

**THE IMAGE OF CULTURE IN FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TEACHING MANUALS**
A contrastive analysis of English and Spanish

**LA IMAGEN DE LA CULTURA EN LOS
MANUALES DE ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUA
EXTRANJERA**
Análisis contrastivo del inglés y español



TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

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RESUMEN EN CASTELLANO:

La enseñanza de segundas lenguas se ha convertido en una materia clave de estudio, y con ello, la transmisión del componente cultural imprescindible para un correcto aprendizaje. Por ello, he decidido realizar un análisis contrastivo de cuatro manuales de enseñanza de segundas lenguas, dos de español y dos de inglés, nos ayudará a comprobar qué imagen cultural nos ofrecen y de qué manera transmiten la competencia intercultural.

PALABRAS CLAVE EN CASTELLANO:

Competencia intercultural, cultura, enseñanza de segundas lenguas, español, inglés.

ABSTRACT:

Foreign Language Teaching has become a key matter of study, and with it, so has the transmission of the cultural component. For this reason, I have decided to do a contrastive analysis of four foreign language teaching books, two of which are in Spanish and two in English, in order to see the cultural image offered and in what way intercultural competence comes across.

KEY WORD:

Culture, English, foreign language teaching, intercultural competence, Spanish.

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1. Introduction

Learning a new language is a task that has concerned people throughout time, and nowadays it has a crucial importance in our lives. It was in the twentieth century when the development of strategies and studies for the acquisition of a new language produced several methods in order to deal with foreign language teaching. In fact, the studies related to language teaching have been increasing until being one of the most relevant issues of education studies. Brown (2007, p. 17) defends the varied interpretation of methods that emerged:

A glance through the past century or so of language teaching will give an interesting picture of how varied the interpretations have been of the best way to teach a foreign language. As disciplinary schools of thought – psychology, linguistics, and education, for example – have come and gone, so have language-teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. Teaching methods, as “approaches in action,” are of course the practical application of theoretical findings and positions. In a field such as ours that is relatively young, it should come as no surprise to discover a wide variety of these applications over the last hundred years, some in total philosophical opposition to others.

It would be interesting to provide a brief description of the history of education methods.¹ One of the earliest methods used for foreign language teaching was the same used to teach Latin, focused in learning the grammar rules and the vocabulary by translating texts. The main aim was to translate the Greek and Latin literature, so this method was called the Classical or Grammar Traditional method. After that, the Series method whose technique was to teach without translation and without explanation. However, this method caused frustration so it was substituted also by the Direct method which focused in the use of spontaneous and direct discourses in the target language. Nevertheless, the Direct method was replaced by the Audio-lingual method due to the lack of native teachers in places like USA, the necessities emerged during World War II, and other factors. The next was the Audio-lingual, which was based on the behaviourist habit-formation theory, selected and graded the vocabulary and grammar. The Silent way was another method featured by a problem-solving approach. The Total Physical Response method attempted to teach language through physical motor activity although it was substituted by the Community Language Teaching which applies psychological counselling techniques to learning. These methods provided important innovations in foreign language teaching. However, they were focused only in linguistic competence. Methods changed due to the growth and development of the interest in learning different languages. From old methods focused in grammar to other whose main aim was communication and, more recently, the cultural awareness in foreign language teaching.

¹ The description of the history of education methods is based on the information offered by Dr. M^a Carmen Fonseca Mora in her course: Second language Acquisition (2015).

Language is alive, for this reason it must always be an object of study and our main (or at least the oldest) allies are books. The culture images presented in foreign language books are essential for learners in order to forge an accurate image of the community of the target language. I will cite a fragment of Barrett, Byram, Lazar, Mompoin-Gaillard and Philippou (2014, p. 9) to highlight the reason of why the transmission of culture and intercultural education is crucial:

Mutual understanding and intercultural competence are more important than ever today because through them we can address some of the most virulent problems of contemporary societies. Manifestations of prejudice, discrimination and hate speech have become common, and political parties advocating extremist ideas have gained fresh momentum. These problems are linked to socio-economic and political inequalities and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds and affiliations. There is a felt urgency – and it touches many aspects of our lives – for education which helps citizens to live together in culturally diverse societies. The ability to understand and communicate with each other across all kinds of cultural divisions is a fundamental prerequisite for making such societies work. We all need to acquire intercultural competence. For this reason, intercultural education, which aims to develop and enhance this ability, can make an essential contribution to peaceful coexistence.

I will do an analysis of four foreign language manuals two of which are in English and two in Spanish. On one hand, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world² and the Spanish world has an extensive culture which must be shown. On the other hand, English has become the universal language of the world. What I would like to highlight is that these languages are the official language in not just one country, thus each one represents more than one community and that results in a conglomerate of cultures associated to the same language. Consequently, I will analyse two manuals of Spanish as a foreign language and two of English as a foreign language, and I will focus on how culture is represented in those books following the rules established in Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes and the Common European Framework of Reference.

