Core Concerns: Cultural Representation in English Language Teaching (ELT) Coursebooks

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Abstract Many learners of English view what they are doing as a means to an end: that end is to gain an advantage in our post-modern world, subject to the powerful influence of 'globalisation'. This advantage, this reward, is a result of their efforts to embrace a new language. The most frequently employed tool in any L2 teaching/learning process is a coursebook. It lies at the heart of many aspects of ELT planning and delivery and is a product of a huge, worldwide industry. Given the historical association of the English language with its various 'mother tongue' nation states it seems relevant to ask: just what does a learner receive when s/he buys an ELT coursebook? Along with the English language comes much, much more: explicit and implicit cultural content. Indeed, in certain L2 learning contexts (for example, Portugal) specific reference is made in the national programmes to the learning of language *and* culture. ELT professionals have exercised themselves greatly since the 1970s in re-defining what they understand the concept of learning a language to be, especially since the advent of the 'Communicative Approach'. But much less has been said about they understand the concept of culture learning to be. This paper is a modest attempt to redress that imbalance.

It is indisputable that anyone in the business of producing materials for the teaching of the English language must embrace some conception of the symbiotic relationship that exists between language and culture, as Kramsch[1] states:

> Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least,

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[1] In "Language and Culture" (1998), Kramsch discusses the connection between language and culture in great depth according to an extensive range of linguistic criteria. Further more recent books by the same author have focused more on intercuturality.

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making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (1993: 1)

What can be derived from this statement is that, outside the classroom, the real world demands that language users are in some way culturally competent to an equal degree that they are linguistically competent and perhaps that one (language) cannot exist without the other (culture) and that this reality should therefore be mirrored in language teaching materials produced for the classroom context. It could be said that "… foreign language learning is foreign culture learning… What is debatable, though, is what is meant by the term 'culture' and how the latter is integrated into language learning and teaching." (Thanasoulas 2001: intro.) Thus, there exists a general consensus within the English Language Teaching (ELT) fraternity that teaching culture is an important element to consider, but what that culture consists of and how to include this in the teaching-learning process is less well defined.

Indeed, since the mid-1960s and especially in the 1970s many writers have sought to include a socio-cultural perspective into their definitions of language knowledge. More specifically, the notion of communicative competence, popularised by Hymes (1967, 1972) described language use beyond the more narrow confines of a Chomskian[2] approach which sees individual language users as having some kind of mental blueprint which enables them to process and generate language, using innate, implicit knowledge of principles, conditions and rules of their language system.

The ethnographic research data cited by Hymes focussed on language in use: language in the world rather than language in the mind and as such led to a definition of communicative competence that involves language, people, context and culture:

> … both the knowledge and the ability that individuals need to understand and use linguistic resources in ways that are structurally well formed, socially and contextually appropriate, and culturally feasible in communicative contexts constitutive of different groups and communities of which the individuals are members. (Kelly Hall 2002: 105)

Since the initial model (with its components of grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic knowledge) proposed by Hymes, many developments and additions have occurred in the field of applied linguistics and curriculum design which have been reflected in the materials produced for language teaching.[3]

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) propose a model of communicative competence with five different inter-related areas of competence: linguistic, sociocultural, strategic, discourse and actional. At the core is discourse competence, which includes both elements of linguistic and pragmatic (actional) knowledge and the ability to use these

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[2] Since the late 1950s (with "Syntactic Structures" in 1957) and 1960s (a series of published works), Chomsky's ideas concerning the innate capacity of all children to acquire language and the infinite capacity humans have to create language (through Transformational Grammar) have become highly influential in the theorizing of language teaching practices.

