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**TEXTBOOK VOCABULARY  
AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE:  
A CASE STUDY IN EFL  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

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17 JAN 2001

**School of Education  
University of Durham**

**M.A Thesis by Emilija Georgievska**

# **Textbook vocabulary and Cultural Competence:**

## **A case study in EFL in the Republic of Macedonia**

**M.A Thesis by Emilija Georgievska**

### **ABSTRACT**

The issues of cultural content of textbooks for learning English as a foreign language and the sociocultural content of vocabulary in these same textbooks are the main focus of this thesis. The key point is that cultural learning is integral to language learning, and that while improving their linguistic ability learners should have an understanding of what the language they are learning represents. In the Republic of Macedonia the importance of cultural learning has been recognized but the theory and methods of teaching culture have been to a certain degree neglected.

Issues such as ELT in Macedonia and the problems it faces, serves as a point of departure for this thesis, whereas the theoretical framework is based on issues such as the specific case of English as the *lingua franca*, the inseparability of language and culture, the six competencies according to Van Ek and the intercultural perspective to language learning. The survey of the studies shows that the aims of language learning involve intercultural competence rather than merely acquiring language skills which is not enough for cross-cultural communication and for real understanding of the target culture(s). On the basis of this framework criteria for the general cultural content of textbooks are looked at.

Apart from these issues dealing with language and culture and language learning, a whole chapter is devoted to a survey of the latest research on vocabulary teaching and learning: corpus based vocabulary studies, in what way culture is encoded in vocabulary whereby the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary is specified, vocabulary acquisition, selection and incorporating vocabulary in the syllabus. Having in mind the above studies, criteria for the analysis of the sociocultural content of vocabulary are put forward.

Investigation is carried out on two textbooks for learning English, both from the point of view of general cultural content and more specifically, sociocultural content of vocabulary,

The results of the analyses showed that both textbooks have to a certain extent a potential for generating cultural knowledge. However, there does not seem to be an awareness on the part of the textbook authors of how such knowledge is to be conveyed to the learners.

It seems that the role of culture has not been fully appreciated in that the learners should be taught to observe the world from the natives' perspective and appreciate the differences between their own culture and the target culture(s).

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- Finally, many thanks to my husband and my two sons, for their endless patience and understanding.

***I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO MY LATE FATHER  
WHO DID NOT LIVE TO SEE IT PUBLISHED***

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# CHAPTER 1

## EFL in the Republic of Macedonia

### 1.1 Introduction

The advent of communicative approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language has led teachers and educators to embrace the notion of communicative competence without critical appraisal since teaching communicatively claimed to guarantee success (Canale, Swain, 1980). Important issues such as cultural awareness have been entirely ignored or, at best, not carefully examined. If teachers and textbook writers are to take the idea of communicative competence seriously, the question of culture appears to be unavoidable. The importance of cultural learning seems to be recognized but in most of the syllabuses for teaching English as a foreign language in Macedonia, one or two pages are devoted to 'cultural enrichment' (Parmenter, 1993) and twenty or more to describing functional and semantic and grammatical competence. The linguistic objectives are specified in detail, the cultural component is left to the teacher. This puts great responsibility on the teachers of English to achieve an aim without any guidelines as to how this aim can be achieved. In the Republic of Macedonia, the importance of cultural learning has been recognized but the theory and methods of teaching culture have been neglected.

There have already been studies (Brown, 1987; Byram, 1989) that prove the key point that, while improving their linguistic ability, students should have an understanding of what the language they are learning represents. Cultural learning is not a second-rate alternative to the



traditional language and literature teaching. Neither is it an extra to fill in gaps at the end of a lesson or to provide a little light relief. Cultural learning is integral to language learning and can be incorporated at every level and in every aspect of language learning.

Such an approach, requiring the integration of language and culture, would demand radical changes in the current English as a foreign language syllabuses in secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia. New materials would need to be produced, new examinations developed and most important, teachers' and students' attitudes to what is appropriate for English as a foreign language study, would need to be changed.

Since this study focuses on the issue of cultural content in foreign language learning materials, chapter 1 of this research work gives a description of foreign language teaching in Macedonia and more specifically it lays out the problems of TEFL in Macedonia.

