An Evaluation of the Authentic Socio Cultural Elements in the Prescribed English Language Textbooks of the Secondary Schools in Jordan

تقويم العناصر الاجتماعية الثقافية الأصيلة في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية في الأردن

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Abstract

This study deals with using authentic English in the English language textbooks of the secondary schools in Jordan. Unfortunately, few studies have been conducted in Jordan concerning this issue though the interest in it has been for a long time at world – wide level (Wilkins, 1967; Lado 1975 and Brooks, 1964). As a result the researcher intends to carry out an investigation of this through content analysis to find out the amount of authentic cultural aspects in the prescribed textbooks of English at the secondary level in comparison with the unauthentic aspects. For the sake of carrying out the present study and fulfilling its aims, the following hypothesis is proposed: "Foreign language syllabuses of English for the secondary schools in Jordan are basically based or unauthentic socio-cultural elements". A number of procedures have been adopted to achieve this aim and to confirm the supposed hypotheses: a) identifying the authentic socio-cultural elements depending on the available sources. B) Adopting Brooks' well- Known list of authentic socio- cultural references as a tool of analysis. C) Analyzing the content of the Jordanian

English texbooks on the basis of authenticity and antificiality. As a result, of the detailed analysis and the thorough discussions of authenticity and artificiality in both books, it is possible to say that English language textbooks for the secondary schools in Jordan are basically based on the local culture of the learners, while the authentic culture of the English Language community is ignored. This could be an indirect suggestion for textbooks writers to take such a fact into consideration the time they sit to decide the content of the foreign language syllabuses, in the sense that it should be based on authentic material of real life situations. Additionally, the socio cultural content of a foreign language syllabus should be up- to date because an out date content neither contributes to real understanding, nor is it an adequate guide to genuine communication in the foreign language being taught. Therefore, it has been recommended that the teacher should reject these cliches and introduce instead authentic ideas and concepts of the foreign culture within the appropriate words and expressions in which they are usually expressed.

ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى تحليل وتقويم كافة النصوص في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية في ضوء المحتوى الثقافي الاجتماعي لمجتمع اللغة الانجليزية لطلبة المدارس الثانوية في الأردن للتعرف على مقدار وجود المحتوى الثقافي الأصيل مع المقارنة مع المحتوى الثقافي المحلي من خلال فرضية أن كتب اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية في الأردن مبنية على الثقافة المحلية لمجتمع التعلم. قام الباحث بتحليل كافة الدروس في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في الأردن معتمد على تقسيمات "بروكس" للعناصر الثقافية والتي تشتمل على عناصر اجتماعية، ودينية وتاريخية، وجغرافية، وسياسية، وتربوية، وأدبية مستخدماً الوسائل الاحصائية المتعددة، وبعد حساب التكرارات وايجاد النسب بين النتائج بأن كتب اللغة الانجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية في الأردن مبنية بشكل أساسي على الثقافة المحلية للطلبة. يمكن اعتبار هذه النتيجة بمثابة اقتراح على المنهجيين وفرق تأليف كتب اللغة الانلجيزية بأن يتم اختيار المحتوى الثقافي لكتب اللغة الانلجيزية بحيث يكون مأخوذ من الحياة اليومية لمجتمع اللغة الانجليزية. وعليه أوصت هذه الدراسة مجتمع الباحثين في تعلم اللغات الأجنبية بأن يقوموا بتحليل كتب اخرى في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية للحكم على موائمتها للطبة واجراء تطويرها بحيث تنسجم مع فلسفة التربية والتعليم في تعلم اللغات الأجنبية.

Introduction

The teaching of English as a foreign language has recently been receiving a remarkable emphasis owing to the developments taking place in all walks of life. New theories, publications and new teaching methods are always introduced to elevate the level of achievement of learners. Precisely, various educational research projects have called attention to the uniqueness of culture and its inseparability from language (Ryan, 1996). One of the issues in foreign textbooks writing is whether the material chosen should primarily reflect the foreign or the native culture of the learners. Supporters of the view in favor of including the foreign language culture argue that language forms are best understood in their cultural settings and that without the cultural context language forms are lifeless and meaningless since they are unnatural and unauthentic (Brooks, 1987). On the other hand, supporters of the view in favor of native culture argue that a book should reflect the philosophy of the educational system to which it belongs and that language training should enable learners to express themselves on topics related to their culture where the whole content focuses on the foreign culture. It also lights the alarm that such curriculum might be exploited for non-patriotic and brainwashing purposes (ibid).

It is very necessary to teach a foreign language with its socio-cultural concept, because we find trouble when the same form has different classifications or meanings in two cultures. For example, bullfighting has always been a source of cross-cultural misinformation. A bullfight has a very precise, complex form. A man, armed with a sword and a red cape challenges and kills a fighting bull. While the meaning is different from culture to another, the bullfight has a complex of meanings in Spanish culture. It is a sport. It symbolizes the triumph of art over the brutal force of a bull, while an Arab seated next to a Spanish spectator will see the same form in different meaning. It is the slaughter of a "defenseless" animal by an armed man. The fighter is, therefore, cruel. The public is also cruel. But to an American spectator, it is the place where he releases his tensions through violence.

