

Luisa Fernanda Galvis Contreras, Andrés Mauricio Guarnizo
Fernández and Karen Michell Villamizar Mantilla

ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS THROUGH A CULTURAL
PERSPECTIVE IN NORTH OF SANTANDER, COLOMBIA: PHENOMENOLOGICAL
RESEARCH

Facultad de Educación, Universidad Santo

Tomás

Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de aprendizaje

Author Note

Luisa Fernanda Galvis <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1670-7251>
luisagalvis@usantotomas.edu.co

Andrés Mauricio Guarnizo <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3466-9572>
andresguarnizo@usantotomas.edu.co

Karen Michell Villamizar <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2343-0287>
karenvillamizar@usantotomas.edu.co

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Introduction

In the evolving globalized world, the importance of learning a second language has become widely recognized. English has emerged as a lingua franca, facilitating communication and opening doors to numerous opportunities. In the Colombian context, the teaching of English as a foreign language has gained significant attention in recent years, with a focus on enhancing language proficiency and communicative skills. However, it is equally essential to consider the dimension inherent in language learning, as language and culture are intricately intertwined.

The importance of culture and intercultural awareness in the language classroom is not a recent topic of study in EFL, and it has been modified in relation to factors in various foreign language teaching methodologies. Henao et al. (2019) stated that the development of intercultural and cultural awareness was a key component in ensuring the success of the latest version of the Colombian National Bilingual Program 2015-2025 (NBP), and the textbook series English, Please! was promoted as a breakthrough in this context.

The region of North Santander serves as an interesting context for this research, given its unique cultural heritage and diverse population. This study aims to look at the cultural components present in the current English textbooks used in high school grades in a private school named ISSJB and a public institution referred to in this project as "GGV." Both schools are located in Cúcuta, North Santander. Moreover, this proposal seeks to assess the effectiveness of the cultural and intercultural components in English textbooks and reflect on the inclusion of the local cultural environment.

Additionally, this research project will involve engaging teachers and students from several educational institutions in the North Santander region. Their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of English textbooks will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of cultural content in fostering intercultural competence and understanding.

Along with culture, this research focuses on the analysis of English textbooks, specifically NatGeo's

Time Zones and English, please! These textbooks play an important role by providing common linguistic and cultural input to teaching. Textbooks implemented in second-language classrooms should have the potential to connect teachers' knowledge and expertise with their students' lives, needs, expectations, and language levels. Textbooks and materials should not only demonstrate linguistic content but also cultural richness.

The findings of this study can contribute to the development of more culturally inclusive English language teaching materials and approaches in the region, with the goal of enhancing students' language proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By recognizing the importance of cultural perspectives in language learning, students can be better prepared for meaningful cross-cultural interactions in an increasingly interconnected world.

Main Objective:

To determine aspects related to the cultural and intercultural component in English textbooks in private and public institutions in Cucuta - Northern Santander. /

Question

How do the key cultural and intercultural components impact students' learning experiences in a private and a public institution in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander?

Specific objectives:

To compare and analyze teachers' and students' perceptions and opinions regarding the cultural component in EFL textbooks in private and public schools in Colombia.

To analyze the suitability of cultural contents in EFL textbooks implemented in high schools.

To determine possible challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks from an intercultural perspective in a private school from North of Santander, Colombia.

Literature Review

In this research project titled Analysis of the Use of English Textbooks in North of Santander, Colombia: A Phenomenological Study, we are exploring three main ideas that are crucial for understanding language, culture, and education.

First, researchers are looking at how language can be learned in a more interesting and effective way by including elements of culture. This means helping students not only learn the language but also understand the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of the people who speak that language. Thus, teaching a language requires the development of not only linguistic codes but also cultural and intercultural components. Yank & Chen (2019) stated that “the knowledge of a language and its culture is ever-changing over time. A good instructor should also be a lifelong learner and constantly update the knowledge of the subject” (p.11). Unfortunately, it is a practice that not all language teachers in Colombia do. Nurjanah & Umanemah (2019) criticized in their article that most language teachers currently focus on improving the four skills of students and do not explain the culture when they teach a language, especially in learning English. Consequently, students are unaware of the culture and create barriers between their own culture and the culture of the language that they are learning. One of the sources that can bridge the cultural awareness of the teacher and students is a textbook.

Textbooks can be considered as the guide of the process itself; it is a tool that benefits both teachers and students. Mithan (2020) defined a textbook as "a teaching tool that facilitates both

effective teaching as well as independent learning. The teacher can integrate the textbook into all stages of the teaching process" (p. 25)

Regarding prior studies, we classified the literature review into three categories: Culture integrating learning, bilingual learning process, and textbooks.

Culture integrating learning

Culture plays a significant role in teaching language as it is closely intertwined with language learning and communication. Moreover, it provides a context for understanding the language's nuances, idioms, and social norms. Incorporating cultural aspects into language teaching not only enhances students' language proficiency but also promotes intercultural competence and a deeper appreciation for the target language. Deoksoon (2020) asserted: "Educating the 'whole person,' when teaching language, requires engaging with the cultural ways of life within which that language lives since people use language to participate in and to create social, emotional, and ethical activities" (p. 1). Many language researchers have talked about the importance of integrating culture and intercultural knowledge into teaching and learning a language.

Henao et al. (2019) in their paper, not only highlighted the importance of culture and intercultural awareness in the language but also mentioned that this component must be included in the material used in class. They stated that textbooks and materials should ideally demonstrate respect for and interaction with local culture, history, linguistic diversity, values, and traditions. This idea is aligned with the one mentioned in Soto-Molina et al.'s (2020) inquiry; they found that in most textbooks analyzed in their research, the presence of local or Latin American culture is very scarce. "If it is understood that English is a language for international communication, a description of different sociocultural contexts must be provided as an extension of the places, cities, and cultural devices presented in pictures and dialogues which belong to English language mainstream

cultures” (Soto-Molina et al., 2020, p. 10). They concluded that the absence of the learners’ own culture can be experienced also as a lack of context-based reality to react or respond to the target language without experiencing an acculturation process.

In this way, these authors showed us the importance of extending the intercultural dimension of language teaching in scenarios where textbooks are culturally biased and used as acculturation instruments that favor the learning process itself. Karacabey et al. (2019) affirmed, “Education and schools need to consider the diversity of people and students in society (race, ethnic origin, class, gender, language, physical disability, etc.) and to develop appropriate educational programs, teaching and mechanisms” (p.2).

Bilingual Education

Bilingual education has emerged as a crucial topic in contemporary educational discourse, aiming to foster linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding among students. It involves providing instruction in two languages, typically the first language and a second language, to facilitate academic achievement and promote bilingualism. As noted by Johnson (2022), a renowned expert in bilingual education, "bilingual education not only enhances language skills but also cultivates cognitive flexibility, multicultural awareness, and academic success" (p. 35). By immersing themselves in two languages simultaneously, children develop an enhanced understanding of both cultures and gain valuable communication tools that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Bilingual education has some benefits, Santoso (2006) listed two benefits of bilingual education: exposing children to many languages and having them participate in different teaching and learning methodologies. It is also crucial to emphasize that the teacher is the key to executing multilingual activities successfully, both within and outside of the classroom. Theoretical and

practical expertise is required of multilingual educators. A teacher needs to be aware of five things, per Brisk and Harrington (2010): (1) literacy development; (2) the value of being bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural; (3) language interaction in a bilingual learner; (4) reading and writing proficiency; and (5) factors impacting literacy development. Teachers need to be aware of these aspects given that it allows teachers to create a more effective, inclusive, and responsive educational environment that fits to the diverse needs of bilingual learners, promoting their overall academic and personal growth.

The importance of teachers in bilingual education stems from various factors that significantly impact students' language development, academic success, and cultural understanding. Firstly, teachers serve as language models and facilitators, providing students with exposure to both the target language, and their native language. Through effective instruction and classroom practices, teachers can create a supportive learning environment that fosters language acquisition, vocabulary development, and language fluency. Moreover, teachers possess the cultural knowledge and sensitivity necessary to navigate the complexities of different cultural contexts, fostering a sense of belonging and identity among students from diverse backgrounds (García, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2018).