2. Objectives:

The general objective of the analysis consists on verifying whether the selected books achieve the following expectations in order to see the cultural image provided:

- The manuals represent the target language culture in a realistic manner
- The cultural references' scheme established by the *PCIC* are accomplished
- The books represent cultural content as important as grammar and vocabulary content
- Manuals break with cultural stereotypes
- There appears comparisons between the target and the inner culture

² Instituto Cervantes, 2016, p. 4.

3. Methodology

In order to do the analysis, I have chosen an A1/A2 level (following the *CEFR* Reference Levels) because it belongs to the beginners whose cultural knowledge of the target language is vague and that acquisition will be influenced, among other things, by books. With that level, I have selected the following books of Spanish as a foreign language:

1. García Catalán, G., García Santos, J., Hernández Martín, A. y Re, A. (2013). *Español ELElab Universidad de Salamanca*: nivel A1-A2. 1st ed. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca.
2. Martín Peris, E. y Sans, N. (2004). *Gente*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Difusión.

I have decided on the first book because it has been published by the University of Salamanca, whose prestige is well known, and has elaborated the Diploma of Spanish as a Foreign Language (DELE) which is the only official certificate recognized by the Spanish Government and the Cervantes Institute. I opted for the second book because it was published nine years before that *ELElab* and I think that it could be interesting to observe if there is any relevant change in teaching culture throughout time. Also, it contains a pan-hispanic view not only in the book, but also in the auditory material included (CD) in which the speakers are from different countries where the mother language is Spanish: Cuba, Argentina or Spain.

Regarding the materials of English as a foreign language, I have chosen:

3. Frances Eales, Steve Oakes. (2011): *Speakout Elementary Students' Book*. Editorial Pearson Longman.
4. Soars, Liz and John. (2006): *New Headway Elementary Student's Book*. Oxford University.

I have chosen the A1/A2 level books available at the University of Huelva. The third book is the property of Modern Language Service because it is the most accurate manual that I have found for the analysis. Similarly, the last book has been chosen due to its accuracy and because it has been published by Oxford University, which in 2016 has been considered by Times Higher Education the best University in the world.

The cultural sphere is very extensive and to include the accurate information when teaching a language is not an easy task. Consequently, I have followed the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*CEFR*) and Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes (*PCIC*) where the cultural contents are established according to the different levels of knowledge (from A1 to C2). The *PCIC* divided the cultural elements in three main sections Cultural References, Intercultural Attitudes and Abilities and Sociocultural Knowledge and Behaviour. These sections are based in the *CEFR* with the aim of delimiting and creating an intercultural competence for the learners to have access to the cultural reality. The *PCIC* (n.p.) establishes that the information is more universal than detailed to serve as a guide:

El inventario recoge, además de los conocimientos puramente factuales, creencias, valores, representaciones y símbolos, en aquellos casos en que su conocimiento puede ser rentable desde el punto de vista del aprendizaje de la lengua y de su incidencia en el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural

To contrast the information from the manuals I have selected two sections from the *PCIC*: a. Cultural References and, b. Sociocultural Knowledge and Behaviour. To show the contents in a clear and schematic manner, the data has been placed in a table where the reference levels recollected by *PCIC* appear. It is indicated in the annex which cultural information is included in the manuals. As the *PCIC* defends: “Estos aspectos permiten al alumno el acceso a una realidad nueva sobre una base amplia e integradora en la que se imbrican los conocimientos, las habilidades y las actitudes que conforman un modo de competencia intercultural” (n.p.). It can be observed in the annex mentioned before, that the analyzed books do not incorporate all the contents presented by the *PCIC*, although they include the majority in an explicit or implicit mode. A book has a limited space where all the possible combination of real communication cannot be recollected. Guillén Díaz (2004, p. 849 cited in Solís, 2012, paragraph 33) explains:

[...] la enseñanza y aprendizaje de los contenidos culturales en el aula no estará orientada a que los alumnos lleguen a comportarse de igual manera que lo harían los nativos, reproduciendo sus comportamientos de forma mimética, sino a que sepan descodificarlos y comprenderlos a través del recurso a los referentes propios, los conocimientos anteriores, las vivencias y experiencias propias en la perspectiva de los contactos interculturales. Lo importante no será cuántos contenidos culturales se proporcionan a los alumnos en el aula de *Español como L2/LE*, sino la forma en cómo éstos acceden a ellos, cómo los adquieren y cómo pueden aplicarlos.