We find also another kind of trouble spot when the same meaning in two cultures is associated with different forms. For Example, A young man from Jooba, Sudan, gets off the train in a small town of the United States. He claims his baggage and attempts to hail a taxi. A likely car with license plate and black letters goes by. The young man waves at it. The car does not stop. Another car appears with the same type of license plate. The young man moves again without success. Frustrated because in the United States taxis will not stop for him, he picks up his suitcases and walks to his destination. He later finds out that taxis in the United States are distinguished not by a white license plate, but by bright flashing lights and loud colours.

We can expect further trouble in the fact that the members of one culture usually assume that their way of doing things, of understanding the world around them, their forms and their meanings, are the only correct ones. For example, when foreign visitors from areas where tea is served thick, have Jordanian tea they often don not say that it is different, they say that Jordanian tea is bad.

Moreover, those who have learned a language without including nonverbal communication are seriously handicapped if they try to interact with members of the target language society. This indicates that insight into posture, movement, facial expressions, eyes management, gestures, and distancing as they affect communication not only increate sensitivity to other human beings, but deepen inevitably students' understanding of their own nonverbal systems.

The whole discussion leads us to say that learning to understand a foreign culture should help students of another language to use words and expressions more skillfully and authentically. Osgood's theory is clarified and proved through many universal socio-cultural situations. For example, superstitions are usually regarded as a part of a language community's culture. For example, owls are looked upon as a sign of good luck, while, in other cultures they are felt as omens of bad fate and disaster. Moreover, there are some utterances in a culture that are not found in another. For example, there are different words for different kinds of snow in the Eskimo language another point of difference is that

there are different ways of looking at things, one language may have a grammatical form which does not exist in another language. (Rivers, 1968: 342).

Our major concern through out this study is with the idea that there is no distinction to be drawn between linguistics and either sociology or social anthropology since language is a socially maintained and socially functioning institution. As a means of communication, language should achieve its functions i.e., expressive, phatic, referential, ideational, emotional, aesthetic, and other functions of language (Halliday, 1970).

Textbooks writers of foreign languages should be macrolinguistically competent. They should have had interdisplinary studies of language, sociology and culture to decide what to teach in foreign language courses.

Many writers such as: Valdes(1986), and Brown (1990) insist on the idea that language should be taught in its socio-cultural context since they are deeply interrelated and inseparable. Moreover, learning a language within its socio-cultural context does not necessarily mean adopting a new culture. Moreover, people who speak the same language may not necessarily share the same culture (Lyons, 1981: 306). As a result language should be learnt within their socio-cultural context for these reasons:

1. Many concepts with which we operate are culture-bound, in the sense that they depend for their understanding upon socially transmitted knowledge, and vary considerably from culture to culture. (Lyons, 1981: 308). For example an Arab may consider the expression: 'If you put yourself in my shoes, you will act in the same way, as an insult while it is quite acceptable by an English person.

2. There are many universal concepts that are related to man's experience as a social being, but the codability of these concepts differ from one culture to another.

3. Learning language within its socio-cultural context reduces the chances of resorting to L1 to fill the gaps of insufficiencies whenever

the learner faces a difficulty and thus the learning of L2 will be more successful.

4. There are differences of grammatical structure and differences in the mentality of speakers of grammatically different languages (Lyons: 1981).

5. Translatability can break down whenever there are differences of cultures in the two language communities, e.g., languages may differ in the number of basic color-terms they have, and some languages have no basic color-terms at all.

6. If proficiency in a particular language implies the ability to produce and understand sentences of that language, then it is unquestionablly a part of its culture.

7. Full understanding of the several kinds of meaning that are encoded in the grammar and vocabulary of a language comes only with full understanding of the culture, or cultures, in which it operates (Hymes, 1964). When interacting with other cultures, many if not most situations are unfamilliar. Thus, the same behavior may be considered proper in one culture, but odd or rude in another.

8. Particular languages are associated historically with particular cultures; the languages provide the key to the associated cultures, and especially to their literature; the languages cannot be fully understood otherwise than in the context of the cultures in which they are intextricably embedded, (Languages de culture, 1972:12).

9. Crystal (1987:20) argues that in addition to communicating our ideas, language is used to maintain comfortable relationship between people. The use of such authentic phrases as "Good morning" "Pleased to meet you", are ritual exchanges of greeting, do not communicate ideas in the usual sense. Sentences of this kind are usually automatically produced and stereotyped in structure. For someone may hold these sentences, when they are expressed, by staying silent, is assume sign of distance, alienation or even danger

(Crystal, 1987: 10) Moreover, each language commonly has its own ritual expressions that are stereotyped in structure.

10. Understanding the socio-cultural elements of a language gives the learner an insight into the social function of the language which in its turn helps to achieve better learning (Wilkins, 1967:134).

11. The exact ideational and conceptual meaning of an utterance in a language is decided by the context and the situation in which it occurs (Lado, 1975: 320).

12. The social function of language should be taken into account in foreign language teaching because each nation has its own traditions and its own way of living that have been gained through a long historical phases and cultural developments.

13. The cultural content of a language is at most indelibrately acquired through informal exposure to authentic language and internalized through practice with informal instruction. Much concern fall on the functionality of messages and their meanings, while with formal instruction, the form of the utterance and its grammaticality is the major concern.