Finally, the field of bilingual education was evolving and adapting to meet the needs of diverse student populations. That is why new trends and strategies are being used to get more students. Kannan & Munday (2018) affirmed that "The current state of second language education has been greatly influenced by the pervasiveness of cloud-based technologies, AI applications, NLP approach, networked communication, Open Educational Resources, and improved access. " (p. 15)

This research aims to address two key aspects related to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Colombia. Firstly, it aims to demonstrate the importance and influence that

textbooks have on bilingual education. Secondly, it seeks to identify potential challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks, especially from an intercultural perspective, within a private school in North Santander, Colombia.

This research aims to address two key aspects related to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in Colombia. Firstly, it shows the importance and influence that textbooks have on bilingual education and to identify potential challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks, especially from an intercultural perspective, within a private school in North Santander, Colombia.

Textbooks

Bilingual textbooks play a crucial role in bilingual education by providing resources and materials that support language learning and content acquisition in multiple languages. Larrea et al. (2020) stated, "Textbooks are effective tools for educational practice" (p. 2). Bilingual textbooks are designed for specific language needs and purposes. Trinova (2022) considered that a good textbook should correspond with the learners' needs.

Language learning is a multifaceted process that extends beyond the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. It encompasses the exploration of cultural nuances, social practices, and communication styles that shape a community's language use by Bialystok (2017). In the context of North of Santander, where English language education is increasingly prevalent, it becomes imperative to analyze the role of textbooks in this intricate dynamic. When we use language, we can deliver our opinion and create meaningful communication with all peoples in our social environment as well as the cultural beliefs and practices of the communities of which we are a part: our family, social groups, and other associations (Tambunam, 2019)

Moreover, this research examines English textbooks from a cultural standpoint, by analyzing the content, themes, and cultural references presented in these textbooks, it reaches to identify how they intersect with the region's cultural fabric. Furthermore, Mahmood et al. (2012) affirmed, “Culture provides grounds for meaningful content, learning materials, and class discussion. Introducing cultural elements in the EFL classrooms may help teachers recreate practical situations, partaking in which could enable learners to become better intercultural communicators” (p.35).

The idea above demonstrates the target culture should be related to the student's own culture providing with a dual perspective and make them realize that their point of view is not the only one; there are always multiple interpretations of a fact.

Finally, to carry out the analysis of the cultural content of English as a foreign language textbook, there are several approaches and sights as those materials can be divided into two different ones regarding their creation. Textbooks can be regional or global in scope. International or global textbooks are written for a global market, whereas local textbooks are written entirely or partially by non-native authors and follow the guidelines of a country's national curriculum. They also have characteristics of that country's culture. To determine whether cultural teaching has been gradually incorporated or how it is being developed in the classroom, this study utilized the culture checklist provided by Paige et al. (1999) and Lee (2009), which examines three main components, along with the methodology of content analysis.

Method

This research follows a qualitative design, defined as a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems by gathering participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). This study sought to analyze and understand

foreign language teachers' thoughts on the English textbooks used in class and their relationship with the cultural approach.

This research was framed under a phenomenology design. According to Creswell (2013), phenomenology is a research approach that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The main objective is to describe the characteristics of the specific phenomenon. Consequently, this study aimed to describe the experiences that some EFL teachers and students have had with the use of EFL textbooks and their cultural components. Moreover, it allowed researchers to analyze the use of two textbooks, *English Please* and *Time Zones*, within two schools in Cúcuta, and how these cultural components influence both the development of the class and the students' learning process.

Context

The context is composed of two types of schools, a public and a private which are located in Cúcuta, North of Santander. The first school named “ISSJB” is a private school that is equipped with comfortable infrastructure, different spaces, and some technological devices that allow students to have a high-quality education. The school program aims at developing human beings with high critical thinking, which is why the focus is the development of three different competencies: International business, educative software development, and natural science deepening. Regarding the EFL context, students receive from four to five hours of English classes per week, the textbook used is called “*Time Zones*”. It is a series of books from National Geographic publishing houses, these books are aimed at encouraging students to develop not only students' language skills but also their critical thinking through activities that are contextualized with real-life situations of citizens around the world. Moreover, students are involved in bilingual experiences.

The second one is “GGV” a public school situated in the heart of Cúcuta. Its campus includes classrooms, a science lab, a library, and a green area that promotes recreation. This school offers a wide range of academic programs from preschool to high school. Its teaching approach is based on updated teaching methods that encourage exploration and discovery. This school strictly follows highly structured academic standards that are nearly always reflected on students’ performance on national tests such as PRUEBAS SABER. Moreover, the school program is committed to academic excellence, inclusion, and the formation of responsible citizens who contribute to Colombia's future. Focusing on the ESL program, the students attend 4 English hours per week, and the textbook implemented is English, please! A series of books developed by MEN and the British Council intended for 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. This book is aligned with basic foreign language standards and its main objective is that students achieve B1 level. Its syllabus is focused on the frame of a topic-based syllabus in which students develop interdisciplinary projects while they learn English and enhance their culture. (MEN, 2016).

The participants were six teachers. Their ages ranged between 25 – 45 years old. They taught in high school, especially in ninth to eleventh grade. Four of them have at least a university degree in areas related to teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Applied Linguistics, or Education. The others have postgraduate diplomas, such as specializations in language teaching with an emphasis on English. A notable feature is that all teachers are familiar with different pedagogical approaches, including the communicative method, project-based learning, and student-centered teaching. This diversity in their training and experience allows them to approach the use of textbooks from multiple perspectives. These participants have demonstrated an active interest in integrating cultural aspects into their English lessons. Hence, they have carried out activities and projects that promote intercultural understanding.

In addition to the teachers, ten students whose ages range between 15-17 years old were selected. These participants belonged to the schools mentioned before, they were chosen considering their high academic performance and their perception of working with the textbooks mentioned above. They have also participated in extracurricular activities such as speech contests, discussions, and spelling bee. It's important to note that both schools work with different textbooks and present a different background regarding English learning and teaching.

Table 1

Participants academic background and professional experience

Participants	Academic background	Professional experience
Teacher 1	Master applied linguistics	3 years
Teacher 2	Bachelor of Arts	3 Years
Teacher 3	Master in ICT	3 Years
Teacher 4	Bachelor of Arts	5 Years
Teacher 5	Master in English as a Foreign language	10 Years
Teacher 6	Master in ICT	5 Years

Note. The chart below contains information about teachers' academic backgrounds and professional experience

Table 2

Public school students' academic background and English textbook

Public- school students	Grade	Textbook
S1	10°	English Please
S2	10°	English Please
S3	11°	English Please
S4	11°	English Please
S5	9°	English Please

Note. The chart below contains information about students who belong to public schools.

Table 3

Private school students' academic background and English textbook

Private school students	Grade	Textbook
S1	10°	Time zones
S2	9°	Time zones
S3	10°	Time zones
S4	11°	Time zones
S5	9°	Time zones

Note. The chart below contains the information about students who belong to private school.

Instruments

In the field of academic inquiry, a thorough research methodology frequently consists of a collection of instruments and methods that collectively provide light on examination. In order to collect data three different instruments were used: Semi-structured interviews, surveys, and non-participant observation.

These research instruments serve as the pillars upon which we construct our investigations, facilitating the extraction of valuable insights, perspectives, and data to enrich our scholarly pursuits.

Semi-structured interview

According to Magaldi and Berler (2020), an exploratory interview is a semi-structured interview. Which is normally focused on the major issue that offers a broad pattern and that is generally based on a guide. Additionally, Megaldi and Berler (2020) assert that the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to dig deep for discovery while having relevant paths offered beforehand. This instrument provided the researchers with valuable information about students' and teacher's perceptions regarding the uses of textbooks and the development of the cultural component in class

Surveys

Surveys represent a quantitative and structured approach to data collection, enabling researchers to gather a wealth of information from a broader population. By administering standardized questionnaires or instruments to respondents, researchers gain access to a diverse array of perspectives and attitudes.

