives unique and original" (p. 108). In order to tackle this problem, Canagarajah (2006) proposes that we must change our

understanding of proficiency, which requires shifting “our emphases from language as a system to language as social practice, from grammar to pragmatics, from competence to performance” (p. 234). Consequently, assessing proficiency in a foreign language should be based on performance rather than the type of accent spoken.

8.1.2 Dominance of Source and Target Cultures

Much like the majority of existing studies that have investigated the type of culture represented in EFL textbooks (e.g., Abid, 2021; Arslan, 2016; Dehbozorgi, Amalsaleh & Kafipour, 2014; Ponte, 2019; Shin et al., 2011; Su, 2016), the findings demonstrated a predominant representation of the source and target cultures compared to the coverage other international cultures received. This indicates that English language teaching is still perceived as a tool for helping students communicate with native English speakers from the UK and the USA mainly. With little attention paid to other international cultures, students' various needs, which can be as broad as pursuing studies in a non-English-speaking country or as simple as using the language to communicate with visiting internationals, seem to be unfulfilled (Baltag, 2017).

Other implications of such overrepresentation of the Anglo-American culture include conveying wrong messages about the English language and the countries where English is spoken as a native language. According to Nault (2006), such representation fails to acknowledge other contexts where English is also spoken as a native language, such as Australia and Canada. Another important point that applies specifically to the Palestinian situation is students' feelings toward Western and American cultures. Western and American strong ties with Israel have resulted in some enmity towards these countries. Therefore, too much Anglo-American representation in EFL textbooks, as argued by Argungu (1996) and Sárdi (2002), might drive students away from English as a school discipline.

On the other hand, this argument should not be understood as a call to abolish the cultures of the source or the main English-speaking countries from appearing in EFL textbooks. On the contrary, a balanced representation of those cultures along with other international cultures would be beneficial in developing awareness of self as well as other, which is one of the aims of culture teaching (Byram, 2008). In this context, Knutson (2006) comments that “the understanding of self as culturally determined is closely associated with the humanistic values *L2 education* is designed to promote, and it is a valuable asset for lifelong learning as well” (p. 599). However, the question to be asked is whether the culture included in the textbooks about the source/target cultures really helps in developing awareness of self and other. The answer lies in the type of incorporated culture as it will be presented in the next section.

8.1.3 Oversimplification of Culture

The findings concerning the type of culture represented in the textbooks suggest that cultural representations mainly tackled congratulatory and superficial topics. Avoidance of conflictive and controversial issues was evident in a number of studies (e.g., Aliakbari, 2004; Espinar & Rodríguez, 2019; Faraj et al., 2021; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Irawan & Daud, 2021; Ponte, 2019). This shows that teaching culture has not been viewed in connection to developing students' intercultural competence yet. Rather, it is still perceived as an absolute bonus of cultural information about the culture where English is spoken as a native language (Lee & Li, 2019).

This outdated perception of teaching culture has a number of implications, which have roots in the theoretical framework discussed earlier in chapter two. First, such superficial and overly positive cultural representations introduce culture as a static and homogenous entity, which allows the formation of generalizations about certain cultures (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Levy, 2007). This contradicts the current view of culture as “ever-developing and changing, and inherently unstable”

(Atkinson, 1999, p. 632), which considers the individualities existing in each community or ethnic group. Consequently, such generalizations, as claimed by Gómez Rodríguez (2015), may result in presenting the target culture in accordance with oversimplified and stereotypical images. In fact, such representations, which include fixed facts, urge students to act as passive receivers, making no room for critical thinking (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). This was shown in the depiction of the textbook characters, who mainly expressed positive perspectives and feelings because of the limitations posed by the nature of the represented culture, which takes materialism as their main theme.

Unlike celebratory views of culture, debatable topics encourage the formation of what Kramsch (2006) calls “symbolic competence” (p. 251), which goes beyond understanding the literal meaning of words to comprehending the views, attitudes and values of the people using them. In addition, the inclusion of deep and contentious cultural topics in EFL textbooks seems to be essential, as argued by Gómez Rodríguez (2015), since it helps students think critically about issues related to racism, political conflicts, dominance, and gender, which consequently, as suggested by Kubota (2004), can encourage students to participate in social change.

8.1.4 Under-Representation and Stereotypes

Similar to this research, other studies have confirmed that biases based on nationality (e.g., Joo et al., 2020) and gender (Roohani & Molana, 2013) existed in EFL textbooks. These findings could be examined in relation to the effects of such biases on students, which have been found to greatly influence “(1) children's attitudes, (2) their personality development and behaviour, and (3) their academic and long-range, career-related achievement” (Wirtenberg et al., 1980, p. 17).

Undoubtedly, repeated exposure to certain cultural patterns repeatedly has an immense impact on shaping students' perspectives. Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) explain that

internalization of certain attitudes and feelings works through a process known as “association”, through which receivers are exposed to the characters in visual and written materials repeatedly. This exposure results in unconscious linkage of characters’ predominant characteristics to certain ethnic, religious, and gender groups. However, the result is not limited to students’ perception of others, as it has a direct impact on students’ perception of themselves as well (Kramsch, 1993).