1.1.   The problem and its significance

Along experience of teaching English as a foreign language, and an experience of working as a foreign language curriculist and supervisor with the Jordanian Ministry of Education have revealed that English language textbooks for the secondary schools in Jordan are to some extent based on unauthenic English. This orientation leads to problems in communication, in the sense that FL students might face difficulties in handling language effectively when they are put in an authentic real life situation. Moreover, it would be a mistake to suppose that the general understanding of several kinds of semantic structures of other languages is anything more than superficial. Full understanding of the several kinds of meaning that are encoded in the grammar and vocabulary of a language comes only with a full understanding of the culture, or cultures in which it operates (Hymes: 1964).

The significance of this problem lies in that:

1. It tackles a vital issue in syllabus design and curriculum development.

2. It attempts to fill a gap in the information concerning the distribution of the authentic cultural elements in foreign language syllabuses.

1.2.   The value of the study

The benefit of this study can be manifested in the following aspects:

1. According to the researcher's best knowledge, it could be the first study in this area to be conducted about the authenticity in English language textbooks.

2. The present study paves the way for evaluation of the authentic content of foreign language syllabuses for other stages in Jordan or in any other countries that teach English as a foreign or a second language.

3. The importance of this study stems also from making English teachers, supervisors, and syllabus designers conscious of the place of having an authentic culture in teaching and learning a foreign language. Moreover this study is important since it reveals the relationship between culture and language.

4. It also makes it clear that knowing the cultural differences between L1 and L2 reduces the chances of interference.

5. It also shows the relationship between language and culture.

6. The study is expected also to be of great use to the Jordanian Ministry of Education, specially, to experts in the field of curricula and textbooks as far as suggestions and recommendations of the study are concerned.

1.3.   The aims of the study

Different schools of ELT teach English language for many different purposes including TESL, TEFL and TEIL (teaching English as an international language).

Regarding the socio – cultural content, different schools of TEFL look at the cultural problem in different ways. Mainly we have two schools: one which considers culture and language inseparable, while the other school believe that language can be taught without its authentic socio-cultural context. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following question:

How many specific western cultural aspects are used in Amra series in comparison with the quantity of the Arab national and universal elements to decide the degree of authenticity of the textbooks ?

1.4. The hypotheses

For the sake of carrying out the present study and fulfilling its aims, the following hypotheses is proposed:

Foreign language syllabuses of English for the secondary schools in Jordan are basically based on the native culture of the learners.

1.5. Limits of the study

The study is limited to:

1. The evaluation of all the reading passages of the prescribed English textbooks for the secondary academic schools in Jordan during the academic year 2006-2007.These books are under the title of Amra. (General English One and General English Two).

2. Some cultural aspects, such as: social, religious, political, peographical, educational and literal references.

3. Teaching of English as a foreign language.

1.6. Procedures

The researcher is going to:

1. identify the authentic English socio-cultural elements depending on the available sources.

2. adopt Brooks' well-known list of socio-cultural references as a tool of analysis.

3. analyze the content of the Jordanian English textbooks on the basis of the authentic and unauthentic socio-cultural aspects,

4. carry out the evaluation process to see if these syllabuses are basically based on authentic socio-cultural elementor unauthentic ones.

Review Related Litratue!

Bex (1994:60) argues that a language can not be emptied of its authentic cultural content. Teachers may emphasize more or less the cultural messages expressed through language they offer to their pupils, but the language will inevitably be situated and carry some cultural assumptions.

Lado (1975) points out that, in its widest sense, culture indicates all the most important meanings to which a language attaches words and expressions a long these lines, Lado draws our attention to the strong interrelationship between language and culture:

Language does not develop in a vacuum. A

language is a part of the culture of a people and

the chief means by which the members of a society

communicate. A language, therefore, is both a

component of culture and a central network through

which the other components are expressed.

(Lado 1975: 23)

Sapir (1949:81) reminded linguists that, if their works were to be scientifically productive and aesthetically rich, they should not be dealt with apart from the study of man. This is because language is a cultural or social product and must be understood as such.

Strainslawczyle (1976) suggested that language is the purer extract of a people's culture. It is the essence of thought, value system and way of life. They added that language and culture are so interrelated that any attempt to seprate them into two distinct categories will be destined never to succeed. He suggest that all languages reflect the cultures of the people who use them. It follows, then, that it is undesirable to learn a language without understanding how languages are coordinated with cultures.

Valdes (1986:1) insists on the view that language, thought and culture are three parts of the whole and can not operate independently regardless of which one most influence the other two. She justifies the lack of acceptance of artificial languages such as Esperanto by the isolation of language from culture. In fact, whether one begins or ends with language, thought, or culture, the other two are woven in; they are not all the same thing but none can survive without the others. Moreover, there can be no real learning of a language without understanding something of the patterns and values of the culture of which it is a part.

Hymes (1964:62) elaborated a concept of communicative competence which soon began to affect language teaching community. To him, the most novel and important aspect of sociolinguistic research is to establish what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings.

The real point behind the rejoining of language and culture in teaching is an emphasis on communication, Byrnes cited in F.Freed, (1982:205). To him a communicative focus may amount to nothing more sophisticated than the desire that learners be able to use the foreign language. To communicate effectively, the linguistic competence is not enough but one aspect; others are related to discourse/strategic, and sociolinguistic competence. Moreover, students should understand which variant forms are appropriate within which context.