Dewaele (2018) asserts that the open online survey offers the benefit of anonymity because there is no face-to-face contact between the researchers and the participants, and there is no coercion to take part, which raises the degree of honesty in responses. There is less probability that participants will be enticed to embellish or falsify the answers as there are no social repercussions for participating.

It is important to highlight that the questions administered in the survey and interview were made based on the model of culture checklist created by Paige et al. (1999) and Lee (2009) which is mentioned in Raigon's (2018) work *Analyzing cultural aspects in EFL textbooks a skill-bases analysis*.

That study suggested that the analysis of culture in textbooks requires to examine three main components: Culture in general, big C categories, and small c categories. Cultural in general assesses the knowledge that is widespread and can be transferred to other cultures; the specific culture covers both big "C" and small "c" aspects related to a particular community or group.

Furthermore, before the application of the interviews, the following checklist was shown and explained to the participants.

Table 4

Culture checklist proposed by Paige et al (1999) and Lee (2009)

CULTURE IN GENERAL			BIG C CATEGORIES	SMALL c CATEGORIES
Knowledge:			Ethnic groups	Individualism/collectivism
✓	Cultural		Geography/history/politics/regional	Equality
learning		variations		Fairness
✓	Cultural		Arts/crafts/ monuments/ historical	Competition
adjustment stages		sites/		Materialism
(Shock) Cultural identity		media/ Icons/ Celebrities	Literature, films, music and mass	Confrontation
Behavior			Currency/shopping/market/industry/ better)	Novelty oriented (newer is
✓	Culture		business	Self-improvement
learning or dealing with			Urban life/ infrastructure/ housing/	



Intercultural stress. ✓ adaptability	Cultural	transportation Education Dress-style Food Festivals/celebrations/holidays/ ceremonies Social customs Leisure/ sports Family Non-verbal communication	Nurture (up-bringing, education) Time Level of formality Communication styles: direct vs. indirect Rules-regulation oriented. Male-oriented Result-oriented
Attitudes: ✓ attitude toward cultural learning	Positive		
✓ attitude toward cultural differences	Positive		

Note. The chart above shows the aspects took into account to analyze culture in textbooks.

Non-participant observations

Hak T (2007) stated that observations are particularly useful to gain insights into a certain setting and actual behavior— as opposed to reported behavior or opinions. It involves systematically watching and recording behaviors, events, or phenomena as they naturally occur without any direct manipulation by the researcher. Van Der Geest (2006) stated that the advantages of conducting observations include minimizing the distance between the researcher and the researched, the potential discovery of topics that the researcher did not realize were relevant, and gaining deeper insights into the real-world dimensions of the research problem.

During this project, the observations made had as a purpose of examining the book contents and the methodology implemented by the teacher when using the books.

Table 6

Instruments to collect data

Research Objectives	Data Collection Technique	Instrument s to collect data	Purpose	Source, date, and link where the instrument is housed.
------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------	--



To compare and analyze teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the cultural component of EFL textbooks in private and public schools in Colombia. To identify possible challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks from an intercultural perspective in a private school from North of Santander, Colombia.	Interview	Semi-structured interview	The semi-structured interview will be carried out to know, compare, and analyze the teachers' perspectives on the cultural component that is contained in the textbooks of English as a foreign language in public and private schools in the Norte de Santander department - Colombia and the same way to identify possible challenges and limitations in books from an intercultural perspective.	Date: November 10th, 2023 Link: Teacher Interview: Teachers' semi-structured interview Students Interview: Student's semi-structured interview
To compare and analyze teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the cultural component of EFL textbooks in private and public schools in Colombia. To identify possible challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks from an intercultural perspective in a private school from North of Santander, Colombia. To analyze the suitability of cultural contents in EFL textbooks implemented in high schools.	Survey	Questionnaire	The purpose of the survey is to gather comprehensive data that supports the broader objective of enhancing intercultural education and ensuring that EFL textbooks effectively incorporate cultural perspectives in the context of North of Santander, Colombia.	Date: February 13th Students and Teachers survey link: https://forms.gle/hQZrpZs2TvySgMRU6 Teachers' survey Format.pdf
To compare and analyze teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the cultural component of EFL textbooks in private and public schools in Colombia. To identify possible challenges and limitations in EFL textbooks from an intercultural perspective in a private school from	Classroom observation	Non-participant Observation	The purpose of class observations is to provide a direct, real-world view of how cultural content is being integrated into EFL classrooms. It allows you to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods and identify areas where improvements can be made to achieve the objectives of enhancing cultural and intercultural education	Date: -Private school nonparticipant observation: November 3rd -Public school nonparticipant Observation: November 6th Links: Student observation link: Non-participant observation format

North of Santander,
Colombia.

To analyze
the suitability of cultural
contents in EFL
textbooks implemented
in high schools.

in North of Santander,
Colombia.

Note. The chart above contains important information about the instruments used in the research as their purpose, the source where are housed, and the date of the implementation.

Analysis and Findings

This research was framed under a phenomenological study. It had as its main objective to determine the aspects related to the cultural and intercultural components of EFL textbooks in a private and a public institution in Cúcuta as well as to identify the influence that these textbooks have on the students' bilingual learning process.

The data collection process was carried out over three (3) months and the data analysis took about two (2) months and a half. For this process, the researchers oversaw the following roles:

Table 7

Researcher roles

RESEARCHER	ROLE
<i>Researcher 1: Karen Villamizar</i>	Interviewer
<i>Researcher 2: Andrés Guarnizo</i>	Transcriber
<i>Researcher 3: Luisa Galvis</i>	Observer

Note. The chart above shows the roles that every researcher had during the data collection process.

The interviewer oversaw interviewing the participants to know their perception about the questions stated. The transcriber had as a duty to do a written copy of the audio content from the interviews. Finally, the observer was responsible for the class observation process.

To analyze the data gathered through the implemented instruments, we followed a typological method as defined by LeCompte and Preissle (1993, as cited in Hatch, 2002), which involves 'dividing everything observed into groups or categories based on some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study.' This method allowed researchers to organize and categorize data, identify patterns among participants, and categorize them according to their responses. Additionally, this method helped us gain a greater understanding of the research.

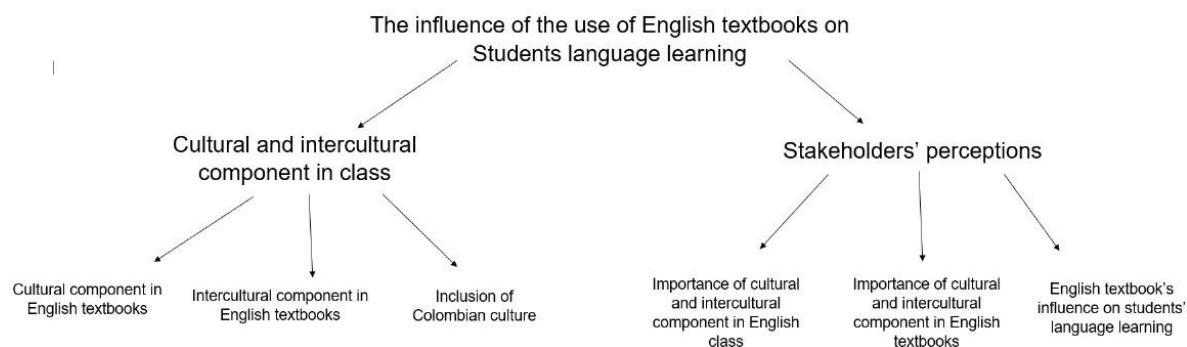
To analyze the data, we implemented open and selective coding. Carpendale et al. (2015) emphasized that open coding allows researchers to identify patterns, themes, and categories within the data, enabling the generation of new insights and interpretations. The open coding method ([APPENDIX E](#)) allowed researchers to classify the data into different codes and subcodes based on common patterns, which were organized into two main categories and six subcategories. Selective coding, as described by Trinidad et al. (2006), involved focusing on the central category to delimit coding to variables significantly related to it. Additionally, we used MAXQDA, a software program designed for computer-assisted qualitative and mixed methods data, text, and multimedia analysis in academic, scientific, and business institutions. Kuckartz and Rädiker (2019) noted that 'this software is a helpful tool that can offer significant benefits for qualitative data' (p. 1).