Certainly, the visual illustration that compares schools in the UK and Palestine stands out from the rest of the comparisons. The picture, which was introduced to ten-year-olds, is deplorably communicating a negative message about their schools as crowded and untidy. British schools, on the other hand, are portrayed as beautiful, quiet and friendly. Such comparisons can be misleading, as the Palestinian school which was referred to is a refugee school whereas the British school seems to be a private one. Instead, the writer could have used the picture of a state school to make the comparison fairer for Palestinian students. As argued by Ndura (2004), representations like this work as a reinforcement of students’ previous views of the represented culture, which are usually stereotypical. Thus, students’ perception of the UK as a more advanced country than their own country is expected to be reinforced.

As far as gender bias is concerned, the portrayal of male and female characters suggests an inherent male dominance, which has dangerous effects on students in general and on female students in particular. Images of female characters depicted in stereotypical roles can, according to Sheldon (1990), foster the stereotyped societal roles of females in the eyes of male students as well as deter female students from pursuing influential roles in society. Peterson and Lach (1990), and Potter and Rosser (1992) claim that this effect can have future implications on the females’ career choices, since girls are likely to unconsciously internalize the characters’ roles as appropriate and socially acceptable for them. Patt and McBride (1993) suggest that these effects result after the formation of distorted beliefs, which assume that boys are more suitable for or capable of doing

certain occupations. Academic performance of female students can also be badly affected as suggested by Crawford and English (1984), who have proven that instructional materials in which females are less represented than males are more likely to help male students to retain information more than female students. Besides, feelings of marginalization and underrepresentation can cause female students to dislike biased school textbooks and refrain from learning, which certainly will influence their academic performance negatively (Sunderland, 1992).

Moreover, stereotypes are based on a collective judgement of a certain culture, which contradicts the current view of culture by prominent scholars in the EFL field, who see culture as heterogeneous and dynamic (Atkinson 1999; Byram 1992; Clifford 1992; Crozet & Liddicoat 1999; Kubota 1999; Oxford 1995). In fact, mutual representations have become more appropriate to be made on certain age or social groups (e.g., waged women vs. unwaged women) than on entire cultures. Thus, it is recommended to refrain from making collective stereotypes that view different countries as static and homogeneous since they do not make place for critical thinking and reasoning based on context (Byram 1992; Clifford 1992). As a result, claiming that Palestinians have closer social ties than Americans does not seem to go along with the current views of culture. Similarly, visual illustrations can have an equal or even bigger effect on confirming existing false representations of other cultures as in the case with the picture that depicts Africans fleeing from regional conflicts and receiving humanitarian aid from Western people. As a result, representations of nationalities and females need to be reconsidered to avoid potential international misunderstandings and biases against women.

8.1.5 International Dimension

The importance of an appropriate international and intercultural component in EFL textbooks stems from the fact that it forms the basis of various learning opportunities where students can develop

various skills that are crucial for enhancing IC. Consequently, the fact that the *English for Palestine* textbook series lacks sufficient and adequate representation of international and intercultural issues indicates that the textbook series does not support students' development in intercultural communication. The findings are in line with the studies conducted by García (2005), Nguyen (2011), and Pasand et al. (2018), which were carried out in three different contexts: Spain, Vietnam, and Iran.

International and intercultural issues, as argued in chapter 5, include comparisons, mutual representations and relations at the international level. Unbalanced representation of such issues, as argued by Pasand et al. (2018), can encourage “a one-sided worldview in which learners prefer particular nationalities, groups, races, and gender over others” (p. 65). This effect is clearly perceptible in the comparisons that were made between Palestinian and British schools, as well as the picture that showed Africans as receivers of international aid. To avoid the formation of such negative perceptions, Byram (2001) argues that foreign language teaching should not be neutral. Rather, it has the responsibility of engaging learners in social and political discussions as a way of bringing change. Engagement in debates on controversial topics, as proved by Porto (2014), promotes the formation of intercultural citizenship because they develop a number of skills, such as “comparative interpretation, consciousness-raising, reflection, critical thinking, critical reflexivity...and critical cultural awareness” (pp. 246-247).

The positive representation of international mutual relations covered in the textbooks brings up the question of what type/s of international relations should be tackled in EFL textbooks. García (2005) emphasizes that a realistic approach that combines both positive and controversial issues should be followed, as this gives a holistic view of such relations and prepares students to deal with real situations. However, it must be noted that issues related to conflicts and contentions “can be better explored if taken as a basis to examine how misunderstandings often occur in intercultural

contacts and how they can be resolved in the future” (García, 2005, p. 67). Inclusion of either type without the other can result in an incomplete perception of self and other. In this vein, Scollon and Scollon (1995 as cited in García, 2005) explain that stereotypes form as a result of the exaggeration of either positive or negative characteristics of a certain group of people. The author elaborates that negative stereotypes usually have a "grain of truth" that is extended to every single member of the foreign community based on a limited and skewed understanding of otherness (p.59). In addition, Clarke and Clarke (1990) assure that the exclusion of either type renders EFL textbooks a potential carrier of stereotypes.

In light of the aforementioned, it seems that a balanced approach that takes into account both positive and controversial aspects of international issues proves to be the right choice for enhancing the necessary skills for successful intercultural competence.

8.1.6 Cultural Tasks

Concerning the practical side of the textbooks, it is clear that the rise in the number of cultural activities incorporated in the secondary textbooks did not have much effect on the potential of the cultural tasks on enhancing students' IC, as few tasks fell under the application category, where students can role-play cross-cultural situations. These findings are consistent with Hilliard's (2014) and Huang's (2019) findings.