Chapter 2 explores the foundations on which teaching and textbook writing for English as a foreign language may rest. This is the theory of language and culture and the link between this theory and FLT. Issues concerning cultural and language learning will be discussed such as: the relationship of language and culture, the influence of culture on language learning and intercultural competence, and the implications of cultural learning for the general aims of foreign language education. These studies form a theoretical framework for the issue of language and cultural learning. On the basis of this framework investigation of two textbooks for learning English as a foreign language will be presented. Each textbook was analyzed from the point of view of general cultural content and then a second analysis was performed focusing on the vocabulary/lexis cultural content.

Before conducting the analyses, Chapter 3 looks at the basic principles for establishing criteria for cultural content analysis, and it also delineates the criteria for analysis of the general cultural content of both textbooks.

Apart from the general cultural content analysis of the two textbooks for learning English as a foreign language, this thesis will concentrate specifically on the cultural content of vocabulary. How are the new word items presented? To what extent is there awareness from the point of view of the teacher as well as the students, of the social and cultural meaning of words, the hidden meaning underlying many utterances, polysemy and word collocations. These issues together with the criteria for analysis of the socio-cultural content of vocabulary, will be discussed in Chapter 4, beginning with a survey of the current literature on the subject of vocabulary teaching and learning.

In Chapter 5, the analyses of the cultural content of both a British produced textbook and a local one will be presented, as well as the vocabulary/lexis analysis concentrating only on the sociocultural content.

The core of this study thus consists of two separate analyses of two textbooks for learning English as a foreign language. One of the chosen textbooks is by British authors and it is published in Great Britain. The other is a locally designed textbook for learning English as a foreign language produced by Macedonian textbook writers and published in Macedonia. The British produced textbook is widely used in private language schools (centres) and the locally produced one is used in most, if not all, secondary schools in Macedonia.

The textbooks were by no means chosen randomly. The British produced book is *Headway Intermediate* (Soars, 1986), which has been used for many years around the globe. The textbook was designed to suit learners from around the world. How suitable is it for Macedonian learners and does it provide them with sufficient cultural content necessary for their attainment of intercultural communicative competence?

The Macedonian textbook *English 2* designed by several specialists in the field of EFL and methodology, provides a contrast to the globally favoured *Headway*. It was designed primarily for Macedonian learners. How aware were the authors of what is appropriate in the cultural domain for the students to grasp? What is their attitude towards the target culture? How is the target culture portrayed? How can we assess the validity of the statement that British produced textbooks have a 'To Whom -It- May- Concern' (Enyedi and Medgyes, 1998) character, in other words a disregard for local needs and the learners' L1 backgrounds.

Learning a foreign language includes a further dimension. It is the intercultural perspective to language learning which is the ultimate goal in foreign language education and we shall define it in Chapter 2 .

The thesis as a whole aims to show that comprehension of the target-language culture is in fact one of the determinants which has an impact on full communicative competence. At this point it is of utmost importance to pin-point what we mean by 'the' target culture. We recognise that several national cultures may be associated with one language, this is especially true of English. It is a usual custom to identify the English language with England which is only a part of the United kingdom, and to say England and English when we mean Britain and British. The English language is spoken by the various nationalities and their respective

cultures which comprise the British Isles. Another important issue which will be dealt with in more detail later on, is the fact that English is spoken all over the world as a *lingua franca* and not just by native speakers. Why a culture has to be taught together with the language? Why not teach English as a neutral, international language with no reference to Britain or the USA? There are differing views on this which will be the focus of later discussions. We will attempt to prove, once again, the inseparability of language and culture. Suffice to say, at this point, that in this thesis 'the' target culture will mean concentrating on British culture and focusing on native speakers of English. The reasons for this are, first of all, the fact that we are analyzing a British produced textbook, and in light of the important role that cultural knowledge plays in achieving full communicative ability, it becomes a preoccupation of how to choose teaching materials which are representative of the target culture, and how authors should be aware which culture specific image they portray for the students, how representatively they reflect the real situation of British culture when designing the textbooks and finally, how many cultural dimensions they cover in the textbooks.

The above questions will be covered in the final chapter, Chapter 6, which will summarise the findings and results of the analyses of the two textbooks for learning English already mentioned above. This chapter also puts forward the implications this research study has for textbook writers of EFL in Macedonia as well as recommendations for further research.

It should be mentioned, at this point, that this research work does not aim to give a full evaluation of the two textbooks cited above. This thesis limits itself to providing only analyses of the cultural content of the two textbooks in question with a special focus on the cultural content in the domain of vocabulary/lexis.