As we can see in the Annex, in general the Spanish books deal with the same contents that those seen in the English manuals, for example: festivities, interpersonal relationships and integration of other cultures. Although we find some exceptions as in the section Cultural References: on one hand, the Spanish books deal with population and ethnic minorities, and the English books do not. On the other hand, the English manuals speak about flora and fauna and the Spanish books do not. In conclusion, we can say that the Spanish manuals cover more specific content than the English books.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Culture

Trying to define culture is what several specialists (Norstrand, 1974; Seelye, 1976; Jorstad, 1981; R. Williams, 1983; Tylor, 1993) have done throughout time. Despite the advances in the research about this term, it is still a controversial concept. Raymond Williams (1983, p. 87) defined culture as “one of the two or three most complicated

words in English language”. William (1983, p. 51) explains in his definition the French and German origin of the word, the metaphorical meaning and its transitions:

its main use was still as a synonym for civilization: first in the abstract sense of a general process of becoming 'civilized or 'cultivated; second, in the sense which had already been established for civilization by the historians of the Enlightenment, in the popular C18 form of the universal histories, as a description of the secular process of human development.

An accurate definition of culture came from the pen of Tylor (1920, p. 1) as a: “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Others defined this term as a “learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people” (Lustig & Koester, 1999, p. 30). Culture was a term studied in isolation, although Kramsch (1993, p. 8) rejected this idea:

Whether it is called (Fr.) civilisation, (G.) Landeskunde, or (Eng.) culture, culture is often seen as mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself; cultural awareness becomes an educational objective in itself, separate from language. If, however, language is seen as a social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching.

It moves us to the first idea: language and culture are integral to one another. Also, Kramsch (1993, p. 9) established that “[o]nce we recognize that language use is indissociable from the creation and transmission of culture, we have to deal with a variety of cultures, some more international than others”. Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby (1999, p. 5) proposed two distinctions of culture:

One of the major conceptual distinctions to be noted is between what is commonly referred to as the culture-specific versus culture-general domains of learning. Culture-specific learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a given “target culture,” i.e., a particular culture group or community. Culture-general learning, on the other hand, refers to knowledge and skills that are more generalizable in nature and transferable across cultures.

It seemed clear that the main meaning of term culture is what emerges from a community, and language is the vehicle to transmit it. Concerning that, to learn a language also means to know how a community works and how to behave and react in any situation. For this reason, the context is extremely important as it has been defended by specialists like Hallyday and Hassan (1989) or Saville-Troike (1989). In addition, several studies reveal that the first step to learn and understand a new culture is to be aware of one's own culture and to consider people as cultural beings (Valdes, 1986). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002, p. 9) claim the recognition of a “critical cultural awareness” explaining that:

curious about and tolerant of other people's beliefs, values and behaviours
learners are, their own beliefs, values and behaviours are deeply embedded

and can create reaction and rejection. Because of this unavoidable response, intercultural speakers/mediators need to become aware of their own values and how these influence their views of other people's values

For students, it is difficult to build a new conception of, what could be called, a new world, in which concepts and behaviours are different from those that are part of oneself. Wiseman (2010, paragraph 14) argues: “ICC competence is not something innate within us, nor does it occur accidentally. Rather, there are necessary conditions that must exist before we are consciously and consistently competent in our intercultural interactions”. As often happens in the acquisition of a new language, they could be attracted by the novelty but afterwards, they could feel frustrated by misunderstandings and be overcome by the differences. Valdes (1986, xiii) defends:

What teachers need in order to achieve this result is a perspective of how language and culture affect one another in the human mind, considerable knowledge of cultural differences per se, specific traits of several different cultures, and some background and insight on how to use all of this in the classroom and in the teacher-student relationship.

Considering that, foreign language teachers must follow the program established by the *CEFR* whose main aim is to provide a common basis for foreign language education. For this reason, I will follow these parameters to show how culture is represented in the foreign language manuals. Politzer (cited in Saluveer, 2004, p. 9) concludes in the *Fifth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistic and Language Teaching*:

As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture in the social scientists' sense of the word) not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches wrong meaning.

4.2 Intercultural competence

Several studies have focused in the Intercultural Competence. Learner's ability to cope with situations in the target language leads to the discovery of a new competence that differs from the communicative competence. In addition, we see the appearance of new methods based in the intercultural competence as for example the Holistic Approach and Social Skills Approach. The Intercultural Communicative Competence main aim is to form intercultural speakers able to develop relationships between people of other countries and cultures avoiding stereotyping and considering the interlocutor as individual. The social interaction must be based on respect for individuals and the

comprehension of other people's perspective (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002). Berger (1979, cited in Wiseman, paragraph 16) defended:

Knowledge refers to our awareness or understanding of requisite information and actions to be interculturally competent. A knowledgeable communicator needs information about the people, the communication rules, the context, and the normative expectations governing the interaction with the member of the other culture. Without this information, the communicator will invariably make misattributions, choose incorrect communication strategies, violate rules of etiquette, or cause the loss of face for self or other. Further, the unknowing communicator may not be able to correctly ascribe the reasons for the errors or be able to remedy them. To obtain the needed knowledge to competently communicate, individuals need to be sensitive to the feedback from others.