The inclusion of sufficient tasks that go beyond tackling the grammatical functions of the language to intercultural communicative functions proves essential, since promoting IC requires developing a number of skills along with knowledge, awareness and attitudes (Byram, 2008). This topic takes its importance from the fact that using authentic cultural texts in EFL textbooks is not enough (Kramsch, 1988; Nostrand, 1989). According to Kramsch (1988), for students to get the most out of such texts, the texts must be used authentically. Using menus as an example, Kramsch

(1988) clarifies that such authentic material must be put into a context that simulates a real situation, which includes “price of food, taxes and tips, restaurant going habits of customers, food and drug regulations, waiter’s wages, trade unions, standard of living, the rituals and metaphors of dining out” (p. 84). Thus, the fact that only three percent of the textbooks activities belonged to the application category suggests that the incorporated cultural texts were not used authentically, which as a result, does not seem to promote IC.

In fact, the lack of tasks aiming to enhance intercultural communication skills supports the findings that revealed the textbooks’ insufficient coverage of intercultural contacts and issues. This is because incorporating a diversity of intercultural contacts where people from different cultures come in contact with each other creates opportunities for including communicative tasks. Similarly, inappropriate international and intercultural issues would surely deprive students of opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas.

8.2 EFL Teachers

This section is related to the second research question, which aimed to assess the potential of Palestinian EFL teachers in promoting IC among learners, as well as explore how their effectiveness may improve in this area. In addressing this question, three sub-questions were formulated (refer to pages 7 & 8). The first sub-question aimed to assess teachers’ current level of IC, intercultural attitudes, and culture teaching practices. The second sub-question inquired about teachers’ levels of international exposure and training in IC. The third sub-question expanded upon the findings of the second sub-question to investigate the impact of international exposure and intercultural training on teachers’ IC level, intercultural attitudes and culture teaching practices.

The findings related to these sub-questions proposed that teachers had a high level of knowledge of IC. However, both their attitudes and classroom practices related to teaching IC were

found to be moderate. Additionally, only a small number of Palestinian EFL teachers were exposed to international cultures or received training in teaching culture. Further investigation revealed that while teachers' knowledge of IC and culture teaching practices were correlated with international exposure and training in teaching culture, their attitudes were only correlated with international contacts, with no association with overseas experiences and intercultural training.

The answers of the sub-questions provided an answer to the main research question, indicating that Palestinian EFL teachers had the knowledge of IC. Nonetheless, their potential in this regard remained unfulfilled, as their intercultural attitudes and culture teaching practices needed further development. In addition, International exposure seemed to have an impact on teachers' knowledge of IC and culture teaching practices. However, the same variables seemed not to affect teachers' intercultural attitudes, suggesting the potential influence of other factors in shaping their attitudes.

The main reason for exploring EFL teachers' IC and the variables associated with it was to use the findings as the basis for enhancing teachers' abilities in IC. Departing from this point, the findings of the current research were discussed under four themes, which mainly aim to form a better understanding of IC development so that EFL teachers can become more compatible with teaching IC.

8.2.1 Reflections on Teachers' Attitudes and Practices

Teachers' responses to sections three and four of the survey, which were designed to measure their intercultural attitudes and practices, revealed that both their attitudes and practices were moderate. However, their answers to the open-ended questions twenty-three and twenty-six, designed to gain deeper insights into the same components, suggested conventional views of teaching culture and limited use of techniques aiming to teach IC.

The fact that only sixty-two participants answered question twenty-three, forty-four of which mentioned the methods and techniques they use in the classroom, indicates that teachers have limited knowledge and use of various intercultural teaching techniques. In addition, the mentioned techniques only involved the use of posters, presentations, videos, guest speakers, cultural events, and role-plays. Thus, the lack of variation in the mentioned techniques supports our conclusion, which suggests an urgent need for intercultural training. Similar findings have been reported in other studies (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2019; Atay et al., 2009; Banafsheh et al., 2016; Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022; Nhem, 2020; Safa & Tofghi, 2021; Shirazi & Shafiee, 2017). This indicates a clear lack of diversity in intercultural teaching practices across various contexts.

Concerning teachers' attitudes towards teaching culture, the findings based on the respondents' answers to question twenty-six reflect a favorable stance towards teaching culture (only six out of two hundred and nineteen reflect negative attitudes). In addition, they viewed teaching culture as essential for avoiding intercultural misunderstandings, improving self-awareness, enhancing communication skills, and encouraging tolerance and respect for others. They also did not refer to the English-speaking countries. Rather, they talked about the Palestinian culture and other international cultures in general.

However, the majority of the responses viewed teaching culture as an important tool for enhancing linguistic competence and acquiring knowledge of other cultures. In addition, they only mentioned surface cultural aspects (e.g., food, clothes, literature, etc.) as examples of the types of culture that could be included in the textbooks. Besides, many seemed to support the inclusion of Palestinian culture mainly and carefully approaching other cultures. Their attitudes towards including other cultures were combined with fear of exposing students to contradicting views of Palestinian culture and Islam.

As previously discussed in the literature review, a significant number of studies suggested that EFL teachers hold positive attitudes towards teaching culture and IC (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2019; Aziz et al., 2020; Ghavamnia, 2020; Hapsari, 2021; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022; Megawati et al., 2020; Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Petosi & Karras, 2020; Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Saricoban & Oz, 2014; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Zou & Park, 2022). However, the significance of teaching culture has often been approached primarily in terms of its role in enhancing cultural knowledge and linguistic competence (e.g., Gu, 2015; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005). This indicates that efforts are needed to further emphasize the broader contributions of teaching culture in enhancing IC.