Analysis and results

During the first phase of the data analysis, interviews, class observations, and surveys were examined through the software MAXQDA ([SEE APPENDIX E](#)). This process helped researchers to highlight two main themes: Cultural and intercultural component in English classes and the use of English textbooks. Consequently, codes and subcodes emerged being the central codes of Cultural and intercultural components in class and the importance of textbooks in English classes. These codes emerged considering participants' perceptions and class observations carried out by the researchers.

Figure 1

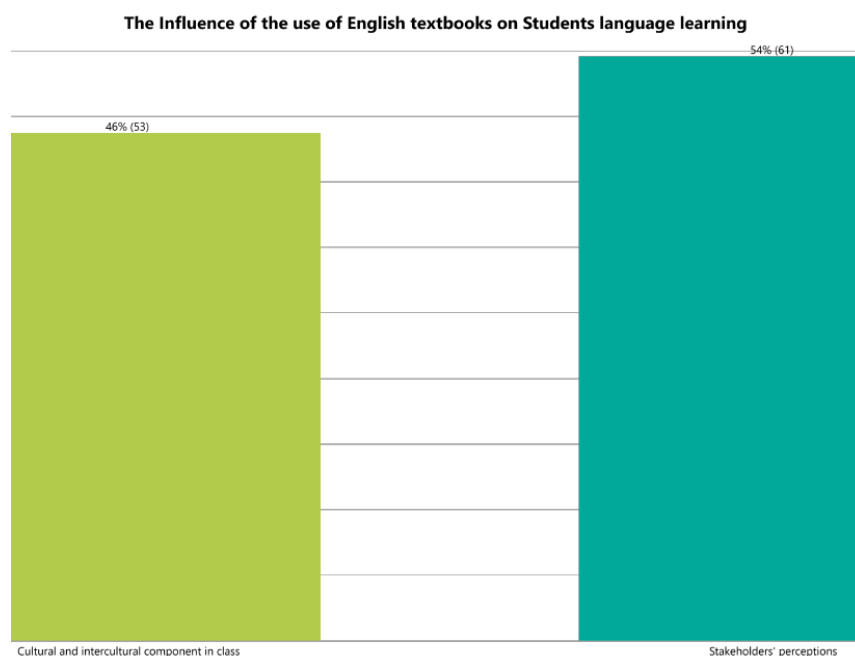
Mind map: Codification process



Note. This mind map was made based on the mind map created by the software MAXQDA. ([SEE APPENDIX E](#))

Figure 2

Frequency scales of codification



Note. This figure was retrieved from the software MAXQDA. It shows the codes that emerged during the data analysis of the project.

Having in mind the research question of this study **“How do the Key cultural and intercultural components impact students’ learning experiences in a private and a public institutions in Cucuta, Norte de Santander?”** and the codification made, two categories emerged: Cultural and Intercultural Component and English textbooks and Stakeholders’ perceptions on English textbooks in the cultural and intercultural component.

The first category cultural and intercultural component in English textbooks, contains the findings related to the use of textbooks in English classrooms and how the cultural component is included in the textbook. The data analyzed within this category was taken from the non-participant observations carried out by the researcher and some participants’ voice. This category is divided into three subcategories: Cultural component in English textbooks, Intercultural component in English textbooks, and Inclusion of Colombian culture in English textbooks. These subgroups explain in a more detailed way the outcomes encountered within this category. The second category shows teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the importance of textbooks in classes, the significance of cultural and intercultural components in English textbooks, and the influence of English textbooks on students' language learning.

Cultural and Intercultural Components in English Textbooks

This first category is intended to describe the textbooks analyzed during the research project and provide information about how the cultural and intercultural components emerged in them. The books were analyzed in the class observations made and taking into account the cultural checklist provided by Paige et al (1999) and Lee (2009). The content analysis which concerned itself with the examination of the contents in conversations, texts, articles, and readings.

Cultural Component in English Textbooks

On one hand, the first book under analysis was *English Please!* It was developed by the National Bilingualism Program and The British Council. The series of books belong to Richmond Publishing House and are commonly used by public schools in Colombia. In the observations carried out by the researchers, it was found that the textbook *English, Please!* contains a vast cultural content, the book is divided into four modules which contain the cultural aspects that will be studied through the units.

Figure 3

Table of content textbook English please!



Note. The image illustrates the table of contents of the English textbook *English please!* and its connection with the culture.

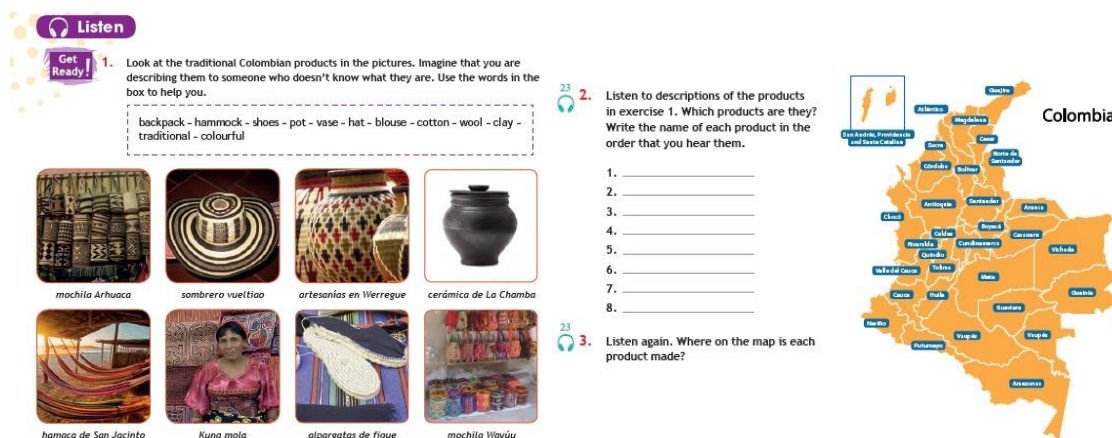
The image above shows the table of contents, these units are related to teenagers' experiences as their cultural heritage, lifestyles, health, environmental awareness, the way to relate to the economic field, the recognition of diversity as human beings, ecotourism as well as their

contributions to achieve changes in the future, their role as global citizens, sexual diversity, and their commitment to save the planet.

Which regards the cultural checklist provided by Paige et al., (1999) and Lee (2009). It was noticed that the book satisfies most of the contents lined in the three categories. First, it contains outstanding general culture content because it helps students comprehend and learn about cultural features of their own culture as well as other cultures, developing favorable attitudes toward other cultures. Furthermore, it was observed that the Big “C” and Small “c” categories are effectively developed in the book's readings, tracks, and speaking exercises since they provide students with relevant information from their country and, in some cases, regions.

Figure 4

Sample of Big “C” and Small “c” activities that are contained in the textbook



Listen

Get Ready! 1. Look at the traditional Colombian products in the pictures. Imagine that you are describing them to someone who doesn't know what they are. Use the words in the box to help you.

backpack - hammock - shoes - pot - vase - hat - blouse - cotton - wool - clay - traditional - colourful

23 2. Listen to descriptions of the products in exercise 1. Which products are they? Write the name of each product in the order that you hear them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

23 3. Listen again. Where on the map is each product made?

Colombia

mochila Arhuaca, sombrero vueltiao, artesanías en Wierregue, cerámica de La Chamba, hamaca de San Jacinto, Kuna mola, alpargatas de fique, mochila Wayúu

Note.

In the observations and the analysis made by the researcher, it was found that although the textbook activities include some cultural knowledge and information from other countries, they cover only a portion of what could be addressed in terms of cultural traditions, beliefs, and a deeper understanding of the culture. This finding is consistent with that of Viafara et al. (2023), who noted

that the cultural content of textbooks often fails to represent deeper cultural topics that could enhance students' cultural awareness.