In a Foreign Language Teaching class, the cultural information, cultural values, etc. come from books, among other things. This was defined by Cunningsworth (1995) as 'hidden curriculum'. Some specialists defend the effectiveness of that hidden curriculum, as for instance, Risager (cited in Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90) who claimed that "foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission with the educational system and in the rest of society". However, there are other specialist that considers course books as inefficient for cultural transmission:

The Durham researchers (Byram et al, 1991) found that the textbook was used extensively, functioned as instructional guide, and determined themes and sequence of material. Furthermore, extensive and frequent interviews with their young learners led the authors to conclude that the textbook influenced most of the internalized knowledge the students had of French culture. This they found particularly problematic because the textbook topics were frequently poorly chosen and represented a distorted view of reality by taking a tourist's perspective (e.g., focusing on topics such as restaurant meals or public transportation). The authors emphasize that the influence of the textbook on the range and depth of the cultural information should be cause for concern to all foreign language educators. (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby, 1999, p. 40)

Transmitting culture based in the low levels of poor materials is problematic considering that the learner will take that information as truth. "Kramsch concluded from her study that much of the content of these textbooks—and their use—could actually impede the development of positive cultural understanding." (Paige et al., 1999, p. 41).

In order to analyze the intercultural dimension portrayed in Course books, several specialists (Huhn, 1978; Cunningsworth, 1995) have created checklists as the following written by Huhn's (cited in Lara, 2008, p. 5):

Huhn's list (cited in Byram) includes the following criteria:

1. factual accuracy and up-to-date information;
2. avoidance (or relativisation) of stereotypes;

3. presentation of a realistic picture;
4. freedom from (or questioning) ideological tendencies;
5. presentation of phenomena in context rather than isolated facts;
6. relevance of historical material to contemporary society;
7. presentation of personalities as products of their age.

5. Cultural image in Spanish as a Foreign language manuals

It must be considered that the analysis of cultural references demands an attentive eye to images, texts, activities... because it responds to an attempt to determinate a concrete cultural paradigm. For example, if in an activity we find several images corresponding to famous singers from the Spanish World, where two of them are from Spain and five of them are from Latin America, it promotes a pan-Hispanic perspective, defending that the Spanish world is not only formed by people from Spain (as it could be found in old books). The activity provides implicitly cultural information. At the same time, the foreign language professor has the possibility to establish some comparisons between the cultural references presented and those from the students' own cultures. The big responsibility lies on the L2 teacher, who should transmit the knowledge to his/her students. However, it is something controversial also; I would like to mention what Kramsch (1993, p. 12) establishes:

Second language instructors, who teach their language to immigrants or visitors in their country, or to adults abroad, have tended to transmit, with the language, a view of the world that reflects only the values and cultural assumptions of the native speaker's society. Even as an international language, English instruction transmits such Anglo-Saxon values as efficiency, pragmatism, and individualism, that superimpose themselves on those of the learner's native culture. Foreign language instructors, on the other hand, who teach a second or a third foreign language to students in educational settings, generally transmit with that language a view of the world that mainly promotes the values and cultural assumptions of the L2 educational system.

Occasionally, it is assumed that some basic matters are known by the apprentice, as it sometimes happens with the greetings. However, in a beginner level A1-A2 where the learners have contact for the first time with the target language, it is a crucial matter. In the section 5.1.1.2. *El conocimiento sociocultural* from the *CEFR* (n.p.) it said:

Estrictamente hablando, el conocimiento de la sociedad y de la cultura de la comunidad o comunidades en las que se habla el idioma es un aspecto del conocimiento del mundo. Sin embargo, tiene la importancia suficiente como para merecer la atención del alumno, sobre todo porque, al contrario que muchos otros aspectos del conocimiento, es probable que no se encuentre en su experiencia previa y puede que esté distorsionado por los estereotipos.

The book *ELElab* starts by the different ways of greetings in diverse situations, as in class, with some friends, in a bar or in the medical office. The topic is contextualized. In

contrast, in the manual *Gente* greetings appear in the tenth unit in an implicit way, in other words, it appears in an activity where the concept of greeting is not clear enough because it is not the main aim of the activity. It does not provide any context for the learner to acquire that knowledge, although it is essential: “FLT always takes place in a particular context and the nature of the Intercultural Communicative Competence required is partly dependent on context” (Byram, 1997). In this case, it would be the teacher who should explain this topic.