There is no doubt that including culture in EFL materials enhances linguistic competence (Brooks, 1969; Seelye, 1968) and increases one's stock of knowledge. However, the importance of teaching culture should also be viewed in terms of the acquisition of intercultural skills and attitudes as well as the development of self-awareness. This involves changing the type of cultural material offered in EFL textbooks, which predominantly represent surface culture (Espinár & Rodríguez, 2019; Faraj et al., 2021; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015; Irawan & Daud, 2021). Consequently, changing teachers' attitudes towards the type of culture to be included in the textbooks is important for the aim of teaching culture to be fully realised.

Teachers' careful approach towards foreign cultures and their emphasis on their Palestinian culture may be related to the political situation in their country, which may cause them to feel responsible for protecting their students from exposure to *extraneous* cultural norms and emphasize the need to cling to their cultural forms even more. This may have an effect on developing students' intercultural skills and attitudes, since they will be exposed to fewer international issues and contacts. However, this should not only be taken negatively, as it also indicates their awareness of issues related to power and dominance in relation to English language teaching, which actually

occupies a visible space in the recent discussions on teaching culture and IC development (Holliday, 2011; Liddicoat, 2013).

In brief, teachers seem to be willing and enthusiastic to teach IC. However, they have not demonstrated that they are familiar with a wide range of techniques that can be used to teach culture effectively. Similarly, their attitudes and perception of culture need further development in order to meet the requirements needed so that they can promote students' acquisition of IC.

8.2.2 Teachers' Perception and Practice of IC: A Knowledge-Practice Gap

Inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and behaviour was shown in various studies (Ahmed et al., 2019; Atay et al., 2009; Banafsheh et al., 2016; Megawati et al., 2020; Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Munandar & Newton, 2021; Nhem, 2020; Petosi & Karras, 2020; Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Saricoban & Oz, 2014; Young & Sachdev, 2011). However, consistency was also reported—although less frequently—in studies conducted by Gu (2015), Hasanah and Gunawan (2020), Kidwell (2021), Sercu (2006), and Shirazi and Shafiee (2017).

According to Cochran-Smith (1999), assuming that the more teachers know, the more they will be able to teach better is naïve. Various factors contribute to putting teachers' knowledge into practice. This does not underestimate the importance of knowledge, which also plays an immense role in enhancing the quality of teaching. Thus, the gap between teachers' knowledge and practice of IC suggests that enhancing teachers' knowledge of IC is insufficient by itself in making a visible change in teaching culture in the classroom. As a result, factors, such as stakeholders' and material developers' stances on the importance of teaching culture in the EFL classroom play a role in transferring teachers' knowledge into practice as well. Besides, one has to take into consideration the different societal and educational contexts in which the studies were conducted in order to better understand their implications.

On the other hand, consistency between teachers' knowledge and practice of IC proposes the need for providing teachers with professional training that aims to equip them with the most up-to-date methods and techniques of teaching culture as this will surely make their teaching better. The findings of our research suggest that the gap between teachers' knowledge and practice is mild. Therefore, both professional development opportunities and other variables related to the school environment, stakeholders and materials should be taken into account to enable teachers to be more competent in teaching IC.

8.2.3 Lack of International Exposure and Intercultural Training

Limited international exposure of Palestinian EFL teachers could be due to political restrictions, which make traveling difficult for those Palestinians who do not have a passport other than the Palestinian one. According to Aljamal (2014), Palestinians have to provide many documents confirming they have sufficient money and willingness to return home before they can obtain a visa to travel to another country. They also do not have an airport of their own. Thus, Palestinians who live in Gaza need to cross the borders with Egypt first before they can travel from Egyptian airports, while Palestinians who live in the West Bank use Jordanian airports to travel to other countries.⁴

Fortunately, the Internet has made it possible for those who cannot afford to travel or do not want to go through all the difficulties mentioned above to have intercultural exchanges with people from all over the world. However, still traveling offers a better experience (Korhonen & Lytle, 2004), as it places people in the middle of the target culture where they have to find ways to settle in, make contacts, and experience life as it is in a new country. Thus, traveling seems to play an essential role in enhancing peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards other cultures. As a result,

⁴ See Alijla (2020) on traveling hardships experienced by Palestinians.

new strategies should be explored to compensate for the teachers' limited freedom of movement, or at least minimize its effects on them.

Undoubtedly, the necessity for intercultural training in the Palestinian context is evident. Planning an effective intercultural training program requires setting specific and clear goals based on the trainees' needs (Black & Gregersen, 1991). Additionally, if intercultural training is to meet its goals, it should be based on a specific model of IC that explains the target components. For example, King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) intercultural maturity model, which describes the phases of development through which IC is expected to develop from initial to mature levels, can be used to first assess trainees' level of IC and then guide the creation of an intercultural training program.

Taking the components of intercultural competence (cognitive, affective and behavioral) into account, Graf (2004) conducted an assessment of intercultural training designs: "experiential discovery versus didactic expository and culture-specific versus culture-general training" (p. 199). Whereas the didactic approach involves exposing trainees to other cultures by means of direct lecturing and debate, the experiential approach creates opportunities for the trainees to practice real-life situations, which they reflect on in a later stage (Graf, 2004). In contrast, culture-specific training is concerned with providing trainees with cultural knowledge that guarantees appropriate interaction in a specific culture, while the culture-general approach is predicated on equipping trainees with knowledge and skills that enable them to get along with people from various cultures (Brislin & Pedersen, 1976 as cited in Graf, 2004). The results of the research proposed that the culture-general training design with an experiential focus was the most suitable approach for developing IC.