On the other hand, the other textbook analyzed was *Time Zones*. This textbook was developed by the National Geographic publishing house. This textbook is aimed at encouraging students to learn English with images of different countries, films, and motivational stories of global citizens. This material provides the language and abilities students need for their next destination through teacher-tested language courses thoughtfully scaffolded, practice exercises, and engaging teaching materials.

Figure 5

Unit 7 Time Zone



Note. The image illustrates one of the units of the book *Time Zone*.

Looking at the cultural component of the textbook, it was encountered that the textbook *Time Zones* allows students to get immersed in cultural context through authentic materials,

integrated language culture, and cultural content, those materials are presented in the textbooks as videos or readings and belong to the category general culture.

Moreover, regarding the Big-C and small-c categories, the application of cultural immersion spans literature, history, and language. Students explore folklore, a diversity of customs, traditions, and values, which are integrated into every lesson to contribute to global perspectives and enrichment. During the analysis, it was observed that the activities proposed by the textbook enhance students' cultural knowledge about their context. Some units contain activities and content that help students expand their knowledge about the folklore and traditions of various countries. However, researchers consider that these contents are not fully developed to meet students' cultural needs.

Intercultural Component in English Textbooks.

The intercultural component in English textbooks is an important aspect of English Language Teaching (ELT). The integration of this component is critical for facilitating the development of pragmatic competence among language learners Parlindungan et al. (2018). Unfortunately, some researchers like Gomez (2015) and Viafara et al. (2023) agreed on the idea that the perception of intercultural learning is still superficial on textbooks, reason why teachers need to adapt materials based on students' cultural context and realities.

During the analysis process of the inquiry, some aspects related to the intercultural component were observed in the English textbooks that were analyzed.

Firstly, the English textbook, *English please!* contains exercises that enhance on students the ability to analyze and relate events from another culture to the student's own culture. Moreover, it shows students the connections and communication with other cultures,

with a particular emphasis on cross-cultural communication between individuals of diverse origins and nations.

For example, in unit 1 of module 3 (figure 4) students are asked to read about two famous festivals around the world; the book provides students with a description of the activities and vocabulary that they should know. Then, in the speaking activity students are asked to reflect on similar festivals celebrated in Colombia and to compare them with the ones that they read before this example illustrates how the textbook provides tasks that strengthen students' capacity to assess and link events from another culture to their own.

Figure 6

Reading and speaking activities about festivals around the

Read

3. Read about two different festivals that are celebrated all around the world. Which festival sounds more interesting to you and why? Tell a partner.

Saint Patrick's Day

Irish people celebrate an important day called Saint Patrick's Day. This is celebrated every year on the 17th of March. It's an important festival all over the world, not just in Ireland.

Lots of Irish people dress up in colourful clothes and hats. They also draw shamrocks and the Irish flag on their faces.

A lot of people watch the parade on the street where there are bands playing Irish music and people dancing Irish dances.

Not many people go home early! In the evening, people often go to pubs to listen to Irish music and to continue the party.



Chinese New Year

Chinese people celebrate New Year on the first day of the Chinese calendar, which is usually in February.

Everyone spends time with their family, eating lots of special food, giving gifts and watching fireworks.

Parents usually give their children red envelopes with some money inside. There isn't much money in the envelopes, but they believe it will bring them good luck. For Chinese people, the colour red represents fire and can stop bad luck.

The celebration ends with the lantern festival - a night-time parade where people carry lanterns and watch the dragon dance: a huge dragon made of silk, paper and bamboo.



Speak

9. Work in groups. Discuss the following questions.

- Do you have similar festivals in Colombia to the ones that you have read and heard about in this lesson? Which ones?
- Which of the festivals in this unit is the most interesting? Why?
- Which special occasion would you like to have in Colombia? Why?

In my opinion, ... is more interesting because ...

I think ... is similar to ... because ...

I would like to have ... in Colombia because ...

Glossary

• shamrock: <i>trébol</i>	• lantern: <i>linterna</i>
• flag: <i>bandera</i>	• luck: <i>suerte</i>
• fireworks: <i>fuegos artificiales</i>	• silk: <i>seda</i>
• envelope: <i>sobre de papel</i>	

Note. The image illustrates the example of one of the activities that the English textbook, *English, Please!* has.

Secondly, concerning the *Time Zones* textbook provided by National geographic Learning, it includes a lot of images, texts, and topics about people and places from different spaces and countries. As a result, the instructor can often apply the cross-cultural aspects of the material to help students build their intercultural awareness alongside their language learning.

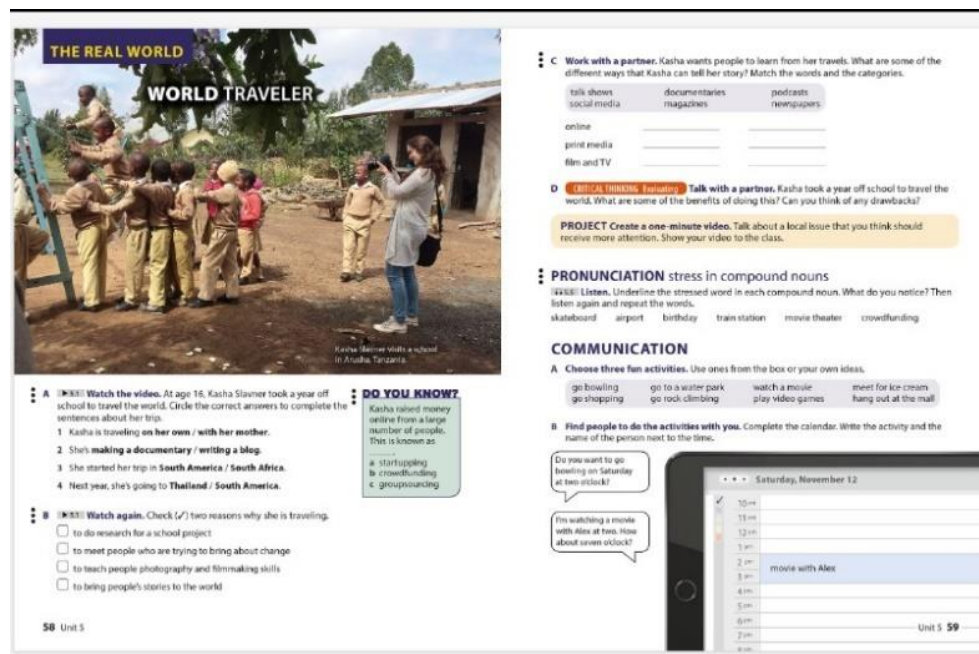
Hence, when thinking about the way to approach intercultural in classes or classrooms, it begins as a trip into another culture and finishes as a trip into the own one. So introducing the topic of other cultures into a lesson plan, employ it as a chance for students to reflect on their own culture in other words to personalize it.

This material provides students with a scope not only about the culture this book belongs to but also an abroad vision of what they can experience or face in different locations. One example could be the communication projects which involve a variety of activities of different cultures around the world and intertwine them.

As an example, in unit 9, page 109 of the textbook, an unusual commuting reading aims to teach students about real-world issues in Colombia. Students are required to read information and complete various activities, including answering open-ended and multiple-choice questions and filling out comparative charts comparing Colombia and Indonesia. Additionally, after reading and applying critical thinking skills, students must choose the correct options that align with the information provided to complete statements and develop a writing activity related to their own place of residence.

Figure 7

Example of a project of the textbook



THE REAL WORLD

WORLD TRAVELER

Kasha Slater visits a school in Arusha, Tanzania.

A **WATCH** Watch the video. At age 16, Kasha Slater took a year off school to travel the world. Circle the correct answers to complete the sentences about her trip.

- Kasha is traveling **on her own** / with her mother.
- She's **making a documentary** / writing a blog.
- She started her trip in **South America** / South Africa.
- Next year, she's going to **Thailand** / South America.

B **WATCH** Watch again. Check (✓) two reasons why she is traveling.

- ☐ to do research for a school project
- ☐ to meet people who are trying to bring about change
- ☐ to teach people photography and filmmaking skills
- ☐ to bring people's stories to the world

DO YOU KNOW?