[3] Tseng (2002: 11–12) describes these developments succinctly: "From a sociolinguistic perspective, competence in language use is determined not only by the ability to use language with grammatical accuracy, but also to use language appropriate to particular contexts. Thus, successful language learning requires users to know the culture that underlies the language."

resources in both oral and written contexts, as well as knowledge of the socio-cultural norms, conventions and expectations involved in language as a communicative activity, i.e. as social behaviour. The inclusion of a top-down influence of socio-cultural knowledge and abilities is crucial. This model (and its subsequent revision in 2008) implies that successful communication must take into account the participants (their age, gender, social status and distance, their relations of power and affect), the existence of stylistic conventions related to genres, politeness strategies and registers and also background information related to the target language group, major language varieties and cross cultural awareness (1995: 23–24). When these insights are related directly to the topic of materials development for language teaching, the importance of the role of culture as content can be clearly identified:

> General knowledge of the literature and arts that are integral to the target culture should be part of language instruction as should basic knowledge of the history and geography associated with the target language community. The social structure of the culture should also be covered (e.g. family, kinship relations, child rearing, courtship and marriage, gender roles) especially if the target culture differs in important ways from the learner's culture. Political and educational systems should be introduced as should major religion(s) and holidays, celebrations and important customs. (Celce-Murcia 2007: 51)

Here then is a clear description of the kind of cultural content that language teaching should embrace as a means to facilitate the acquisition of communicative competence: content which would logically be reflected in the teaching materials and/or coursebooks designed to facilitate the L2 teaching-learning process.

Language and culture are social phenomena which are shared by all humanity and lie at the centre of our social life; as Risager (2006: 4) has stated "human culture always includes language, and human language cannot be conceived without culture. Linguistic practice is always embedded in some cultural context or other". Culture is a social context in which people live out their lives in the real world. From the point of view of language teaching any interest in the culture (and the language) is not derived from a desire to understand these phenomena as mental processes or abstract structures but rather to include an anthropological perspective within our understanding: culture is a "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89). The human and social aspects of the interrelatedness of language, culture and life can be equated to a highly complex network of significance that is real and meaningful: "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative in search of meaning." (idem: 5) Geertz, following Wittgenstein's stance on language,[4] believes that culture is not something

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[4] Wittgenstein was concerned in his later work (Philosophical Investigations 1953) with "ordinary language" which he defined as a series of "language games" and how within this context the meaning of words is derived through their public use: the words are moves in a game and grammar is the rules of the game.

that occurs in the heads of humans; "Culture is public, because meaning is" (idem: 12).

English language learners across all possible learning contexts are being asked to deal with other people's meanings (cultural knowledge), they are participants in a diffusive process. Hannerz (1992) argues that this is social distribution where culture exists both at an internalised locus (ideas and modes of thought) and an externalised locus (different forms and ways in which meaning may be accessed and made public). In addition, it is true to say that knowledge or generating meaning is "constructed as a result of a transaction between an individual's conception of the world (individual culture) and the world outside that individual" (Tseng 2002: 11). Participation and diffusion are key words here. Our contemporary era of globalisation implies the need to understand how cultures may spread across languages (and vice versa: how languages may spread across cultures) and what changes this cultural complexity may provoke in the way individuals structure their personality and cognition.

Cognition can be described by largely the same characteristics throughout humanity while the symbols that people use to communicate are different. Symbols are not to be studied to gain access to mental processes, but as formations of social phenomena. These insights from the field of Anthropology find an echo in earlier work associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham. In a clear break from any notion of the pre-eminence of 'high culture', Raymond Williams states culture is "a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values, not only in art and learning, but in institutions and ordinary behaviour" (1961: 61). Social behaviour is conditioned by culture and language and it is both an agent of this dynamic and a component of it at the same time. In essence, culture controls and guides how the members of a social unit behave and provides the means how to make sense of the other members' (and outsiders') behaviour (including language). Language is construed as a vital socio-cultural practice.[5]

More recently, Bourdieu emphasized the importance of language not as an autonomous construct but as a system determined by various socio-political processes. For him, a language exists as a linguistic habitus (1990: 52), as a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating, with particular systems of classification, address and reference forms, specialized lexicons, and metaphors for politics, medicine, and ethics. Bourdieu also coined the term 'cultural capital' as part of his explanation for educational under-achievement. Parents and the family, schools and other institutions can impart knowledge and attitudes which make success more likely: this cultural capital can include ways of behaving or communicating