To sum up, conducting effective intercultural training entails taking into consideration (1) the type of intercultural component aimed to develop, (2) a well-planned intercultural training

program, and (3) allocating enough time for the goals to be fully achieved, since the development of different intercultural components requires different time spans as well as different approaches (Graf, 2004).

8.2.4 Knowledge Acquisition Versus Attitude Change

The results obtained by means of inferential statistics are partly in line with a number of studies which suggested that intercultural training (e.g., Dejaeghere & Zhang, 2008), and international exposure (e.g., Hismanoglu, 2011; Jular, 2007; Saricoban & Oz, 2014; Williams, 2005; Zou & Park, 2022) may have an effect on teachers' knowledge of IC. As for teachers' attitudes, the impact of international exposure was evident in Penbek et al. (2012), Shaftel et al. (2007), and Williams (2005). In contrast, teachers who received intercultural training either developed their intercultural attitudes (e.g., Dejaeghere & Zhang, 2008), or exhibited minor changes in their attitudes (e.g., Korhonen & Lytle, 2004). The correlation between the variables mentioned above confirms the importance of international exposure and training in developing teachers' IC. However, incongruence poses questions related to the difference between attitude change and knowledge acquisition (Korhonen & Lytle, 2004), the type and length of intercultural training that the teachers received (Graf, 2004), and the time spans of teachers' international experiences (Salisbury et al., 2013).

The findings reveal a relevant point about attitude change, which seems to require more than just exposure by means of knowledge-based training and traveling. In other words, getting familiar with a specific body of knowledge is not the same as changing one's attitudes towards it, which seems to involve the implementation of other strategies for the change to occur (Korhonen and Lytle, 2004). Eagly and Chaiken (1993) define attitude as "a psychological tendency, expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). Thus, attitude

involves a preference for certain ideas, people, cultures or objects, which according to Petty et al. (1997), requires negotiation and persuasion skills to be changed. It is also worth noting that one's attitude towards a specific issue would certainly determine the person's behavior as regards the same issue. This is evident when looking at the findings related to teachers' intercultural attitudes and practices related to intercultural competence teaching, as both were moderate.

Consequently, one has to consider the complexity of the process of changing attitudes, which requires a prolonged period to be effectively realised (Salyer, 1993 as cited in Graf, 2004). According to Graf (2004), different components of IC require different techniques and time spans to develop. For instance, getting trainees familiar with IC requires less time and simpler techniques compared to changing their attitudes or classroom practices. While factual knowledge about IC can be transmitted easily through lecturing, introducing trainees to new intercultural attitudes and practices may require the implementation of various techniques such as *interactive narratives* or *interactive documentaries*, proposed by Kramersch (1993). Thus, it is recommended that intercultural training programs should be well-planned and distributed over various sessions.

Similarly, the different time spans (Shaftel et al., 2007) and the purpose (Williams, 2005) of teachers' international experiences may have contributed to the discrepancy between the results of the current study and previous studies related to the effect of intercultural exposure and intercultural attitudes. Confirmed by the results of a study conducted by Shaftel et al. (2007), longer stays are more likely to have a greater impact on participants' intercultural attitudes, as they may have bigger chances to experience life in the foreign country than short-stayers. Likewise, Williams (2005) explains "that the experience of being abroad in and of itself is not enough" (pp. 369-370). He elaborates that what counts in the experience is the amount and type of social interaction which people were involved in during their time in the foreign country. In other words, it is what happened

during the international stay, rather than the mere fact that the international stay has actually took place that determines the outcomes (Williams, 2005).

Therefore, it can be said that enhancing teachers' intercultural attitudes not only involves providing teachers with knowledge-based training but also requires the use of negotiation and persuasion skills, which should be part of the trainers' competence. This requires a well-planned training program, designed to take place over a relatively long period if fruitful outcomes are expected to take place.

8.3 Summary

The set of Palestinian EFL textbooks analyzed are still created in line with a number of inherent practices that do not seem to contribute to IC development. These practices include an exclusive focus on developing linguistic proficiency in RP, a predominant representation of the target and source cultures, the inclusion of an oversimplified version of culture, underrepresentation and stereotyping, the inadequacy of the international dimension, and insufficiency of activities and tasks aiming to effectively promote intercultural skills and attitudes. Based on these findings, this research study found that the EFL textbooks under study have failed to consider EFL students' current needs related to cross-cultural communication, which cannot be limited to using English with native English speakers only. In addition, the textbooks still embrace an old-fashioned view that depicts culture as a static and homogenous entity allowing generalizations and oversimplified and stereotypical images about other cultures to form.

The findings related to teachers' perception and practice of IC prompt reconsideration of international exposure and intercultural training as variables affecting IC development in relation to the difference between knowledge acquisition, attitude change and practice. Thus, the gap between teachers' knowledge of IC and their classroom practices-although of a minor significance-

suggests that knowing does not always lead to good practicing. Similarly, the difference between teachers' knowledge of IC and their intercultural attitudes proposes that attitude change is a more complex process than knowledge acquisition. Accordingly, it is evident that different components of IC (cognitive, affective and behavioral) require different time spans and training techniques to develop. Therefore, intercultural competence trainers must reevaluate their intercultural training programs for the change to take place.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter will conclude the dissertation by summarizing the answers of the main research questions, reflecting on the approach followed to obtain the results, stating the main contributions of the research, and making recommendations to improve the EFL textbooks and teachers in terms of their potential for promoting IC. It will also discuss the limitations of the study and suggest areas for further investigation.