This concept (communicative competence) extends the idea of linguistic competence which Chomsky popularized to include not only knowledge of rules which enable a speaker to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences in the language, but also the rules that

determine appropriate use of the language in living situations (Brumfit, 1986:113). It includes knowledge of sociolinguistic rules, or the appropriateness of an utterance, in addition to knowledge of grammatical rules. It involves three types of knowledge-grammar, signification and use (Johnson, 1981:22).

Students may know the rules of language usage, without being able to use the language effectively, since structures and vocabulary are important but not enough to have communication. When we communicate, we use the language to accomplish some functions, such as; arguing, persuading or promising. Moreover, we carry out those functions within a social context (Freeman, 1986:123).

As for the real needs for communicating effectively, Rivers (1964/1988: 84) states that textbook writers and classroom teachers should realize that students' need to know more than how to express ideas in correct grammatical patterns; they also need to know the culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with others, appropriate levels of language to use in different situations, conversational gambits; appropriate gestures and other body language were appropriate; the boarders of the self; when one might intervene in conversation and when one should wait for others; which questions and comments can be made and which would offend. They also.

For Rivers (1964/1988: 318) the study of a language should bring home to students the realization that there are many ways of looking at things, many ways of doing and expressing things, and that differences do not necessarily represent moral issues of right and wrong. Such an indication leads us to say that an honorable expression, gesture, movement, sign, or facial expression in a certain culture may be considered a taboo in another.

The psychologist Osgood has set out a theory of language 'meaning' which maintains that the full meaning of words for individuals is the result of the sum total of experiences they have had with those words in the environment in which they learned them, (cited in Rivers 1968:318).

Like others, Kramsch (1994: 177) focuses on the interaction between language and culture. In this regard, she points out that it is a truism to say that teaching language is teaching culture. To her, culture plays a prominent role in language teaching. To study a language involves studying the cultural aspects tied to that language. Because culture and language are interwoven, foreign language teachers are involved in handling the meaning of language rooted in socio- cultural context. Thus, cultural awareness should become an educational aim in itself and the core of language teaching.

Many researchers have called for incorporating language teaching with culture teaching. Hymes (1964:40) asserts the importance of studying the relationship between language and culture. To him, this kind of study may provide useful information like how human beings differ, how they are similar to each other and how cultures work. He also adds that different cultures have different norms and values. Based on this notion the researcher wants to assert that, learners should be familiar with those norms and values to develop the pragmatic competence of the native speakers of the target language.

To persue the same line of argument of stressing the importance of culture of language teaching it is preferable to state the ideas of more experts and researchers in this field. Valdes (1986:61) also argues that it is unavoidable to teach culture when teaching language. She adds that the focus of a lesson may be on syntactic or phonetics features, but the content is cultural. Similarly, Harthman (1986, cited in Sulieman, 1993:18) stress the view that language learning is a culture learning process. They argue that it is impossible and undesirable to separate the linguistic aspects of a language from culture. In this regard, Brooks (1964:33) states that the teacher must relate language to culture in the classroom.

Likewise, Ikeda (1990, cited in Kurogi, 1998) conducted a study to investigate the attitudes of American high school students toward Japanese language learning. The findings showed that the students' cultural understanding was strongly influenced by their teachers' attitudes toward teaching culture; they learned cultural factors more

implicitly from their Japanese national teachers than non- Japanese teachers.

Fries (1968, cited in Abdur Rauf, 1988: 44) stated that when reading a foreign language text, we find three levels of meaning: lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, and socio-cultural meaning. The lexical and structural meaning can be looked up in a dictionary by the students. But the socio cultural meaning is difficult for the foreign or second language learners to penetrate as it implies the values, beliefs and attitudes of the speakers of the target language. Understanding a language in terms of its culture becomes complex with many different aspects and characteristics. It is inadequate for students to grasp the surface meaning of the text. Students may become unwilling or lack the ability to understand or accept the culture of the target language.

However, little is known about the foreign language teacher as a transmitter and handler of culture (Ryan, 1996:36). Besides, there is a shortage of research about the issue of how to teach culture. Although much discussion has revolved around what culture to teach, the issue of how to teach culture remains largely unexamined (Herron et al, 1999). Such ideas initiate the researcher to undertake the task of investigating the issue of culture in Jordanian school curriculum of English at the secondary stage.

According to Chastain (1988: 294) learning culture is as universal and natural as learning a language. A functional knowledge of both is necessary to enable the learner to interact and communicate with other people in one's cultural environment. However, Chastain adds, culture is so complex that a student cannot absorb all values and habits of the target language people.

Gonzalez (1998) makes an investigation of the effect of using authentic materials as textbooks supplements on foreign language students' attitudes, motivations, culture and language achievement. In his study the researcher identifies the attitudes of students in Spanish classes at Indiana University, by analyzing the data gathered from a questionnaire. The data show that, while students have generally negative

attitudes toward foreign language study, those who have studied a language longest have more positive attitudes.