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[5] Within this approach to 'Cultural Studies' an overriding concern is to examine the practices of everyday life and their meanings, how these meanings relate to objects and behaviours and particularly to explain relationships of power: subordination and resistance, production and consumption.

effectively (embodied), 'high culture' objects which are owned and understood (objectified) or qualifications obtained (institutionalized). In this context, adding a second linguistic and cultural code through the learning of a foreign language could provide these learners with enhanced "cultural capital" by providing them with a wider range of resources, both material and symbolic (Pierce 1995).[6] This may change both their expectations in life, their perspectives of life and their prospects in life.

The importance of the interplay between socio-cultural factors and cognitive factors in learning contexts is also at the heart of the work of Vygotsky (1978), more specifically in his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) wherein the learner is not fully independent and requires non-intrusive assistance or 'scaffolding' to be provided. Variation in educational performance may be explained by the linguistic, social and cultural disparity between the learners' school and home environments. Here, the learning environment is the crucial factor, a learning context which has its own history, its own culture. These factors shape the learners' cognitive development. Language shapes cognition and at the same time cognition is a resource for language. Educational settings are not natural settings and associated educational structures and practices may not enhance effective learning unless their culture is recognised and valued.

Cultural transmission is an inevitable result of the cultural contact always present in ELT classrooms and materials since it is the site of non-static negotiations of representations and meanings: they provide opportunities to "enter into other frameworks of understanding" (Risager 2006: 154). Foreign language learners' identities are challenged as their notions of the world and their relationships with it formed through time and space become modified by an 'other' culture. As Stuart Hall makes clear: "Identities are constructed through, not outside, difference" (1996: 4) and it is the target culture in ELT procedures which provides the most substantial point of reference in determining difference. In all learning contexts, coursebooks and other learning materials related to the English language play a role in the construction of the learner's self-identity as much as any identity associated with any English speaking community. Wang is perhaps not overstepping the mark by stating:

> To speak a language well, one has to be able to think in that language, and thought is extremely powerful. A person's mind is in a sense the centre of his identity, so if a person thinks in English way in order to speak English, one might say that he has, in a way, almost taken on an English identity [see for example Brown (1994) and Littlewood (1984)]. That is the power and the essence of a language. Language is culture (ibid. 2008: 59).

Investment in learning an additional language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity (Pierce 1995). Indeed, operating at both the local and

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[6] For Bourdieu, symbolic power involves the use of concepts, ideas and beliefs to achieve goals. In society, symbolic power operates in a field called 'culture' whose logic, in turn, is such that it maintains class structures that are inherently iniquitous.

global levels, what happens at both the national and at the international level, with regard to individuals in classrooms and the production of coursebooks contributes directly to the influence of and role of the English language (and culture) as an agent in the construction of learners' identities around the world. Giddens, right at the outset of his discussion, makes this quite clear:

> The self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences; in forging their self-identities, no matter how local in their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications. (1991: 2)

Exposure to different ways of life (social and psychological meanings) in coursebooks will certainly affect younger learners' constructive process related to self-identity. Coursebooks are agents that enable social relations to be relocated across time and space, so, as Marcus has argued "local identity emerges as a compromise between a mix of elements of resistance to incorporation into a larger whole and elements of accommodation to this larger whole" (1992: 313). This is perhaps especially true when the English language given its dominant (hegemonic?) role it plays in the world population's need for an additional or second or foreign channel of communication (depending on your choice of terminology). Coursebooks may be the agents of bringing geographically distant cultures into a proximity with learners that borders on the intimate: either through private reading or participation in classroom related activities based on the coursebook.[7] The forces at work within globalization challenge the boundaries of national cultures and identities leaving no local context unconnected or independent and yet not creating a new global alternative. According to Bhabba the connections or relationships created may be both tense and temporary:

> We have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialize lost time, and to reclaim lost territories, creates a culture of disparate 'interest groups' or social movements. Here affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be only situational and strategic: commonality is often negotiated through the 'contingency' of social interests and political claims. (1996: 59)

Thus, all cultures become partial and subject to a process of "cultural hybridization" and characterized by their "baffling alikeness and banal divergence" (idem: 54). Our identity is established in relation to others (others who are different and these relations may be conflictual or contradictory) and as Woodward has rightly emphasized, identity is "given meaning through the language and symbolic systems through which they are represented... Representation works symbolically to classify the world and our relationships with it" (1997: 8–9). This is the heart of the matter: language is a representational system, using signs and symbols to convey concepts, feelings and ideas (meanings), allowing for

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[7] And there can be few ELT classrooms in Portugal or Poland where there is not a strong reliance on the coursebook as the dominant teaching resource given the high number of contact hours that most teachers of English are currently expected to administer.

communication between participants on the basis of a shared understanding and vision of the world (Hall 1996).

Whether today's world is labelled 'post-modern' or 'high modern', these considerations are crucial to understanding our identity, our human experience: "In modernity, identity becomes more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation. Yet identity in modernity is also social and Other-related" (Kellner 1992: 141). The current generation of English language learners could therefore be said to be 'open' to the significance and influence of different cultures in a way that was not previously true.[8] References to distant events throughout any local mass media mediate the local population's experience of everyday life and help form a reality which while being both virtual and phenomenal in some ways negates any notion of place: Giddens makes this very point in relation to the print media, describing what results from the juxtaposition and/or co-existence of stories and news items: "the 'separate' stories which are displayed alongside one another express orderings of consequentiality typical of a transformed time-space environment from which the hold of place has largely evaporated" (1991: 26). Something similar can be ascribed to coursebooks (which may also be categorized as a form of print media) if the term 'stories' is replaced with 'texts': the cultural content is disembedded from its original setting: this results in a kind of "collage effect" (idem: 26), an equally apt metaphor to describe how 'culture' is dealt with in ELT coursebooks which contain greater or smaller texts, illustrations and photographs, all of which represent elements of the target language/culture in a displaced learning context.

What constitutes the culture in the teaching materials of an English language teaching context requires particularly sensitive consideration given the connection that has traditionally been firmly established between the nation state of the United Kingdom and the culture and language most clearly associated with that political and/or geographical entity:

> Culture is a concept which needs to be handled carefully. Nowadays it is much used, often far too loosely. One of the problems is that the most common use of the word—as national culture—is very broad and conjures up vague notions about nations, races and sometimes whole continents, which are too generalised to be useful, and which often become mixed up with stereotypes and prejudices. (Holliday 1994: 21–22)

Within the context of research into any potential connection between nations and cultural characteristics, Geert Hofstede, the Dutch psychologist, designed and carried out extensive research into cultural differences and similarities of over 116,000 employees of International Business Machines (IBM) in over 50 countries and in 20 languages. The findings of his research were initially published in 1980. He identified four dimensions of culture and mean scores for each country on each dimension. The research relates to large, national groups working in a business

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8 The recent refurbishment of many Portuguese schools has further enhanced this 'open' door to other cultures by means of technologies such as the Interactive White Board and connections to the Internet.

context and not individuals. A consequence of the research is that the broad cultural tendencies of countries/nations can be compared. Hofstede used the metaphor of culture as the "software of the mind" with large groups sharing a collective "mental programming" (1991: 4). The four dimensions identified by Hofstede are described below. These descriptions represent extremes and it is more realistic to think of each country situated somewhere between, on a continuum (Ellison and Hurst 2007).