9.1 Conclusions

The research aimed to evaluate the *English for Palestine* textbook series and Palestinian English teachers in terms of their potential for promoting IC. The mixed methods approach, which combined both quantitative and qualitative data, was used to gather and analyze data. This approach succeeded in providing a holistic picture of the cultural elements of the textbooks, which were difficult to measure using a standalone quantitative or qualitative approach. Additionally, a quantitative approach was employed to explore teachers' perception and practice of IC, as well as the impact of international exposure and intercultural training on these aspects. A nationwide survey was used to collect data from a large sample of Palestinian EFL teachers ($N = 360$), who were selected using the stratified random sampling method.

The findings suggested that the textbooks were created mainly to develop linguistic proficiency in RP with unplanned inclusion of celebratory and surface cultural aspects, which were unevenly and scarcely distributed throughout the textbooks. Furthermore, whereas the findings of the survey's closed-ended questions suggested that teachers have a high knowledge of IC and a moderate level of intercultural attitudes and practices, the answers to the open-ended questions revealed that more work is needed to improve teachers' intercultural attitudes and IC teaching

techniques. Additionally, international exposure and intercultural training were differently associated with teachers' knowledge of IC, their intercultural attitudes and practices.

This research demonstrates that culture was incorporated haphazardly and incidentally into the EFL textbooks without being given considerable thought. It also shows that IC was not considered when creating the textbooks, as the incorporated cultural aspects aimed to increase students' stock of knowledge rather than develop their intercultural skills and attitudes. Similarly, the part concerning teachers' level of IC suggests that teaching culture is still predominantly viewed as a source of knowledge enrichment rather than a facilitator of intercultural communication. On the other hand, the research raises questions about the quality of intercultural training as to what components of IC (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) are targeted in the training, as well as its length and approach. Similarly, the impact of international exposure should be reconsidered in relation to its length, the amount of interaction it provides, as well as its purpose.

Based on the research findings, a number of recommendations could be made to improve EFL textbooks and teachers' potential for promoting IC. To start with, teachers can compensate for the lack of an appropriate cultural component by using supplementary materials. In addition, policymakers are urged to carry out strict reviewing of the updated versions of EFL textbooks prior to the approval stage. Publishers should also be demanded to meet certain criteria that guarantee the proposed textbooks are adequate for developing IC. Similarly, supervisors, stakeholders and teacher trainers are urged to provide adequate training that would improve teachers' IC and encourage them to take part in international activities both online and in person, if possible. Palestinian universities are also encouraged to equip pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills of IC by making courses in IC available or at least tackling IC in courses related to culture in the EFL classroom.

There is no doubt that textbooks and teachers play an essential role in forming various learning opportunities through which students can develop multiple competencies. Thus, the research findings can be viewed in terms of the impact of textbooks and teachers on students' acquisition of IC. In this vein, this thesis has provided the first comprehensive assessment of EFL textbooks and teachers in terms of their potential for promoting IC in Palestine, since it covered the entire *English for Palestine* textbook series, analyzed both quantitative and qualitative cultural aspects using a mixed methods approach, and surveyed EFL teachers nationwide.

9.2 Limitations

This study is not without limitations. There are three main issues, which could be improved in this research. First, the research investigated an EFL textbook series specially designed for a specific population (i.e., Palestinian students). Therefore, the findings of this research may not be fully applicable to EFL teaching materials designed to be used in international contexts, as it is expected that such locally-produced ELT teaching materials are more likely to focus on local cultural aspects and have a limited international scope.

Second, although the survey contained some open-ended questions that gave teachers the chance to express their attitudes towards teaching culture and IC, as well as to state the techniques they use in the classroom to teach IC, more research tools were needed to gather information about their level of IC and practices. Some classroom observations and interviews conducted with some of the participants would have given a better insight into their real level of IC. This would have surely exposed other interesting facts about the topic under investigation and made the survey findings more reliable as the case with other researchers who succeeded in yielding reliable and interesting results using multiple research instruments (e.g., Kidwell, 2021; Munandar & Newton, 2021).

Third, teachers' answers to the open-ended questions were sometimes brief and unclear. For example, questions four and seven asked participants to elaborate on how often they get in touch with their international contacts and the length and purpose of their overseas experiences. Some of the answers mentioned the countries they visited or where their friends were from without stating the frequency and length of their international exposure. Similarly, more information about the teachers' intercultural training could have been beneficial in comprehending the specific IC components addressed during the training, the adopted training approach, and its duration. Consequently, clearer answers about the teachers' international exposure and intercultural training could have yielded more specific results in relation to the impact of these two variables on teachers' IC as recommended by Graf (2004), Shaftel et al. (2007), and Williams (2005).

9.3 Future Research

Further research needs to be conducted to better understand the impact of international exposure and intercultural training on teachers' perception and practice of IC. This research could compare the impact of various types of international stays with different lengths on attitude change. However, teachers' intercultural attitudes could be measured before and after the international stay, as some of them might have already had positive intercultural attitudes before the experiment. Similarly, different intercultural training programs can be investigated for their effect on teachers' cognitive, affective and behavioral development.