Friedman (1997) states that foreign language learners are also culture learners. However, foreign language education has done much to remove cultural information from the language class. This is a disservice to students because they lose the context of the language, a large part of what they need to communicate. They also lose one of the most motivating aspects of foreign language study.

Concerning bring the culture of the target language to the classroom and use it as a tool for learners' motivation, Hendon (1980) states that introducing culture in the language class stimulates interest in foreign language students. He adds that most students are curious to know more about the foreign peoples and their way of life which increases students' motivation to learn the language. He asserts that language is a phenomenon structured and motivated by its culture. To stress the same ideas, Valdes (1990) emphasizes the effect of teaching culture on motivating the students' language acquisition. She believes that a feeling of closeness to the speakers of the target language can be a strong motivation for language learning.

Prodromou (1992) investigates the effect of the knowledge of the target culture on motivating students' language learning. The findings show that 83% of the students are strongly motivated which is in turn reflected positively on their language learning.

Another fundamental reason for introducing culture in a foreign language class is its constructive role in improving students' language skills. In this respect, Widdowson (1992: 174) states that reading is an interaction between the writer and the reader which cannot be gained without an insight into the culture of the target language.

Accordingly, many researchers have emphasized the role of cultural background knowledge in reading comprehension. The findings of Jafapur et al. (1980) experiment on reading comprehension showed that learners who were given reading materials related to the target culture had greater comprehension than those who were provided with reading

materials based on their own culture. These results, in fact, support the notion of the inseparability between language and culture; one cannot be learned without the other.

Woo (1995) conducted a study to explore the aspects of speech patterns and speech functions in addressing, arguing, complementing, offering, requesting and thanking. The study relates aspects of sociolinguistic cross- cultural communication and teaching English as a second language. The findings revealed that since Asian ESL learners carry out speech acts according to their cultural norms, miscommunication frequently occurs.

Irving (1986:18) states that cultural knowledge is essential for non-native performance to carry out successful communication. He states that good communication skill depends on becoming familiar with the cultural context to which a language naturally belongs. Besides, he argues that.

The act of communication goes beyond the formal knowledge to include the socio – cultural factors, Brooks (1989:145) suggested that when the learner communicates in the foreign language for the first time, he will discover that there are overtones of meaning that are not related to skills, grammar or lexicon. This recent important issue in foreign language learning has enabled teachers of foreign languages to consider the fact that learning the grammatical structure of a foreign language and learning how to form grammatically correct sentences and phrases is not the same as learning to use a language in social interaction. Watson (1977:205) argued that learning the rules for speaking in a given community is the first requirement for effective communication, intelligent interpretation and perception of the social processes underlying interaction.

To conclude this section, it is necessary to say that language and culture are just like bone and flesh in a human being. Bone is to form the general structure and flesh to give life and beauty to that structure. Cultural background knowledge positively affects foreign language teaching and language learning in EFL or ESL situations.

3.2.   Population

The English language textbooks for the secondary stage (Amra Series) represent the population of the research. The researcher has got the last edition of the books, which are written by a special foreign team of authors with a partial participation of Arab authors appointed by the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

The secondary stage in Jordan is the last stage of schooling, and it is of two grades (the first and the second secondary grades equivalent to the eleventh and twelve grades).

Textbooks used for the purposes of the study can be stated as follows:

1.   <u>The General English Course One</u>:- For the first secondary stage..

2.   <u>The General English Course Two</u>:- For the second secondary stage.

Each textbook is divided into (16) units. The total number of the reading passages in these books are (32). All of them are included in the process of analysis without any exclusion.

Table (1): Presents a detailed description of the two English textbooks.

The title of the book	The stage	Year of publishing	The number of topics
1. General English Course One.	First Secondary class	1996	16
2. General English Course Two.	Second Secondary class	1996	16
Total			**32**

3.3. Method of research

The method of investigation used in this study is content analysis as it is the most suitable scientific method that fulfils the aims of the present study. This method is employed in the present study as it is a descriptive study which concerns itself with socio – cultural elements.

With content analysis, the raw material is converted into data based on the selected instrument of analysis. These data are quantified using frequencies of recurrence and percentages. This enables the researcher to arrive at his own results. The actual steps adopted to carry out content analysis can be summarized as:

1. Constructing an investigation tool (i.e. a tool of classification) on which the analysis process is based and thus the systematic characteristics are identified.

2. Quantifying the analysed data using frequencies where each reference is given a frequency.

3. Achieving objectivity by calculating reliability coefficient which is described latter in this chapter.

3.5.   Specifications of the research tool

The researcher has adopted Brooks's list of socio - cultural references in his work "Language and Language learning" (1964: p.90-94): as a tool of analysis. This tool is applied to the whole material of <u>Amra 1</u> and <u>Amra 2</u> of "Amra Series" for Jordan, namely the reading passages of these books which are intended to be analysed.

These references are social, historical, political religious economic geographical and literary references. For the social references, they are basically divided into sub references:

a) references to ways of life such as; (customs, values, traditions, entertainments), references to interrelationships among individuals such as friendships, family relations, neighborhood, etc. Other social references, such as sport, music, songs, jokes, sayings, etc. Figurative

language, superstitions, paralanguage, stereotype). The political references deal with the governmental system and its institutions, such as; the flag, current money, stamps, political system). Historical references are related to events in the history of people of a certain country. Geographical references deal with timing, locating places, showing directions, climate, weather and the environment. Religious reference are related to religious places and religious practices in general.