At the end of the first unit of *ELElab* we found a world map with the following information:

- Spanish speaker countries
- 1-10% Spanish speaker population
- More than 10% Spanish speaker population
- Countries which have concentration of Spanish speakers

Creating such a graphic vision in the learner mind is essential for him/her to discover the importance of the target language and its expansion around the world. The book *Gente* also tackles this content but not in such specific way. It uses an activity to show a map where appears the Spanish speaker countries indicated in other color. This manual has a section called *Mundos en contacto* where shares more specific content about the Spanish Culture, in order to show the history, the everyday life, or traditions that helps the students to understand better the Spanish society.

In addition, both manuals include a CD for the students to practice listening comprehension and do some activities. What is interesting about these materials is that the voices recorded represents different varieties from Spanish: Argentina, Cuba, Chile, México and Spain. One of the most controversial topics in an ELE class is which variety of Spanish should be taught, for this reason *PCIC* (n.p.) recommends:

Se recomienda a los docentes aprovechar, hasta donde sea posible, la variedad de acentos y procedencias de los hablantes de español para demostrar también la validez del modelo que se describe y enseña (común y neutro). La visión de que el español es una lengua plural y diversa debe apoyar el planteamiento de que esta diversidad no impide el mutuo entendimiento de sus hablantes y que puede enseñarse y aprenderse para conseguir una comunicación satisfactoria con cualquiera de ellos.

The book *Gente* introduces this topic in the section mentioned before, *Mundos en contacto*, by an activity in which three versions of the same conversation are shown. In the manual *ELElab* this is also introduced by different activities. Throughout the different sections of the CD the Spanish varieties are combined. The conversations offered allow the representation of *seseo*, *voseo* and other aspects of pronunciation. The teacher can inquire into the topic and explain the main differences and usages. Moreover, other features of the Spanish pronunciation can be appreciated as: yeísmo, the neutralization of /s/ at the end of the word and the neutralization of intervocalic /d/. Although oral texts present different characteristics, it must follow some principles that can be found in the *CVC. Diccionario de términos clave de ELE*:

Por regla general, los textos orales que se ofrecen a los aprendientes de una lengua meta se caracterizan por unos rasgos que los diferencian de los que oyen los nativos; éstas son algunas de las características habituales: pronunciación estándar (no dialectal), vocalización forzada, ritmo discursivo lento y uniforme, entonación con oscilaciones exageradas; vocabulario controlado.

The standard variety from north-central Spain predominates in the recordings. This variety is used by Instituto Cervantes to elaborate the *PCIC*: “La selección de esta variedad se sustenta en los rasgos comunes que comparte con las restantes normas cultas del mundo hispánico y en su proyección dentro del modelo estandarizado prestigioso de la lengua para la propia comunidad hispánica” (n.p.).

Literature can be a big ally in Foreign Language Teaching. The use of short stories or poems helps to transmit cultural information. “Depending on the content or message of the poem, short story or play that teachers and facilitators select for use, these activities may even help learners understand how society and individuals can protect the dignity and human rights of people regardless of their cultural affiliations.” (Barrett, Byram, Lazar, Mompoin-Gaillard and Phillippou, 2014, p. 42) In the book *Gente* two poems by Neruda appear in one activity. The students should read and try to write a similar poem.

Religion is an important cultural aspect scarcely treated in ELE manuals. In both books, the only religious content that can be found is the Camino de Santiago, which is included in a unit related with traveling. The description offered in both coursebooks is very similar; it highlights its cultural value and the important places of the route. The Camino de Santiago was declared World Heritage by the UNESCO in 1993. “At the same time, the Camino has been awarded the Galardón de Itinerario Europeo by the European Council and the Honorific Title of Europe’s Calle Mayor”³. Its cultural value is indisputable, in fact, nowadays it is an important destination. However, it seems to be remarkable by other factors apart from religion like sport, nature or different life experiences. Religion is a controversial topic, but by choosing the Camino de Santiago both *ELElab* and *Gente* remark not only religious importance, but also the cultural significance. The section 3.3 *Espiritualidad y religión* from Saberes y Comportamientos Culturales del *PCIC* indicates the specific religious content that must cover an A1-A2 level: “las principales religiones y creencias religiosas y los centros de reunión de fieles y de peregrinación: iglesias, mezquitas, sinagogas...”. The analyzed books accomplish the last point; the book *Gente* includes the terms: romantic churches and gothic cathedrals; and in the book *ELElab*: Apostol, monastery, cathedral. However, any references to other religions with an important presence in Spain are not included.