1. Power Distance: The degree to which a society accepts power may be distributed unequally. In educational terms power distance could be expressed in the relationship between teacher and student.
2. Individualism versus collectivism: The degree to which a society is individual or group-oriented. In education this may be reflected in the extent to which a teacher encourages individual ideas or group work and to the preferences of students to work alone or within a group.
3. Uncertainty Avoidance: This is the extent to which a society feels threatened by ambiguity and tries to reduce or prevent this by providing more structure, bureaucracy and explicit rules. In the classroom, a tendency to high uncertainty avoidance manifests itself in the need for specific information e.g., course programmes, detailed hand-outs, clearly defined objectives for tasks.
4. Masculinity versus femininity: This relates to the degree to which a society distinguishes between male and female roles. In the classroom, this relates to how competition, assertiveness, and success and failure are viewed.

While this kind of research could be seen as being somewhat flawed it does serve to show how the concept allied to 'national cultures' occupies a position of some power and influence in diverse fields. It could be said that the Eurocentric perspective encouraged by the various treaties and institutions of the European Union and its predecessors further emphasises this socio-cultural association: if we are dealing with the English language, then we need to deal with British culture.

In practical terms, the traditional location of ELT coursebooks was generally the U.K., for example, in 1988 it was possible to state that "globally designed textbooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglo-centric: appealing to a world market as they do, they cannot by definition draw on local varieties of English" (Prodromou 1988: 73). More recent developments in materials production in Portugal have broadened the cultural horizon to include North America and much more recently other varieties of English language (World Englishes), and therefore culture, from around the Anglophone world. This broadening of perspective is perhaps fruit of the greater, contradictory force of globalization:

> One result [of the present intensified phase of globalization] has been a slow, if uneven, erosion of the 'centred' nationalisms of the Western European nation-state and the strengthening of both transnational relations and local identities—as it were, simultaneously 'above' and 'below' the level of the nation-state. (Hall 1993: 354)

In this light, processes such as deterritorialization and fragmentation make it absurd to think of "British Culture" as existing as a unified, whole, identifiable,

geographically defined organism. This does not mean that 'culture' is no longer used as an instrument of national promotion or propaganda or that concepts of national identity and national culture are not present in encounters of an inter-cultural nature, both inside the classroom and outside in the 'real' world. However, studies in Sociology and Anthropology during the last fifty to one hundred years have re-conceptualized culture as being related to social practice and world construction and not a thing or instrument. Individuals, communities and nations are not situated in mono-cultural locations: "It has also become clear that single persons do not enact just 'one culture', but rather is influenced by, and participates in, a plurality of "cultural streams" (Thomassen 2008: 13). In no way is culture to be considered static: it flows and it shifts in ways which may create either greater coherence or greater diversity depending on its location, both in terms of time and in terms of circumstances: "If culture is not an object to be described, neither is it a unified corpus of symbols and meanings that can be definitively interpreted. Culture is contested, temporal and emergent" (Clifford 1986: 476).

Culture provides the reference system by which individuals make sense of the world in which they live: it provides rules and regulations at all levels of society: these are in turn shared and understood so that any individual behaviour may be evaluated as appropriate or inappropriate in accordance with the shared norms and values. Having this kind of cultural knowledge provides the society's members with a certain degree of comfort and stability. ELT coursebooks should be a two way bridge to connect the learners' world to the world of English (language and culture) remembering that:

> Accurate intercultural communication is built on fluency in the target language, insight into what people are imagining when they speak, and the ability to decipher non-linguistic symbols such as gestures and icons. Because people use language to aid and complement other behavioural purposes, language cannot be understood in isolation from a larger context of behaviour—all of which is culturally filtered and most of which is culturally originated. (Seelye 1997: 24–25)

Yet coursebooks can never be adjudged to be neutral in terms of their cultural content (Hurst 2008), their content will always communicate at least some attitudes, ideas, beliefs or values[9] related to concepts, at the macro level, such as individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and so forth. A more refined description would include aspects such as: how people are defined by their work or achievements, what motivates people positively, how people view the world in terms of problems and solutions, what value people give to common goals as well as other similar concepts (Dunnett et al. 1986, 153–154). Indeed, until recently, it has been true to say that "Traditional thought in foreign language education has limited the teaching of culture to the transmission of information about the people of the target country, and about their general attitudes and beliefs" (Kramsch 1993: 205). Here then is the heart of matter, the inappropriateness of accepting and