Kasha raised money online from a large number of people. This is known as:

- start-upping
- crowdfunding
- groupspourcing

C **WORK WITH A PARTNER.** Kasha wants people to learn from her travels. What are some of the different ways that Kasha can tell her story? Match the words and the categories.

talk shows	documentaries	podcasts
social media	magazines	newspapers
online		
print media		
film and TV		

D **THINK & WRITE. Imagine** Talk with a partner. Kasha took a year off school to travel the world. What are some of the benefits of doing this? Can you think of any drawbacks?

PROJECT Create a one-minute video. Talk about a local issue that you think should receive more attention. Show your video to the class.

PRONUNCIATION stress in compound nouns

LISTEN. Underline the stressed word in each compound noun. What do you notice? Then listen again and repeat the words.

skateboard airport birthday train station movie theater crowdfunding

COMMUNICATION

A Choose three fun activities. Use ones from the box or your own ideas.

go bowling	go to a water park	watch a movie	meet for ice cream
go shopping	go rock climbing	play video games	hang out at the mall

B Find people to do the activities with you. Complete the calendar. Write the activity and the name of the person next to the time.

Do you want to go bowling on Saturday at two o'clock?

I'm watching a movie with Alex at two. How about seven o'clock?

Calendar: Saturday, November 12

10:00	
11:00	
12:00	
1:00	
2:00	movie with Alex
3:00	
4:00	
5:00	
6:00	
7:00	
8:00	

Unit 5 59

Note. The image above illustrates the project in unit 5 of the Time Zone textbook.

Figure 8

Reading comprehension, vocabulary and writing activity about unusual commutes



UNUSUAL COMMUTES

READING

A Look at the title and photos. What adjectives can you use to describe these children's commutes to school?

B Scan the article. What caused the bridge in Banten to break?

C Talk with a partner. How do you get to school?

UNUSUAL COMMUTES

SKIM How do you get to school? Do you usually go by bus, by car or on foot? Some children have very unusual commutes to school.

1 No longer today in Colombia. The children's daily commute is breathtaking. They ride a zip line 400 meters above the valley to get to the other side. It's the quickest way to get to school, but when it rains, the cable is too dangerous. The children stay home and can't go to school.

2 Children from the village of Banten in Indonesia cross a river to get to school every day. In the past, the children crossed a bridge, but it broke after a heavy rain. The bridge was broken for 10 months. There was another bridge they could use, but the journey was 30 minutes longer. Students usually chose to cross the broken bridge.

3 According to UNESCO, more than 63 million children around the world can't go to school. It's not easy to solve this problem, but it's something we should continue to work on.

CHALLENGE Draw a picture of the bridge in Banten.

Unit 5 109



COMPREHENSION

A Answer the questions about Unusual Commutes.

- 1 [True/False]** The article is mainly about ways children around the world travel to school.
a interesting b expensive c relaxing
- 2 [True/False]** Why does the author write about the height of the zip line?
a to explain why the commute is breathtaking
b to explain why the children enjoy riding the zip line
c to explain why the children spend hours to get to school
- 3 [True/False]** Why did the children in Banten use the broken bridge instead of the other one?
a The other bridge was for cars.
b They wanted to save time.
c The other bridge was more dangerous.
- 4 [True/False]** More than 6.1 million children around the world
a do not go to school
b have unusual commutes to school
c travel long distances to get to school
- 5 [True/False]** In line 25, the problem refers to
a the broken bridge
b unusual commutes to school
c children not being able to go to school

B Complete the notes. Choose one or two words from the article for each answer.

Common commutes to school	In Indonesia
• By bus, by car, or on foot	• Children from Banten had to cross a broken
• In Colombia • Some children ride a zip line to get across the Rio Negro Valley. • It can be dangerous to ride the zip line when it's	• It was broken for 10 years.

C [Circle, underline, underline] Talk with a partner. Why do you think many children can't go to school?

VOCABULARY

A Find the words below in the article. Then complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box.

daily ride cross bridge broken choose

- 1 Paula a bicycle to school every day.
- 2 Practicing the violin is part of Jan's routine.
- 3 The window was because someone threw a rock at it.
- 4 Carl always to take the bus instead of walking.
- 5 Every day, people the to the other side of the river.

B Read the information below. Then circle the correct answers.

Here are some verbs to talk about travel.
get on / board a train, bus, etc.
get off / leave a train, bus, etc.
pick up / collect someone or something from a place
take / go somewhere by train, bus, etc.
take off / leave the ground and begin to fly

- 1 Lucas **gets off** / **takes** the train to school every day.
- 2 Ana's parents **pick** / **get** her up from school every day.
- 3 Sofia **got off** / **took** at the wrong bus stop.
- 4 They **took off** / **got on** the train just before it left.
- 5 The plane to Paris **got** / **took off** three hours ago.

DO YOU KNOW?
Which country's people spend the most time reading?
a India
b Canada
c Sweden

WRITING

A Read the paragraph.

B Think about your school commute. Make notes. How do you usually travel to school? What time do you usually leave your house? Add any other information.

C Write a paragraph to describe your school commute. Use your notes from B.

I usually like to school. Sometimes, I walk. I leave my house every morning at 7:30 a.m. I usually reach school at around 8 a.m. I'm rarely late for school.

— Unit 9 — 311

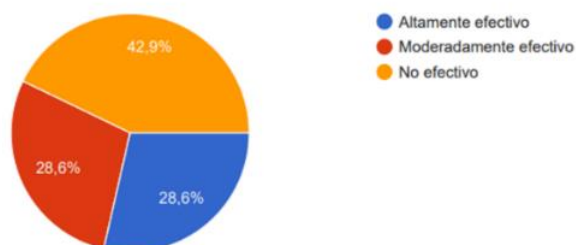
Note. The images illustrate an example of one of the activities that the *Time Zones* textbook has.

Although these textbooks provide these kinds of exercises that allow students to compare other cultures with their own, there is deficient evidence of deeper dialogue between local and global cultures that leads students to value and respect their own culture concerning others and enhance their intercultural awareness. This finding is aligned with teachers' perceptions on this matter (see Figure 6). Henao et al., (2019) claimed that most English textbook activities are focused on the promotion of the four language skills and do not promote the intercultural understanding and awareness on students.

Figure 9

English textbook's efficacy when promoting awareness and intercultural learning

¿Cómo calificaría la eficacia de los libros de inglés para fomentar la conciencia y la comprensión intercultural entre sus estudiantes?



Note. This figure shows English textbooks' efficacy when promoting awareness and intercultural learning.

Moreover, researchers perceived that another limitation regarding teaching culture and intercultural aspects with the help of textbooks is that teachers are not provided with enough training to successfully include those aspects in class. Viafara et al. (2023) concluded that this intercultural limitation may be related to teachers' lack of training on how to implement the activities proposed by the textbooks with a more intercultural view. Researchers emphasize that teacher training is crucial as it equips educators with strategies, tools, and knowledge related to culture and intercultural teaching and learning.

Inclusion of Colombia Culture in Textbooks

One of the main points of this inquiry was to analyze how the Colombian culture was included in the English textbooks and its influence on students' learning process. During the analysis, some important aspects came to light about this aspect.

First, it was evident that the textbook “*English Please!*” has a lot of aspects related to Colombian culture this book was specially designed to promote the inclusion of the Colombian context in English language education to increase students' national identity (MEN, 2016).

In general, the textbook contains images, readings, and activities that illustrate some of the general aspects of our culture, such as food, sports, important figures, and the most famous cities and towns in the country. However, we found that the book does not include information about life in the countryside. This omission may cause students from these parts of Colombia to feel marginalized and disinterested in language learning.

Second, in the textbook “*time zones*” we did not find much information about Colombia.

However, we encountered that in some texts the textbook mentioned Colombia or zones of the country contrasting them with other countries.

In the interviews, we also found that students would like to find more information about their country since they consider that it would boost their English learning process as they could compare what they are learning with what they live. S2 stated that “including information about Colombia could make my English learning process more meaningful. I would relate the content to my own culture and context.” This opinion is an example of the need that some students expressed regarding the inclusion of the Colombian context in their English textbooks.