3.6. Validity

The researcher has chosen seven cultural categories from Brooks's list (1964). This list is internationally recognized and it has been used by some researchers such as Barakat (1996) and Abu Dalu (2000).

Accordingly, Brooks' list of socio – cultural references and the sub-division of these references has been exposed to a number of experts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, psychology, linguistics and education to decide its face validity. Each member has been requested to point out his/ her remarks and suggestions on the suitability and the applicability of the list.

Remarks concerning the suitability of the references, specially the social references, which include many items, were analysed and the result show that all the items scored high percentages of agreement from the jury members who were consulted.

3.7. Reliability

There are two kinds of analysis: quantitative and descriptive. The descriptive one is subjective by nature since it depends on personal opinion and evaluation but it is accepted in research (Krippendorff, 1980). The researcher has used the quantitative kind of analysis because it is systemic and objective.

But it is unquestionable that one of the problems that content analyst faces when attempting a systematic and objective description of the content is reliability. It is an important issue in the use of any measurement method and it is expected to vary according to the nature of

data, the unit of analysis, clarity of categories and coding rules, and the coder's skill, insight and experience.

Measures and procedures must be reliable, i.e., repeated meaures with the same instrument on a given sample of data should yield similar results; therefore, a measure is said to be reliable, to the extent to which measurement error is slight (White, 1988: 81, Holsti, 1969: 135, and Kerlinger, 1973: 95).

In other words, measurements are intended to be stable over a variety of conditions in which essentially the same results should be obtained. Two kinds of agreement are used to accomplish reliability (Berelson, 1954: 514).

1. Consistency through time, that is, a single coder should produce the same results when he/she applies the same set of categories to the same content but at different times. Thus, two trials of analysis of the content of English textbooks are conducted by the researcher with an interval of (14) days.

2. Consistency among analysts, that is, different coders should produce the same results when they apply the same set of categories to the same content.

The following procedure was followed by the researcher to achieve a reasonable degree of reliability. Two raters one is a Ph.D. and the other is an M.A holder of TEFL were trained by the researcher on content analysis and the list of the seven socio – cultural references that would be used for analysing the two textbooks. Next, certain passages from both books were chosen randomly, discussed and analysed.

The researcher has used Scott's coefficient to count the reliability factors as it provides a simple and quick method of estimating intra - and inter - observer reliability (Richard, 1971:80). Scott's formula is:

$$R = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

where Po = the agreement between two observers

Pe = the agreement between two observers that occurs simply by chance.

1 = the greatest possible agreement.

(Holsti, 1969:140).

The agreement coefficient on analysing the socio – cultural content in the first secondary class textbook between the two trials of the researcher (0.96) while between the researcher and the first analyst (0.88) and between the researcher and the second analyst (0.85) after applying Scott's coefficient of agreement.

on the other hand, the agreement coefficient on analyzing the socio – cultural elements in the second secondary class between the two trials of the researcher (0.96), between the researcher and the first analyst (0.86) and between the researcher and the second analyst (0.82). Table 4 indicates the results of the calculation of the reliability coefficient.

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher revised a number of studies, which used content analysis, then he decided to use Brooks' list which includes (social, political, religious, geographical, literal and historical references) to analyze the reading passages of the two books. For he believes that this list includes the major points to be investigated in addition to its being practicable to apply.

The researcher prepared independent special tables of (local, foreign and universal references). Each table shows the number of the reference, the reference itself and brooks' list of references.

3.9. Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher took every reading passage in each book, and analyzed it according to the seven cultural features found above. The researcher made tables of the local, foreign and universal socio-cultural features, basically based on Brooks's list of features.

The raw scores of each book are distributed among the three lists of analysis. Each reference is given one score. Then, statistical means were used to calculate the frequencies of the local, foreign and universal references in each book in order to see the percentages of each in these books. Finally, results are analysed and discussed.

3.10. Statistical means

The researcher has used these statistical means so as to fulfill the objectives of his study:

1. Scott's formula was used to find out reliability:

$$R = \frac{Po - Pe}{1 - Pe}$$

2. The frequencies of the local, foreign and universal socio – cultural elements are calculated.

3. The percentage of the local, foreign and universal socio – cultural frequencies extracted from English textbooks were calculated.

4. Chi – square formula is used:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

3.11. The results of content analysis

On examining the frequencies and the percentages of the local and foreign socio – culture elements in Amra 1 and Amra 2, the researcher has found that the contents of these two course books are basically based on the local culture of the learners.

This finding confirms the first hypothesis of the researcher, that is, foreign language textbooks in

the secondary schools in Jordan are basically based on the local culture of the learners. To verify this conclusion and validate it, full account of the discussion of the results is given below.

3.12. Discussion of the results

In order to meet the requirement of the first question which reads: "how many specific foreign socio – cultural aspects are used in Amra 1 and Amra 2 in comparison with the quantity of the Arab national and universal elements to decide the degree of authenticity of the textbooks ?", the researcher has carried out a deep and through analysis of the contents of both books, and have arrived at a number of sound and objective results using statistical procedures. Below is a detailed descriptions of the analysis of the results.