In addition, an international investigation can be done to explore how teachers from different countries perceive the cultural component in EFL textbooks, and how they compare in terms of their intercultural attitudes and culture teaching practices. A similar comparison could also be done among different international EFL textbooks to see whether the textbooks share similar patterns or follow different approaches for tackling cultural aspects.

Besides, stakeholders involved in the creation of the EFL textbook series, such as authors, curriculum developers, and language experts can be interviewed to gain valuable insights about the decision-making process, constraints, and considerations that shaped the content and design of the materials. This can shed light on the limitations and challenges faced in integrating culture and highlight areas for improvement.

Lastly, there is a need for a project which provides practical guidance on how to design EFL teaching materials that effectively promote the acquisition of IC. To fulfil this need, a pedagogical proposal could be designed to offer specific steps and strategies for material developers and EFL educators to incorporate IC in their materials and teaching practices.

Despite these limitations and the further research needed to explore the topic, this research study succeeded in providing a comprehensive evaluation of the most widely used EFL textbook series in Palestinian state schools in terms of its effectiveness in enhancing IC. It also succeeded in surveying a large sample of EFL teachers ($N = 360$) from all regions in Palestine. This proves important, as it provides comprehensive data for policy development in the TEFL field.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The *English for Palestine* Textbooks

| Textbooks | Grade | Age | Abbreviated Form | Stage |
|---|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 1A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 1st | 6–7 | PB1 | Elementary |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 1B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | | | | |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 2A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 2nd | 7–8 | PB2 | |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 2B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | | | | |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 3A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 3rd | 8–9 | PB3 | |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 3B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | | | | |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 4A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 4th | 9–10 | PB4 | Upper Elementary |
| Arnold, W. (2011). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 4B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | | | | |
| Arnold, W. (2012). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 5A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 5th | 10–11 | PB5 | |
| Arnold, W. (2012). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 5B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | | | | |
| Arnold, W. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 6A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | 6th | 11–12 | PB6 | |
| Arnold, W. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 6B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | | | | |
| Coates, N., & Mauchline, F. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 7A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | 7th | 12–13 | PB7 | |

| | | | | |
|--|------|-------|----------|-----------|
| Coates, N. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 7B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | | | | Secondary |
| Macfarland, M. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 8A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, Oxford. | 8th | 13–14 | PB8 | |
| Macfarland, M. (2013). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 8B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | | | | |
| Macfarland, M. (2014). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 9A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | 9th | 14–15 | PB9 | |
| Macfarland, M. (2014). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 9B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | | | | |
| Macfarland, M. (2014). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 10A</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | 10th | 15–16 | PB10 | |
| Macfarland, M. (2014). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 10B</i> . Macmillan Publishers Limited, London. | | | | |
| Baxter, S. (2015). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 11</i> . Springer Nature Limited, London. | 11th | 16–17 | PB&RP 11 | |
| Coates, N. (2015). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 11 reading plus</i> . Springer Nature Limited, London. | | | | |
| Baxter, S. (2015). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 12</i> . Springer Nature Limited, London. | 12th | 17–18 | PB&RP 12 | |
| Baxter, S. (2015). <i>English for Palestine: Pupil's book 12 reading plus</i> . Springer Nature Limited, London. | | | | |

Appendix B: Teachers Survey

This survey focuses on the teaching of culture in the English as a foreign language classroom within Palestinian state schools. The collected data will be used for a doctoral dissertation that aims to examine the treatment of intercultural competence in Palestinian English textbooks and the EFL classroom. This research forms an integral part of the doctoral program in Humanities at Rovira i Virgili University, located in Tarragona, Spain.

All the data collected from the participants will be handled and kept anonymous and it will not be shared with third parties. The data collected will be used only for educational purposes and it will be destroyed after the defense of the doctoral thesis. The current survey has been assessed and approved by the URV Ethics Committee and complies with all the EU ethics regulations.

This survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your collaboration!

❖ Do you give consent to take part in this survey?

Yes No

Personal Information

1. What is your age?

Below 25 25-35 36-45 46-55 Over 55

2. What qualification(s) do you have?

Postgraduate Diploma Celta BA in English Masters Ph.D.

Other (please specify)

3. Please, state your years of service as an English teacher.

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 Over 20

4. Have you ever stayed in a foreign country to study or work?

Yes No

5. If yes, please provide the country(s) name(s) and duration of your stay.
6. Do you have any international friends/acquaintances that you keep in touch with regularly?

Yes No

7. If yes, please state where they come from and how often you get in touch with them.

Teachers' Knowledge about Culture Teaching

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements on a 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) scale.

8. I am aware of what 'intercultural competence' implies, i.e. intercultural awareness, skills, attitudes, and knowledge.
9. The cultural content of EFL textbooks must include not only the visible side of culture (e.g., literature, monuments, etc., but also the invisible aspects of that culture (i.e., norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values).
10. Today's world culture is dynamic and ever-changing. Therefore, we must avoid promoting stereotypes through the teaching of fixed cultural aspects.
11. The presence of classroom exercises about tourist attractions in London in an EFL textbook can be considered superficial if it does not have a follow-up activity that goes beyond tourist information and does not include any cultural or historical aspects.

Teachers' Attitudes about Culture Teaching in Palestine

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements on a 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) scale.