I would like to highlight something about the way in which *Gente* presents the Camino de Santiago: the lack of any female figure. The text includes a drawing of the route with eight male characters walking through the Camino. In the proposed activities there are also no women present. To my view, the female figure should appear also

³ Information available at: <http://www.patrimoniocastillayleon.com/en/camino-de-santiago>.

because it could lead in misunderstandings. The idea in this section seems to be “the Camino de Santiago is a male matter”. By contrast, the manual *ELElab* includes an activity where a man appears and another where a woman appears. In addition, in the pictures we can find both a female and a male peregrine. In Cunningsworth's checklist (1995, p. 92) of cultural values in text books we find, among others, the following question: “Are women given equal prominence to men in all aspects of the coursebook?” If the course book is *Gente*, the answer is no. Men's figure predominates in most of the aspects of the book. In images, texts, drawings, etc. men are the protagonists. In different sections of the book we can find stereotypical images of women. For instance, in the cultural section *Mundos en Contacto* (page 78), text where we find represented the normal things that Spanish people do daily, such as to drink a coffee in the office break, etc. The text represents the old stereotype of the wife cooking at home and the husband working in an Office. The drawing that appears under the text is a woman wearing an apron bringing a drink to her husband who seems to be suffering of stomach ache. In this section, *Mundos en Contacto*, there is no page that includes only pictures or drawings of women. However, we can find several pages that only include male pictures or drawings (pp. 19, 58, 59, 68, 69, 89). In another activity (page 105) appears some vignettes and two of them incite the gender stereotypes. Three men speaking at the office is the image of the first vignette. The fifth vignette is a woman telling her servant to answer the phone. The servant is a woman too.

On the contrary, in *ELElab* women are given equal prominence to men in all aspects of the book. One example of it can be found on page 22, where there are four images eradicating stereotypes: the first image is a woman working as a doctor and the last photo is a man cleaning. It does not only avoid gender stereotypes, but also the stereotypes related to old people: the third photo is an old man using a computer. The positive thing of this different way of portrait women is that it allows the learner to develop a critical perspective. “Materials from different origins with different perspectives should be used together to enable learners to compare and to analyze the materials critically. It is more important that learners acquire skills of analysis than factual information”. (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002, p. 19).

6. Contrast between English as Foreign language manuals

It is known that English is the international language of the world, and for some decades several specialists have maintained it (Bowen, 1976; Richards, 1978). Phillips defended:

the dominance of English [is] asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Here structured refers broadly to material properties (for example institutions, financial allocations) and cultural to immaterial or ideological properties (for example, attitudes, pedagogic principles) (1992, p. 47, cited in Dick and Titze, 2013, p. 3)

In fact, Kachru and Nelson (2001, p. 9) defined English as “the most widely taught and read, and spoken language that the world has ever known”. However, due to that internationality it is complicated to associate English to a specific cultural sphere, because English not only represents America, Canada, England, Ireland or Australia. English represents and belongs to any country that uses it. Even if English only represented those countries, the variety of different beliefs, values and perspectives would not allow to englobe it as a specific culture. As Smith (1982, p. 102) wrote:

EIL then, can summarily be defined as that English, in all its linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects, which is used as a vehicle for communication between non-native speakers only, as well as between any combination of native and non-native speakers. When any language becomes international in character (Smith, 1978) it cannot be bound to any one culture. It is often claimed that language and culture are inextricably tied together and we completely agree. However, the implication has been that English is therefore inextricably tied to American, British, Australian, New Zealand, or Canadian culture. Stated in that way it seems ridiculous, because we know there are many cultures in these countries and that any culture use English as its vehicle.

Having this in mind, we assume that culture and language form part of the same being, and also, that culture is not a stable and learnable amount of facts, as it was stated in early models (Brooks, 1975). English is the vehicle that transmits the thoughts, the intentions, the manifestation of different communities, being adaptable to any society.

Provided that, it would be interesting to see how the culture question is represented in the selected English as foreign language manuals: *New Headway* provides a very international perspective throughout the book. It can be said that in the manual the learner finds a welcoming atmosphere due to the variety of cultures where she or he can also find information about her/his own culture being part of a whole. Mainly, the perspective offered is that of a cross-cultural community. As an instance, some people appear in one activity explaining why they want to learn English: a boy from Brazil affirms that he wants to learn English because it is an international language. Therefore, *New Headway* reinforces this image not only implicitly but also explicitly. Moreover, we also find a woman from Moscow whose reason for learning English is because of her job. Here, there is a reinforcement of the importance of learning English for employment around the world. Nowadays, to learn English is a main requisite in people's academic career or career path. As the language of business, English will open up the world to people in any field of employment. Although, *Speakout* also provides an international perspective, it is not presented in the same way as *New Headway* does. Cortazzi and Jin (1999, pp. 204-210, cited in Lara, 2008, p. 4) divide foreign language textbooks into three categories:

- Textbooks based on the source culture: the textbooks that are produced at a national level for a particular country. (Learners are taught how to talk about their own culture to visitors to their country rather than be prepared to encounter other cultures. Although such textbooks help students to become aware of their own cultural identity, they do not develop students' intercultural awareness.)