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[9] Cunningsworth (1995: 90) refers to this phenomenon as the "hidden curriculum", it being interpreted as a crucial feature in many educational programmes.

reinforcing as natural and necessary a linkage between a language-culture and a particular country-nation. When referring specifically to culture, Holliday highlights this inadequacy: "One of the problems is that the most common use of the word—as national culture—is very broad and conjures up vague notions about nations, races and sometimes whole continents, which are too generalised to be useful, and which often become mixed up with stereotypes and prejudices" (1994: 21).

Learners of English are faced with the tasks of learning not only a linguistic code but also, simultaneously, a cultural code. For example, the "accepted" way for young women to dress in the U.K. or the U.S.A. may not conform to the dress code in different societies around the world: these cultural codes are representative of different opinions, beliefs or attitudes. The significance of this line of argument cannot be overstated, for example within the very recent political and legal developments related to the use of a hijab in various European countries:

> These dress examples, that symbolise deeply held beliefs, show how intensely emotional cultural tenets can be, and how much culture is a matter of the heart and not just the head. This explains why cultural misapprehensions can sometimes lead to argument, violence and, in extreme cases, the killing of individuals (Johnson and Rinvolucri 2010: 11).

And it is precisely this kind of cultural representation that is very likely to be found in ELT coursebooks, whether they are produced for the Portuguese, Polish or an international market. For example, contemporary ELT coursebooks are largely 'populated' by pseudo-real teenagers in various guises for various instructional purposes: both at the levels of illustrations/images and as the supposed authors of texts. Any kind of thematic content or 'topics' in the ELT classroom automatically implies a situation in which "… a multidimensional linguistic and cultural contact will, under all circumstances, be involved, one in which sex, social class, life experiences and mastery of the language will be able to play a role" (Risager 2006: 24). Each and every learner may construct and/or provide a different interpretation, a different representation of the cultural content in question. This is true across the whole spectrum of classroom language learning experiences, even at the most basic level of instruction, for example when teaching a vocabulary item of such apparent simplicity as the word 'breakfast'. From this cue a Portuguese or Polish learner will make various associations but would probably not include items such as 'tea' or 'eggs' or 'toast' or 'marmite' or 'marmalade' which someone from an Anglophone background might be more likely to associate. The point is that it is very often taken for granted that cultural correspondence exists when there is an apparent lexical correspondence. In addition, consideration needs to be given to further unstated or undisclosed meanings associated with the item 'breakfast' which here might include aspects such as economic power (How much can you afford to pay for a breakfast?), social class membership-relationships (Who prepares the food? Who is supposed to take

part in its consumption?) or even religion (Are there any limitations on what can be eaten?). Reference here should be made to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis[10] which identified two crucial attributes of language in that it "influences the way we construct our model of the world (determinism). And if this is so, other languages convey differing visions of the same world (relativity)" (Fantini 1997: 11).

In the realm of coursebooks, it is important to establish criteria for examining cultural content, in the light of nuances of the kind described above, and avoid resorting to binary distinctions of an 'us' and 'them' type, grounded in spurious notions associated with countries—nation states. At the forefront of this approach, in association with the Council of Europe, Byram (1993a: 3–16) posited a framework based on a seven-fold categorisation:

Social Identity and Social Groups (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities)
Social Interaction (levels of formality, as an outsider and an insider)
Belief and Behaviour (moral, religious beliefs, daily routines)
Social and Political Institutions (health care, law and order, social security)
National History (historical and national events as markers of national identity)
National Geography (factors seen as significant by members)
Stereotypes and National Identity (what is 'typical', symbols of national stereotypes).