Before passing any judgment on the distribution of the socio - cultural factors in Amra 1 and Amra 2, the researcher has consulted the opinions of a number of experts. Table 4 shows their names and opinions.

Table (4): Expert's opinions regarding the weight of distribution of the three types of socio – cultural elements in foreign language textbooks.

Names of Experts	Local	Foreign	Universal
1. Ayif Habeeb Al – Ani	30	60	10
2. Ibraheem Al – Shibli	30	60	10
3. Abdul Latif AL - Jumaily	20	70	10
4. Adnan AL – Jubouri	20	70	10
5. Oqla Al- Smadi	20	70	10
6. Lamia Al – Ani	20	70	10
7. Imran Mousa	30	60	10
8. Abdul - Jabbar Darwesh.	30	60	10
9. Jordanian Curriculists	25	60	15
Averages	**25%**	**65%**	**10 %**

3.12.1 Results concerning Amra (1)

The analysis of the distribution of the three types of socio – cultural factors show the following results:

a. A high frequency of local socio - cultural references that mount to (140) with a percentage of 45.02 is indicated.

b. The foreign references of socio - cultural factors come second. Their frequencies come to (91) with a percentage of 29.26

c. The universal references of socio - cultural factors are the least. Their frequencies come to (80) with a percentages of 25.22.

When these distributions are compared to the experts' opinions concerning the distribution of these elements in foreign language syllabuses, the results of comparison have shown a statistically significant difference by using chi – square. The observed value of chi –

square is (189.98) while the tabulated value is (5.99) with a d.f.=2 and P > 0.05. The calculated value is more than the tabulated value. Therefore, the difference between the two distributions is significance which means that hypothesis number (1) which reads: "foreign language syllabus of Amra 1 is basically based on the native culture of the learners. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed. Table 5 shows the distributions of socio – cultural factors in Amra 1 with the result of chi – square.

Table (5): Frequencies and percentages of the socio – cultural elements in Amra (1).

References	Frequency	Percentage
Local	140	45.02 %
Foreign	91	29.26 %
Universal	80	25.22 %
Total	**311**	**100%**

$\chi2$ = 189.98,   tabulated value 5.99,   d.f. 2,   l.v. 0.05

3.12.2. Results concerning Amra (2)

The analysis of the distribution of the three types of socio – cultural factors show the following results:

a. A high frequency of local socio - cultural references that mount to (88) with a percentage of 61.11 is indicated.

b. The foreign references of socio - cultural factors come second. Their frequencies come to (28) with a percentage of 19.44

c. The universal references of socio - cultural factors equals the foreign references. Their frequencies come to (28) with a percentages of 19.44.

When these distributions are compared to the experts' opinions concerning the distribution of these elements in foreign language syllabuses, the results of comparison have shown a statistically

significant difference by using chi – square. The observed value of chi – square is (135.45) while the tabulated value is (5.99) with a d.f.=2 and P >0.05. The calculated value is more than the tabulated value. Therefore, the difference between the two distributions is significance which means that hypothesis number (1) which reads: "foreign language syllabus of Amra 2 is basically based on the native culture of the learners. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed. Table 6 shows the distributions of socio – cultural factors in Amra 2 with the result of chi – square.

Table (6): Frequencies and percentages of the socio – cultural elements in Amra (2).

References	Frequency	Percentage
Local	88	61.11 %
Foreign	28	19.44 %
Universal	28	19.44 %
Total	**144**	**100%**

$\chi2$ = 135.45 tabulated value 5.99, d.f. 2, l.v. 0.05.

3.12.3. Results concerning Amra 1 and Amra (2)

The analysis of the distribution of the three types of socio – cultural factors show the following results:

a. A high frequency of local socio - cultural references that mount to (228) with a percentage of 50.22 is indicated.

b. The foreign references of socio - cultural factors come second. Their frequencies come to (119) with a percentage of 26.11

c. The universal references of socio - cultural factors are the least. Their frequencies come to (107) with a percentages of 23.31.

When these distributions are compared to the experts' opinions concerning the distribution of these elements in foreign language syllabuses, the results of comparison have shown a statistically

significant difference by using chi – square. The observed value of chi – square is (307.46) while the tabulated value is (5.99) with a d.f.=2 and P >0.05. The calculated value is more than the tabulated value. Therefore, the difference between the two distributions is significance which means that hypothesis number (1) which reads: "foreign language syllabuses of Amra 1 and Amra 2 are basically based on the native culture of the learners. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed. Table 7 shows the distributions of socio – cultural factors in both textbooks with the result of chi – square.

Table (7): Frequencies and percentages of the socio – cultural references in both textbooks.

References	Frequency	Percentage
Local	228	50. 22
Foreign	119	26.211
Universal	107	23. 31
Total	**454**	**100%**

$\chi 2$ = 307.46, tabulated value 5.99, d.f. 2, l.v. 0.05

To sump up the results of content analysis, it is possible to present the following assumptions:

* The artificial socio – cultural references are far more accentuated at the expense of the authentic socio – cultural references of the target language. This represents a deficit in the syllabus design of the two books under study, since the presentation of this factor is of vital importance to achieve effective learning of the target language.