- Textbooks based on the target culture: these textbooks usually focus on one or two target cultures (e.g., the United Kingdom, United States). (Though widely used all over the world, they are often criticised for their commercial nature and seen as publishers' promotional materials.)
- Textbooks aimed at the international target culture: books that include a wide variety of cultures set in English speaking countries or in countries where English is not a first or a second language, but is used as an international language.

I will include *Speakout* in the second category, because its cultural content seems to have been selected to promote BBC. Although it provides authentic material to teach culture or to understand its context and intention: a CD and a DVD from the BBC, Video Podcasts and the *Speakout* website. “Kramsch (1991b) and Robinson (1981) remind us, however, that the use of authentic materials needs to be accompanied by an understanding of how one derives meaning from them. The danger of inaccurate or monocultural interpretations of the materials is always present.” (cited in Paige et al., p.40). I will include *New Headway* in the third category because it presents English as an international language.

It can be noticed that in *Speakout* several images and contents from Hong Kong appear giving to it a special importance. Rather than point out English as an international language, it is reflecting the connections between Hong Kong and the language. The reason of this could be that *Speakout* wanted to provide a positive concern with what was a British colony. However, in *New Headway* this cannot be noticed.

When the manuals show an important famous person, they are mostly from the United States or Great Britain as for example: Michael Jackson, Carl Lewis, Mary Anderson, Charlotte Brontë, etc. However, it also presents people from other countries that are very significant figures in history as Yuri Gagarin or Albert Einstein.

New Headway provides some activities in which people from different countries give information about the same topic, as for example the seasons. Barrett et al. 2014 pg. 40 (2014) recommend this type of activities: “While variations on this activity develop participants’ observation and communication skills, they also promote analysis from multiple perspectives, enhance empathy and non-judgmental attitudes, and highlight the misleading nature of first impressions and stereotypes”. In both manuals, we find several roleplays. These activities help students to develop intercultural competence and the ability to emphasize. “When appropriately implemented, such role plays, simulations and drama also raise awareness of and build knowledge about similarities and differences, assumptions and prejudices, and verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions”. (Barrett et al., 2014, pp. 41-42).

An important aspect to highlight is that both *New Headway* and *Speakout* give women equally prominence to men. Especially *New Headway* portrays independent hard-working women that are present throughout all the course book, breaking with stereotypes: the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, a woman who plays in a rugby

team, the woman who invented the windscreen wiper, etc. In any section both women and men are represented in images, as protagonists in activities, or in texts.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen how the analyzed manuals, following *PCIC*'s and *CEFR*'s pattern of cultural references, show culture encouraging empathy and creating an intercultural competence. On the one hand, the Spanish as a foreign language books present the Spanish culture as a homogeneous mixture between the South American and Spanish traditions and manner of life. Although some references to other cultures appear in some activities in the manuals, the predominant image in exercises, pictures, listening or texts is that of Spain and South America. On the other hand, the cultural image that English manuals present is an international culture unified through a language. English as the medium of world's expression. Finally, I would like to mention that some of the general objectives of the analysis have been accomplished as: the manuals represent the target language culture in a realistic manner. In both analyses one of the two books represents culture in a more realistic way than the other. Cultural content is represented with the same importance as the grammar or vocabulary content and comparisons between the target and the inner culture are included. These foreign language teaching manuals provides an important cultural awareness. All of this without forgetting that "language in this process plays a fascinating and complex double role: it is a medium for as well as shaper of culture". (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby, 1999, p. 4).

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ANNEX 1

Information of Cultural Referents established by *PCIC*⁴:

	<i>Español ELElab</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>New Headway Elementary Student's Book</i>	<i>Speakout Elementary Students' Book</i>
Referentes Culturales				
1. Conocimientos Generales Climas: estaciones, imágenes asociadas al invierno, etc.		Unit 9	Unit 4	Unit 4
Particularidades geográficas: accidentes geográficos en los Andes, el río Amazonas, etc.	Unit 1, 2	Unit 3	Unit 3	
Fauna y flora			Unit 10	Unit 4
Población: pueblos, minorías étnicas	Unit 9	Unit 8		
Gobierno y política: Poderes del Estado e instituciones		Unit 1	Unit 7	
Organización territorial y administrativa: platos típicos, fiestas populares	Unit 6	Unit 6	Unit 9	Unit 1
Capitales, ciudades y pueblos: ciudades con proyección internacional, lugares de interés histórico, artístico y cultural	Unit 4	Unit 1	Unit 10	
Economía e industria: sistema de pesos y medidas, monedas, etc.	Unit 7	Unit 6	Unit 9	
Medicina y salud: Sistemas sanitarios, Seguridad Social, Sanidad Pública				

⁴ Available at:

http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/plan_curricular/niveles/10_referentes_culturales_inventario.htm