In conclusion, researchers can affirm that concerning the cultural and intercultural component within textbooks publishing houses are making an effort to develop these components in the contents of their textbooks. but there are still areas for improvement. For example, researchers claim that textbooks must stop focusing language learning on the development of language skills and provide students with more cultural coverage promoting the intercultural dialogue among cultures allowing students not only to have a better intercultural and cultural awareness but also to create more meaningful language experiences.

Additionally, ensuring adequate representation of local cultures, such as Colombian culture, can further engage students and foster a deeper connection to the language learning process. Addressing these aspects can lead to more effective English language teaching and learning outcomes.

Stakeholders' Perceptions

This second category examines stakeholders' perceptions of English language teaching, focusing on insights from both teachers and students. The instruments under analysis were semi-structured interviews and an online survey. Among the highlighted findings, key subcategories include the importance of textbooks in English classes, the significance of cultural and intercultural components in textbooks, and the influence of these materials on students' language learning.

Importance of English Textbooks in English Classes.

Textbooks are undoubtedly one of the most useful tools used in foreign language classes. During the data analysis, there were encountered many advantages in the use of textbooks in class as the guidance that it provides for both teacher and students, the dynamization of class activities, and test preparation.

Tambunan (2020) affirmed, "Textbook gives the guideline of course and discussion, pushes to give homework or another interesting assignment, directs to do interaction through the activity that provided in the book and increases the confident and safety feeling" (p.22). It not only provides knowledge but also activities that can boost the environment of the class. One example of this is the opinion given by S3:

For me, the book is important because it serves as a guide for studying. It also contains fun activities and a lot of content to learn English. I feel that it positively impacts my learning, not only of English but also of other subjects.

Moreover, teachers also highlight the importance of textbooks in their classes. most of them agreed on the fact that textbooks are a tool that guides their classes and allow them to enhance

student's language skills. T4: "Yes, the book is useful since it gives us the possibility of carrying a sequence of topics and precise information that can be used for the development of classes."

Nevertheless, the use of textbooks has the advantages mentioned before. If it is not used correctly, it can bring some disadvantages to the class like monotonous and boring classes which can affect the learning and teaching process. For example, S4:

In my personal opinion, I consider that the book is important, but sometimes it makes classes boring because it becomes just text and writing and I like it better when the teacher gives us activities to create, analyze and speak. The book is important because it sometimes guides us in the topics we are studying, but I feel that it should not be used in all classes

Cruz & Rondon (2016) claimed that to avoid this, teachers need to be effectively prepared on how to implement textbooks appropriately in the classroom. Teachers also consider that this aspect is very important for their professional growth and their performance in class. T6:

We recently had those teachers training with the school's English team that allow us to enhance our class strategies and methodologies. The textbook is a great tool offered by the Bilingualism program. Personally, it saves me a lot of time and the topics are interesting for students.

To conclude the analysis of the first category, researchers might affirm that English textbooks are seen as tools that guide students' learning process and help them to develop their language skills through the activities that it contains. However, depending on textbooks can lead to monotonous and boring classes. Cruz & Rondon (2016) stress the importance of teacher training to

use textbooks effectively balancing textbook use with interactive activities to ensure engaging classes and effective learning.

Importance of Cultural and Intercultural Components in English Textbooks

In the second category, Teachers' perceptions of English textbooks and their cultural and intercultural components will include the analysis of this cultural component related to the teachers' perceptions and feedback of textbooks implemented in English classes that enhance students' learning and interest in cultural and intercultural aspects.

Firstly, it was evident in the data analyzed that teaching culture in classes is fundamental due to the level of interest that it creates in students. T4 claimed:

Personally, more than grammar I like to teach culture. I think students don't pay attention to grammar if they don't see the need to communicate or the importance. So, I implemented the book because it proposes cultural themes of Colombia that they know and like to participate in. The plus is that I tell them that they can only speak to me in English, so the students begin to say phrases with the vocabulary that they know and when they find themselves short when speaking, I reinforce the grammar so that they can communicate.

Moreover, participants consider that those activities allow students to acquire knowledge from different cultures and countries and increase students' interest in learning English along with different cultural aspects. For example, S4 affirmed that "...the book contains cultural aspects of other cities and countries, and that improves my understanding of English in a broader and global context, well because you learn about the world and when you travel it helps".

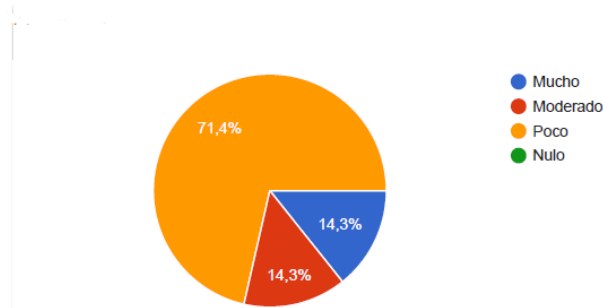
The information above is a clear example of the importance that most English teachers give to teaching culture in the development of their classes since the teacher considers that students become more attentive and involved in the learning process when they perceive the connection between the language and their cultural interests and communication needs. Additionally, Deoksoon (2020) affirmed that language learning goes beyond knowledge of a subject matter, it should ensure that students get immersed and understand others' cultural understanding of social and political divides.

In contrast, it was encountered that 71,4% of teachers think that the textbooks implemented in their English classes have few cultural contents that address students' country and origin. So, sometimes teachers must adapt the contents and activities to include aspects they feel are relevant to their students to awaken students' interest in the language learning process.

Figure 10

Teachers' opinion on cultural content that addresses to students' country and origin.

¿Qué tanto se alinean los libros de inglés implementados en su institución con los orígenes culturales y la diversidad de sus estudiantes?



Note. This figure shows Teachers' opinions on cultural content that addresses students' country and origin.

Secondly, researchers found that textbooks can either facilitate or complicate the process of teaching culture and intercultural aspects to students.

On the one hand, public schools have national English books, such as 'Please!' that contain valuable information about Colombia and other countries' cultures, which makes the process of teaching culture easier.

For example, public teachers affirmed that the textbooks implemented in public schools are adapted to the Colombian context, which facilitates the process of acquiring culture through the acquisition of a second language as T5 mentioned in the interview “I consider that the book is well related to the Colombian context given that this book focuses on the cultural and intercultural part is well designed and provided throughout the units” (Teachers Interview).

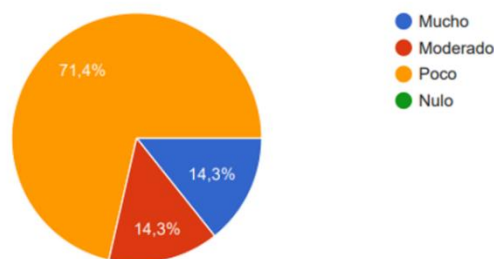
On the other hand, researchers identified that private schools tend to use books where the content is more related to information about other countries than the student's context which makes the process of teaching culture a little bit more difficult since teachers must adapt the content. As Le Gal (2018) mentioned “Global textbooks are not adapted to Colombian learners' linguistic (syntactic, morphological), phonetic (phonologic), pragmatic, and sociocultural specific needs” (p.8) and teachers are forced to adjust or reshape activities and even book content to teach culture not only from other countries but ours.

It was also mentioned by T4 in the interview: “... the book managed by the institution is international, that is why there is no content about Colombia. What I do is to adapt it to the student's needs and interests” (Teachers Interview). This was also evident in the survey where 71.4% of teachers stated that textbooks used in their classes are not related to students' origin and diversity.

Figure 11

English notebooks line up with students' cultural origin and diversity

¿Qué tanto se alinean los libros de inglés implementados en su institución con los orígenes culturales y la diversidad de sus estudiantes?