The current state of EFL teaching in the Republic of Macedonia and the problems of TEFL in high schools served as a point of departure for this research study. Having in mind the political, social and economic changes that have occurred in recent years in this part of Europe, there should be radical changes in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. There is nothing new in saying that if students are taught cultural knowledge in a systematic way, they will emerge much better equipped to communicate with and understand the people who speak the language they had been learning for several years or so. The links between European countries strengthen and intercultural speakers will be indispensable in all walks of life. There is still a long way to go in developing the teaching methods and textbooks which will foster such inter-culturally competent people. In this respect, this research study is only a small step towards the general educational aims of foreign language teaching outlined above in the specific case of the Republic of Macedonia.

In order to pursue the inquiry, let us first of all look into the situation of EFL in Macedonia. A description of EFL in Macedonia follows: the problems involved and materials used for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The issue of the English language as the *lingua franca* in the specific case of Macedonia, will also be addressed.

## **1.2 EFL in the Republic of Macedonia**

Although Yugoslavia (Macedonia was a member of the Federation) was never a part of the communist-bloc countries, the common view held was that these countries were all look-alikes with hardly any national or local traits worthy of note. The fall of communism in 1989-90 resulted in the dramatic disintegration of Yugoslavia which shrank to a fraction of its

original size. It was forced to recognize Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia as sovereign states. The events of the 1990s were tumultuous in this part of the Balkan peninsula and my hope is that I will succeed in transferring some of the essence of these events to appeal to the readership in one particular walk of life, English language teaching.

This survey or report consists of two main sections. Section 1 concentrates on foreign language education before the disintegration of Yugoslavia and before Macedonia became a recognized state within the United Nations i.e in 1993. At this point, it might be worth mentioning the distinction between the teaching and learning of other foreign languages and the specific case of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The global dominance of English as a foreign language and its importance as the *lingua franca* will be addressed. Section 2 describes the situation of ELT in the transformation period up to the present day. It involves looking into the aims and objectives of ELT, current teaching materials and the problems of ELT in the cultural domain.

### **1.3 Foreign Language Education in Macedonia until 1990**

The former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a multi-lingual and multi cultural society, comprising six republics with three official languages: Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian. For many of its citizens the official languages were not their mother tongue. People living in Slovenia and Macedonia had to learn Serbo-Croatian, as a foreign language, in school from the age of 11 until the age of 14, because this was the official language in Former Yugoslavia. In Macedonia, apart from the majority of Slavonic speakers, Albanian is the most widespread language and also Romany and Turkish are spoken by the minorities still

living in Macedonia. But knowledge of the above official language (Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian for the Turkish and Albanian minorities living in Macedonia), in the SFR of Yugoslavia had little value and no practical use outside its borders. Hence, knowledge of a *lingua franca* has always been considered very important and foreign language education has held an esteemed place in school curricula. Due to the political orientation of Yugoslavia i.e. the foreign policy of non-alignment, Russian was never a compulsory language in schools. This was not the case with the other Central and Eastern European countries which were members of the communist-bloc and in which pupils received 8-10 years of Russian tuition and where the teaching of western languages was banned in the darkest period of communism until the 1970s (Enyedi and Medgyes, 1998).

In communist-bloc countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania where, due to restrictions on travel, there was no communication with the rest of the world through the mass media, most people did not have opportunities to use foreign languages in real life situations i.e. for communicative purposes. The learning of English and other 'western' languages was considered to be an intellectual accomplishment, an academic exercise.

Yugoslavia was an exception to this rule and life and education were quite different from the other communist-bloc countries. From the 1960s free travel was possible and it was recognized that foreign languages should be taught and learnt for their communicative value. Seminars and in-service training programmes for secondary school teachers were run jointly with the British Council and the Ministry of Education, the U.S Embassy and local education authorities. Major secondary schools employed foreign 'lektors' or native-speaking language teachers who also improved the quality of teaching and regularly held conferences to

synchronise their work and raise their awareness of the local teaching context (Enyedi and Medyes,1998).

#### **1.4 ELT in Macedonia after 1990**

After a referendum in 1991, the people of Macedonia voted for an independent, sovereign state and Macedonia was no longer a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In April 1993 it became the one-hundred and eighty-first country to be accepted in the United Nations under the interim name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The multi-party political system was introduced and slogans such as ‘catching up with Europe’ and ‘joining the common European home’ were the ambitions of the political parties to join NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Steps were taken to privatise most of the factories and foreign investment was sought for. These new developments meant that learning foreign languages was all the more important and learning a foreign language became a top priority in people’s lives. In order to meet such increasing demands the scope of foreign language education in the school curriculum has been widened. The starting age for compulsory foreign-language learning has been lowered to the age of seven from the age of ten.