As a result of the detailed analysis and the thorough discussions of the socio – cultural references in both books, it is possible to say that foreign language syllabuses of English for the secondary schools in Jordan are basically based on the native culture of the learners.

5.1.   Conclusion

It has been often stated through this paper that language is deeply embedded in culture. The term culture used in this paper is the total ways of shared life of a nation, which the individual trains himself from his early childhood. The child grows up in a social community, learns from others all ways of behaviour, values, attitudes, reactions, unspoken assumptions and so forth. He starts expressing them as he masters them in the social group and in the art and literature he produces, in his social relationships and loneliness, in his happiness and sadness, in his revulsions and pleasures. These accumulated patterns of behaviour function in relation to each other to construct the cultural system of a particular nation, despite the variations within the group which express individual preferences or orientation of some subgroup. These cultural patterns are so integrated with language that any attempt to separate them will never succeed. Therfor, textbook writers should have functional syllabuses wish authentic material of real life situations.

The textbook writers of the secondary schools in Jordan did not seriously take the socio-cultural element of the foreign language into consideration, in the sense that, there are a number of passages that deals with subjects that do not reflect any authentic socio-cultural reference.

The results of analysis have shown that the socio – cultural content of foreign language syllabuses in Jordan is basically based on the culture of the native language. This finding is an (answer for the hypotheses) at the beginning of this study.

Moreover, the authors of these textbooks have shown that they are affected by (Quirk's, 1985) school which minimizes the role of culture in teaching foreign languages. This orientation stems from the view of teaching English as an international language.

On the basis of what has already been argued, we can conclude that language and culture are so interrelated that any attempt to separate them into two distinct categories will be destined never to succeed. This fact amounts to saying confidently that teaching a foreign language is simply

teaching a new culture in accord with the fact that it is through their languages that nations express their concepts and values, whether mundane or spiritual. Additionally, the content of a foreign language textbook should be purposefully chosen in such a way that develops the strategic and ethnic cometence of the foreign language learners that ultimately develop their communicative performance in that language, since the central contemporary aims of ELT is to communicate fluently and expnessively.

This can be achieved through much exposure to language with all of its varieties; different dialects and different idiolects of people of different ages, sexes, social classes, jobs and different standards of education. Through listening to all these language varieties in different circumstances with different visual aids taken from the everyday life of the people of the language. In such case the foreign language learner unconsciously starts to formulate a finite number of phonological, semantic and syntactic rules that can be internalized through the learners' practice and attempts to create infinite number of sentences. (Cited in Rivers 1964/1988:84). Other rules are consciously formulated through learning. Without much practice, the foreign language learners gradually lose what they have learnt, because language is defined as a system of habits embodied in the brains of the speakers (Choas, 1968:11).

5.2. Recommendations

1. Textbook writers should take into consideration the cultural differences between the target language culture and that of the learner, which might affect learning negatively.

2. Authentic materials help students acquire native – like languages where they can communicate freely and naturally. As a result, they should be highly considered in FL syllabuses.

3. The researcher has recommended that teachers should attain more awareness to present cultural information through visual approach such as using photographs and video tapes alongside the other techniques they have employed. Moreover, teachers should use advanced technology such as interactive media to present audio-

visual materials which are essential to link linguistic performance communication and cultural awareness.

4. Many teachers are not exposed directly to the target language culture. So, they should make up for this lack by disciplined reading. In addition, they can utilize many other resources which might supply them with necessary cultural information such as newspapers, magazines and mass media.

5. With the spread of video equipment and audiovisual resources into educational institutions, the use of films is becoming more common. Good films can serve as a valuable pedagogical aid in the classroom.

6. Teachers whose experience is below 5 years may lack the practical skills necessary for teaching cultural content in the classroom. Also, teachers are not eqiupped with guidelines and culture instructions by the Ministry of Education to utilize.

7. When presenting cultural content teachers are invited to do that through the visual approach such as using photographs and video tapes along side audio materials. Moreover making use of advanced technology such as interactive media to present audiovisual materials is essential to link linguistic performance, communicative and cultural awareness in the classroom.

8. The Ministry of Education may be called to hold training programs to assist teachers in attaining ability to tackle cultural content while teaching language and literary texts.

9. The socio cultural content of a foreign language syllabus should be up – to date because out date content neither contribute to real understanding, nor is it an adequate guide to genuine communication in the foreign language taught.

5.3.   Suggestions for further research

1. A content analysis study of the authentic socio – cultural elements in the prescribed textbooks in the basic schools in Jordan or elsewhere.

2. An investigation of the effect of the authentic soci – cultural elements in the prescribed English textbooks on students' performance in Jordan or elsewhere.

3. A study could be conducted to explore EFL teachers' techniques while teaching cultural content at the basic stage.

4. Researchers are invited to conduct a study on the effect of cultural background on enhancing students' reading comprehension at the secondary stage.

5. A study is recommended on examining the effect of cultural awareness on motivating the students to learn the language.

6. A content analysis study of the socio - culture content of the literary texts could be necessary to determine their level of appropriateness and complexity.

7. A study is recommended to investigate teachers' attitudes towards teaching cultural content in EFL classroom explicitly as an integral part of language teaching.

8. A study is recommended to explore the effect of the use of the mass-media approach on increasing students' cultural awareness of the target culture.

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