12. The *English for Palestine* textbooks should include more aspects of Palestinian local culture.

13. The only culture that should be present in the English textbooks is British culture because we teach British English.
14. If other cultural aspects are to be included in the *English for Palestine* textbooks, they should only represent the cultures of English-speaking countries.
15. There should be a larger representation of other international cultures in the *English for Palestine* textbooks.
16. Promoting positive attitudes about international cultures must be a priority in the EFL Palestinian classroom.

EFL Classroom Practices

Please indicate how often you do each of the following practices in class by choosing one of the options provided below (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always).

17. I pay attention to the cultural dimension of the texts included in the English textbooks and use it as an opportunity to teach culture.
18. I use specially designed supplementary materials to teach intercultural aspects in my English classes.
19. I organize extracurricular activities (e.g., showing films and inviting international speakers) to get my students acquainted with other cultures.
20. A part of my exam questions aims at assessing learners' cultural competence.
21. I try to refute certain stereotypes about foreign cultures by means of discussion.
22. I encourage my students to evaluate their own cultural beliefs and practices and try to tolerate the cultural beliefs and practices of others.
23. If you use other methods/strategies to teach cultural aspects in the EFL classroom that have not been mentioned above, please specify them here.

General Comments

24. Have you received any training workshops on how to teach cultural aspects in the EFL classroom (e.g., from the Palestinian Ministry of Education or other entities)?

Yes No

25. If yes, please mention who held the workshop and whether you applied the knowledge in your regular EFL classes.

26. What is your general opinion about including culture in the EFL classroom?

End of the Survey

Thank you!

Appendix C: The Ethics Committee Approval



CEIPSA
Comitè Ètic d'Investigació en Persones, Societat i Medi Ambient

STATEMENT BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE CONCERNING RESEARCH INTO PEOPLE, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**AITOR GÓMEZ GONZÁLEZ, President of the ETHICAL COMMITTEE CONCERNING
RESEARCH INTO PEOPLE, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIVERSITAT
ROVIRA I VIRGILI (CEIPSA) attests to the agreements passed.**

During its meeting on 25/3/2022 (archive number 3/2022), the Committee evaluated and decided to issue a Favourable Report for the study entitled:

“EFL Textbooks and Teachers’ Potential for Promoting Intercultural Competence: A Mixed Methods Research in Palestinian State Schools”

CEIPSA code: CEIPSA-2021-TD-0026

Doctoral Student: Jehad T.A Faraj

Doctoral Thesis Director: Andrea Roxana Bellot

THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS THAT:

- The project proposal presented is in accordance with good scientific practices and the values of scientific correctness, training, justice, solidarity, protection of vulnerable subjects, dignified treatment, personal autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, reparation of damage and respect for human rights.
- The project proposal complies with current applicable European, Spanish, and Catalan legislation, as well as the URV's own regulations on R+D+I.
- The project proposal complies with the methodological, ethical, and legal requirements within the scope of CEIPSA's competences and in relation to its:
 - a) Social value as a project.
 - b) Research staff.
 - c) Methodology.
 - d) Specific ethical aspects, namely the risks and benefits, the measures regarding damage prevention and repair, the processes regarding selection and recruitment, the protection of vulnerable subjects, and the aspects relating to information, consent, privacy, and confidentiality.
 - e) Compliance with the documentation, namely the informed consent document, the document confirming file security, the authorizations, and the current regulatory requirements.
- As this research will be carried out in Palestine, this committee recommends that the doctoral student reviews the legal aspects of the regulations of that country and asks to her to commit to

working in accordance with the current code of good state scientific practices.

- If relevant changes occur in the development of the research activity on the approved initial conditions, the researcher in charge must inform the committee of these changes before carrying them out, as specified in section 10.3.4 of the Rules of Procedure of this committee.

If a member of this committee participates as a researcher / collaborator in a given project, they will not attend any meeting at which the project is discussed.

On the date of the URV's CEIPSA evaluation, the committee's members were:

President

Dr Aitor Gómez González

*University Professor of the Department of
Pedagogy of the URV*

Secretary

Mrs. Cristina Salvadó Baza

CEIPSA Secretary

Members

Dr António Miguel Osório Da Costa

*Associate Professor of the Department of
Economics of the URV*

Dr Gisela Cebrián Bernat

*Lecturer at the URV's Department of
Pedagogy*

Dr Josefa Canals Sans

*University Professor at the URV's
Department of Psychology*

Dr María Dolores Jiménez López

*Associate Professor of the URV's
Department of Romance Studies*

Dr Maria Teresa Novo Molinero

*Associate Professor of the URV's
Department of Biochemistry and
Biotechnology*

Mr Antonio Cortés Martínez

URV Data Protection Officer

Ms Mireia Herranz Aparicio

URV Data Protection Officer

Ms Gemma Garcia Camps

*Coordinator of the Joint Occupational Risk
Prevention Office of the URV and the FURV*

Ms Sandra Rodríguez Rodríguez

Lawyer from the URV's Legal Office

Signed by

**AITOR GÓMEZ
GONZÁLEZ - DNI
38140434v**

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Dr Aitor Gómez González
President CEIPSA URV

UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI
EFL TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHERS' POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: A MIXED
METHODS RESEARCH IN PALESTINIAN STATE SCHOOLS
Jehad Faraj



UNIVERSITAT
ROVIRA i VIRGILI