Educación: Institutos de ESO, centros de formación para adultos, universidades	Unit 1			
Medios de comunicación: Principales periódicos, canales de tv de mayor audiencia, cadenas de radio de mayor difusión	Unit 11		Unit 1	
Medios de transporte: Aeropuertos importantes, redes ferroviarias de los países, puertos representativos	Unit 4	Unit 3		
Religión: Religiones mayoritarias	Unit 9	Unit 8		
Política lingüística: lenguas oficiales y cooficiales, organismos públicos e instituciones para el cuidado y fomento de la lengua	Unit 2			
2. Acontecimientos y protagonistas del pasado y del presente. Hitos fundamentales de la Historia de los países hispanos	Unit 1, 9	Unit 8	Unit 10	
Acontecimientos sociales y culturales y personajes de la vida social y cultural	Unit 9	Unit 11	Unit 10	Unit 4
Acontecimientos y personajes históricos y legendarios	Unit 1, 9	Unit 1	Unit 6	
3. Productos y creaciones culturales: grandes autores y obras literarias, valores e impacto de los grandes personajes en la cultura y lenguajes populares	Unit 2, 9	Unit 1, 6, 7, 11	Unit 6, 7, 11, 13	
Música: clásica, popular, cantantes más conocidos	Unit 10	Unit 1, 11, 13	Unit 6, 7, 11	Unit 2, 6
Cine y artes escénicas: películas, actores y actrices con proyección internacional, teatro, danza	Unit 1, 3, 10	Unit 1, 6, 11	Unit 7, 10	Unit 6
Arquitectura: obras arquitectónicas y arquitectos con proyección internacional		Unit 1, 3	Unit 10	Unit 2
Artes plásticas: pintura, escultura y fotografía	Unit 1	Unit 3		

B) Saberes y comportamientos socioculturales				
1. Identificación personal: nombre y apellidos, documento de identificación	Unit 1	Unit 1	Unit 1	Unit 1
Unidad familiar: concepto y estructura	Unit 3	Unit 10	Unit 1	Unit 3
Calendario: días festivos, horarios y ritmos cotidianos	Unit 2	Unit 8		
Comida y bebidas: Cocina y alimentos, horarios	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 2, 9	Unit 1, 5
Educación y Cultura: centros de enseñanza, bibliotecas, museos, centros culturales	Unit 4	Unit 3, 9	Unit 1	
Trabajo y economía: horarios, descansos, vacaciones	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 3	Unit 2
Actividades de ocio, hábitos y aficiones: concepto de ocio, actividades realizadas, espectáculos, deporte	Unit 5	Unit 5, 6	Unit 4	Unit 2, 6
Medios de comunicación e información: prensa escrita, televisión y radio	Unit 11		Unit 1	Unit 1
La vivienda: tipos de vivienda, divisiones y habitaciones en la vivienda	Unit 3	Unit 2, 10	Unit 5	Unit 4
Servicios: instalaciones deportivas, parques y zonas verdes, mobiliario urbano, mantenimiento y limpieza de espacios públicos				
Compras: tiendas y establecimientos, precios y modalidades de pago, hábitos de consumo	Unit 4, 7	Unit 3, 4	Unit 2, 5, 8	Unit 1, 4
Salud e higiene	Unit 8	Unit 5, 9	Unit 4, 13	Unit 5
Viajes, alojamiento y transporte	Unit 9, 12	Unit 2,3	Unit 14	Unit 1, 7

Ecología y medio ambiente: parques naturales y rutas		Unit 1, 9	Unit 12	Unidad 4
Servicios sociales y programas de ayuda: atención a personas mayores, a inmigrantes, a personas sin recursos económicos				
Seguridad y lucha contra la delincuencia: cuerpos de seguridad		Unit 9		
2.Relaciones interpersonales Relaciones sentimentales, familiares y de amistad. Relaciones entre clases sociales generaciones y sexos. Relaciones entre vecinos y desconocidos.	Unit 1, 3	Unit 4, 10	Unit 1, 2, 4, 6	Unit 3, 4
Identidad colectiva: participación ciudadana y pluralismo	Unit 1, 2			
Tradición y cambio social: signos, símbolos y objetos relacionados con costumbres, nuevas formas de disfrute del tiempo libre	Unit 5, 8	Unit 1, 4	Unit 12	
Espiritualidad y religión: principales religiones	Unit 9	Unit 8		
Presencia e integración de las culturas de países y pueblos extranjeros: tipos de restaurantes extranjeros, productos culturales extranjeros	Unit 5	Unit 1	Unit 5, 6	Unit 1, 2, 5
Fiestas, ceremonias y celebraciones: fiestas populares, ceremonias y ritos funerarios, celebraciones y actos conmemorativos	Unit 7	Unit 2	Unit 8	Unit 3