This framework embraces a broad set of components, drawing heavily on what used to be termed 'low culture' to the detriment of 'high culture'[11] and as such may be considered more inclusive. Furthermore, Byram, as well as providing a framework, makes a strong case for any approach to include not only actively enhancing cultural awareness but also incorporating some form of cultural experience in his model of foreign language learning:

> Learners need to be prepared for experience of the daily rhythm of the foreign culture, of the behaviours which are different and those which are the same but have a different significance. Such phenomena are verbal and non-verbal, and learners need both the skills of accuracy and fluency in the language and the awareness of the cultural significance of their utterances (1989: 145).

The emphasis here is on understanding culture as being both a part of and the result of dynamic, interactive forces that operate in a social context which have an impact on individual practices.

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[10] Based on several 20th century publications (e.g. 1929, 1956), the hypothesis has both 'strong' and 'weak' versions and held great sway in language education into the 1970 s. Today, it is widely accepted that more than just language shapes the thoughts, worldviews and perception of reality of language users.

[11] High culture is usually defined as the works of writers, artists and composers who have gained the epithet 'great' through academic and critical appreciation. Works from this category are also considered superior and less accessible.

Several institutions have issued guidelines aiming to establish standards for the teaching of culture in foreign language education.[12] These documents are influenced by the work of many scholars who have attempted to define culture in relation to educational programmes. A common description views culture as being composed of three elements: for example, products, behaviours and ideas (Tomalin and Stempleski 1993) or artifacts, sociofacts and mentifacts (Fantini 1997) or form, meaning and use (Larsen-Freeman 1987). Moran (2001) introduced a five dimension interactive model into the discussion, the dimensions were: products, practices, perspectives, communities and persons. He states that "Culture is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts" (ibid: 24). This is a comprehensive attempt at a definition which sits well with the five-fold model suggested by Byram (1993a) and described above. What is added here is a direct reference to the human aspect of culture: it is people who either alone or in groups are the agents of making culture part of the real world. In this way it also echoes the approach advocated by members of the Birmingham school of 'Cultural Studies' (Hoggart et al.) by directly referencing the fact that culture should be seen as fundamentally a "way of life" phenomenon: "Culture is thus both individual and collective—psychological and social (ibid: 25)".

To illustrate the usefulness of this framework, take one of Moran's examples, the cultural phenomenon of 'law enforcement' and examine it in the context of the appearance of a British police officer in coursebook (not an infrequent occurrence). Is the police officer in the coursebook male or female? Experienced or a novice? [persons] Does the officer have a baton? A gun? A name badge? [products] Is the officer arresting someone? Giving a tourist directions? Doing nothing? [practices] What is the officer's 'place' in this society? Who and what does the officer represent? [perspectives] Is the officer alone or with other officers? With a member of the general public? [communities] What becomes abundantly clear here is that not all the cultural implications of including a British police officer in ELT materials are immediately obvious: there is inherent complexity and also a great deal that is not explicit: the image of an iceberg[13] is often referred to as a means of illustrating this point and undoubtedly it is easier to understand what you can see (literally and metaphorically) than what you cannot (as a foreign language learner). Shaules argues that much of the difficulty and confusion surrounding 'culture' in an educational setting has to do with a failure to understand a further three way differentiation: "(1)

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[12] In the USA, National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project (1999). In Europe, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) section on socio-cultural contents. In the UK, The National Curriculum (2007) includes content definitions for different 'Keystage' levels of language learning.

[13] Just as 90 % of an iceberg is invisible then so it is with culture: how people conceive of time, how people handle emotions, how people view leadership issues and so on. This idea derives largely from the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall's seminal work "Beyond Culture" (1976).

culture as a form of personal or social identity (2) culture as something that influences behaviour and (3) culture as shared meaning that acts as a framework for interaction …" (2007: 115) and that is the third dimension which is less explicit and less easy to grasp and is, in fact, what he terms "deep culture". Here it is also possible to detect the ripples of influence emanating from Birmingham.