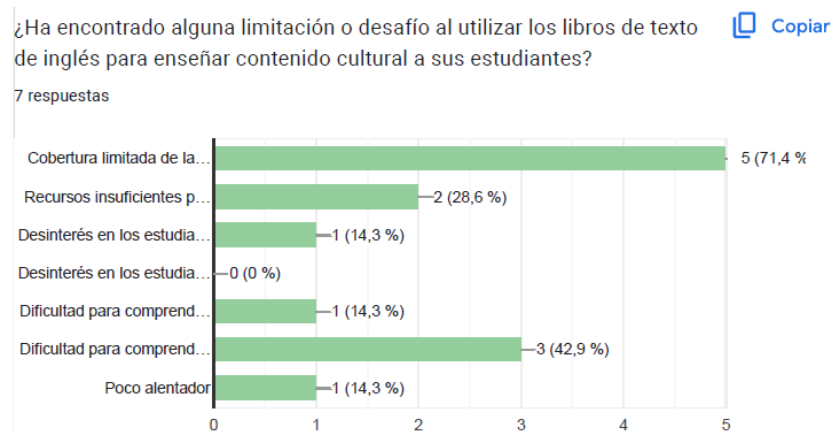


Note. This figure shows English notebooks line up with students' culture origin and diversity.

Thirdly, the teachers claimed that two main challenges emerged when teaching culture based on the topics that the textbook suggests. The main one was the limited coverage of local culture and the difficulty that students have understanding cultural references.

Figure 12

Challenges when teaching culture based on the textbook contents.



Note. This graph shows the challenges when teaching culture based on the textbook contents.

To conclude, this category emphasizes a critical issue in Colombian English language education: the inadequacy of global textbooks in meeting the specific linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural needs of Colombian Learners. For that reason, teachers have the task of adapting materials and reshaping activities to narrow the gap between generic content and local content.

Moreover, the challenges extend beyond linguistics aspects, as highlighted by teachers who struggle with the limited coverage of local culture and student's struggle to comprehend cultural references. This accentuates the urgent need for curriculum reform and the development of culturally responsive teaching resources. By managing these challenges, educators can cultivate a more inclusive and effective learning environment that honors both global and local cultural perspectives. By managing these challenges, teachers can cultivate a more inclusive and effective learning environment that honors both global and local cultural perspectives without taking sides stronger than others.

English Textbooks Influence On Students' Language Learning.

The last category shows the influence that the English textbooks and cultural and intercultural component have on students' language and culture learning and their interest on English classes.

This category highlights the significant influence that English textbooks and their cultural and intercultural elements have on students' acquisition of language and culture. It is clear from exploring the complex dynamics of classroom education that these materials not only help students improve their language skills but also their interest in and participation in English lessons.

First, researchers found that most students felt pleased with their textbooks, since they considered that the English textbook plays an important role on their language learning process. S5 affirms that:

For me the book is important because it serves as a guide to study, it also has entertaining activities and has a lot of content for learning English, I feel that it positively affects my learning not only of English but also of other things.

Moreover, the textbook serves as a guide that helps students to prepare themselves for both school and international tests as students one and five claimed in the interviews. “I would think so, I like the textbook because it prepares us a lot for the national tests and the topics are entertaining. It's cool to try to talk in English about things that we know...” (S1),

At this point, the book is the basis of what we have, from there, we get the topics to practice and study, for either evaluation or the future, because from there we can get words that help us to create sentences and dialogues with others. (S5)

A common opinion among students about the importance of the English textbook in their educational process is revealed by the data analysis. Many voice their delight, pointing to its importance as a study guide that is enhanced with interesting activities and thorough material. Interestingly, the textbook's usefulness goes beyond learning a language; it also helps with test-taking and academic preparation. Participants emphasize how valuable it is as a starting point for communication, including vocabulary and themes that are necessary for practice and future use.

Second, researchers noticed that students considered that learning culture is crucial for them. As we know culture is an important element in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless,

the insights given by our participants show an important finding about the importance and influence when learning. S8 stated that:

I believe that English is more than learning grammar. I would like to know more about our culture, about what we do here. About the beautiful customs we have and the typical dishes. All of this is the good thing about Colombia, and we must reproduce it to remove the bad reputation we have internationally due to drug trafficking.

In the previous citation the student claims that incorporating information about his own culture into English classes learners make it personal and meaningful for them. It makes evident that when teachers integrate cultural elements of their own culture, it motivates students to develop a connection between the language they are learning by giving them a real-life application. Hossain (2024) also highlights that integrating culture in EFL classes not only motivates students but also prepares them as communicators in different, intercultural settings.

In summary, researchers concluded that the stakeholders considered English textbooks to be relevant tools in their classes as they play a crucial role in their language learning process and provide guidance and preparation for tests. Moreover, researchers contemplated the cultural and intercultural components as crucial content for engaging students and making students reflect on their own culture.

Conclusions

At the end of the analysis, researchers drew the following conclusions regarding the cultural component in students' performance; first, the role of textbooks in English classes, second, the importance of cultural and intercultural components and finally, the influence on students' language performance.

Our research highlights the transformative power of English textbooks and the cultural elements they contain in influencing students' language skills, awareness of other cultures, and general enthusiasm in the language.

First, researchers affirmed that English textbooks are seen as relevant tools that guide the learning and teaching process that not only benefit teachers but also help students to have a better performance within their English learning.

Second, the analysis provides a deeper understanding of the culture and intercultural component in English textbooks. It reveals that even if textbooks such as *English Please*, and *Time Zones* are trying to incorporate more cultural and intercultural aspects to their content they provide students with general cultural knowledge. Publishing houses should work harder on implementing extracurricular activities that improve students' cultural and intercultural awareness.

To address these challenges, publishing houses must work on including local culture as well as integrate more intercultural activities. Moreover, teachers can set the path by adopting a comprehensive strategy that incorporates more linguistic and cultural components that bridge the gap between just acquiring cultural knowledge and creating more cultural and intercultural awareness among students.

Finally, participants affirmed that textbooks have a great influence on their English learning path, as they provide meaningful content that enriches their language skills and nourishes their cultural and intercultural knowledge.

In conclusion, researchers claim that textbooks are not only considered important academic tools but are also fundamental in the process of teaching and learning a language.

Limitations

The present inquiry faced some limitations during the development of the whole research. The first limitation was the size of samples of books that were analyzed because this cannot generate reliability and validity on the data presented given that some searchers can consider that the findings presented are not valid because of the quantity of textbooks are not enough.

Likewise, another limitation was the short timeframes for data collection and analysis could have restricted the scope of our investigation, potentially preventing us from conducting more extensive inquiries or exploring additional facets of stakeholders' perceptions.

Recommendations

In-depth qualitative investigations into the lived experiences of English language teachers and students, incorporating narratives, observations, and participatory methods to capture the complexities of cultural interactions in the classroom; comparative research examining the use of English textbooks across different regions of Colombia, taking into consideration variations in cultural norms, educational policies, and linguistic diversity; and collaborative research partnerships between researchers, educators, and community stakeholders to co-create culturally responsive teaching materials and pedagogical approaches that reflect the diverse identities and perspectives of learners in Colombia.

Contributions

Within the particular framework of the public and private schools in North Santander, our study highlights the impact that English textbooks have on students' bilingual learning experiences. Through the integration of cultural and intercultural elements into these textbooks, educators can strengthen language proficiency while reinforcing students' comprehension of many cultures. In

addition to enhancing the educational process, integration helps people become more globally aware and culturally competent.

Furthermore, our study showed that activities involving cultural aspects had a major effect on students' academic performance. Through the incorporation of cultural elements into the curriculum, educators may successfully foster creativity and improve students' academic performance as well as get more engaged with their language learning process. Additionally, it helps students to develop citizenship values like acceptance, tolerance, and critical thinking abilities by exposing them to many cultures and viewpoints.

All things considered, our study provides insightful information about how school culture, multiculturalism, and language learning interact, as well as useful suggestions for educators and decision-makers looking to improve inclusive and productive learning environments.

Appendixes

[Appendix A](#)

Format(s) of Signed consent prepared by the participants.

[Appendix B](#)

First Instruments: Teachers and Students Interviews.

[Appendix C](#)

Second Instrument: Class Observations

[Appendix D](#)

Surveys

[Appendix E](#)

Data coding- Software MAXQDA

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