What is crucial here in relation to coursebooks is how to embody the conjoined, interactive and yet separate nature of language and culture in FL learning materials. For example, foreign learners of Portuguese have a need to understand the how and the when of the use of the 'you' personal pronouns "tu" and "você" (used according to degree of formality/respect) which takes them in the realm of the deep, the invisible: How do speakers of Portuguese view their relationships with other people? What is at stake is the appropriate use of language for self-expression, for communication and for social interaction (within the same linguistic domain, learners of English need to understand the how and the when (if ever?) of the use the impersonal pronoun "one"). Thus it is possible to state that:

> Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted … Culture … is the foundation of communication (Samovar et al. 1981: 24).

However, language and culture have tended to be dealt with as separate entities in many coursebooks: these coursebooks will have a "Culture Spot" or a "Facts and Trivia" or something similar. This separation perhaps results from the desire on the part of educators and teachers to give their learners the means to be able to participate in pedagogical activities (largely focussed on dealing with linguistic forms and meanings) which improve their general levels of language production and comprehension before tackle the more complex demands of improving their cultural competence (Hymes 1967, 1972).

In order to interpret culture, respond to culture or participate in culture the foreign language learner requires language for communicative and expressive purposes: this view sees language from a functional perspective. Several authors have noted the importance of categorising and understanding language in terms of communicative functions: the most influential of which in ELT in the European sphere were probably Van Eck and Alexander (1975) and Wilkins (1976).[14] Stern (1983) summarises the work of five different linguists of the 20th century from Bühler (1934) through to Halliday (1973) characterising their approaches under the broad heading of "functional categories of speech acts" (ibid: 224). Contemporary ELT methodology makes use of all kinds of pedagogic activities in the classroom that replicate the social interactions that require language use in the real world (speech as action). These activities include role plays, simulations, dialogues, interviews and so on which encourage the use of language for

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[14] For a comprehensive review of David Wilkins (1976) classic book "Notional Syllabuses" written to mark 21 years since its original publication, see Hurst (1997).

communicative and expressive purposes, albeit in a modified or adapted from depending on the national programme or the learners' level or the physical limitations of the classrooms itself, among other factors. Some coursebooks include items described as a "function bank" or similar, acknowledging the relevance of linking the form which the language takes and the purpose for which it is used: greeting people, making promises, giving advice, asking for directions etc. This is the specific language that is used in specific social contexts for specific purposes which also depends on the people involved, the topic area in question and many other non-linguistic factors: the role of silence, physical distance, eye contact etc. (Moran 2001: 40). Knowledge and choice are critical here.

It would be impossible for any coursebook to take into account all realisations of socio-cultural practices or interactions since they are almost infinite by definition but guidance may be found in the work of Orwig (1991) who developed a list of categories which included: functions used when socializing: greetings/addressing, taking leave, introductions etc.; functions used in establishing and maintaining relationships: sharing personal information etc.; functions involving barriers; functions involving influencing people: requests for action, requests for information, giving permission; functions involving feedback: compliments, responding to requests; functions involved in arguing: agreeing/disagreeing, convincing, persuading, threatening; functions involving avoiding trouble: denials, accepting responsibility, explaining, making excuses etc. Taking as an example the function of "introductions" which frequently appears in coursebooks at the level of initial FL learning it is possible to state that this function of language is something of immediate usefulness but which is very often presented in the false paradigm of "Hello, what's your name? My name is X". It is relevant to question: how often people introduce themselves to each other compared to how often introductions are made by a third party? Under what circumstances do people have to make such abrupt introductions? Do the young people into whose mouths these words are often placed ever use the language in this way? This line of argument serves to illustrate the need for a deeper examination of how participation in language learning involves culture learning even when the learning experience is in the classroom and not embedded in the culture itself.

Language and culture in the classroom are subject to a process of adaptation and modification for pedagogical reasons but this does not mean that the learners' experience has to be distorted to the extent that it becomes inaccurate and/or inappropriate.

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