#### **1.5 English as the *lingua franca***

Today English is *primus inter pares* in most parts of the world and Macedonia is no exception. It is the unparalleled *lingua franca* of transnational communication and in other fields as well. It is the language of business and banking, industry and commerce, transportation, tourism, sport, international diplomacy, advertising and youth culture. It has

entered the homes of people the world over through the mass media and high-tech electronic devices. As Phillipson argues, regarding the pushing forward of English in former communist countries, 'English is projected by the donor countries as a panacea for the ills of Eastern Europe' (1992: 2).

Although statistics were difficult to obtain, it can be safely said that in Macedonia, where Russian has never been a compulsory subject, more and more pupils choose English as their first foreign language. It is the dominant foreign language and enjoys enormous popularity.

In the case of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, where English is the *lingua franca*, the most important reason for acquiring the language is to be able to communicate with other non-native speakers. The world has become a 'global village'. The reason for the spread of English globally, is because it is 'natural, neutral and beneficial' (Pennycook, 1994). We will not look into the issue of the cultural politics of English as an international language, since it is out of the scope of this thesis. It will be sufficient to say that the majority of learners in Macedonia choose English as their first and major foreign language because they simply would like to appreciate the glories of British literature, they admire British contributions to scientific knowledge, and learners are convinced that, whatever they choose to do in their lives, knowledge of the English language will help them in some way, whether it is in business, foreign trade, politics, diplomacy, science and so on.

The official language in the Republic of Macedonia is Macedonian, and there are also the languages of the minorities, Albanian, Turkish, Aromanian. Although Macedonia is a multi-ethnic society, and a lot of the minorities are bilingual (e.g. Albanian /Macedonian), English

education can undertake the task of discharging a lot of ethnocentricism and cultural narrow-mindedness and of equipping the students with cultural competence for cross-cultural understanding. Intercultural communicative competence should be the goal here (Byram, 1997). This 'competence' is not synonymous with 'native-like', but rather it focuses on the interlinguistic, intercultural awareness on the part of all involved.

Therefore, TEFL in the cultural dimension is an ineluctable approach to be taken. By way of comparing discrepancies between the mother culture and target culture, we hope the pupils will understand themselves and others more profoundly.

Young people, teenagers, want to be 'trendy' and be well-informed on the latest British pop music and to view the latest films from the USA, not to mention various computer programmes, and INTERNET. We can safely say that in this part of the Balkans, the learners are extremely motivated to learn English as a foreign language.

Foreign language teaching inevitably involves the transmission of particular beliefs whether overtly or implicitly from the foreign culture to the native (Valdes, 1990) and in the specific case of English, some researchers go to extremes and claim that English teaching might be a form of ideological and cultural colonisation - a form of indoctrination (Holly, 1990).

However, another view is that although language learning may involve awareness of different dimensions in the perception of reality, this does not entail undermining one's views. One may appreciate different values and still remain within one's own culture. According to Widdowson (1995), one might regard values and beliefs as 'convenient categories' rather than as fixed, stable, deeply established categories. This view counteracts the arguments about

ideological and cultural colonisation, since learners are not confined to embracing the foreign language values. These values are 'convenient categories' and pose no threat to the learner's identity, they simply co-exist with their own set of values.

Two opposing implications may be put forward here. On the one hand, it may be argued that, if English cannot be dissociated from the social, cultural, economic and political relations in which it exists (Pennycook, 1994), the cultural norms and values of the English are transmitted and imposed as an expression of hegemony. The consequence is that the learner's culture is totally 'submerged' (Alptekin and Alptekin, 1984). On the other hand, it could be argued that the English language is not bound to be detrimental to the L1 culture and the identity of its learners. Suffice to say at this point that in the specific case of Macedonian learners there is 'favourable', 'good' learning situation according to Schumann (1976) in his theory of social distance between cultures. In this respect, the social distance is not great between Macedonia and England. As explained above, the rising popularity of English (not German or French) among learners is a result of the fact that the learners are motivated to find out more about Anglo-American culture and they also 'feel' more close to it because of the flood of information that they have access to on the media (satellite TV, Internet), which is mostly in English. This of course, increases motivation and facilitates the learning process.

However, on a superficial level we might observe that Macedonians are quite different from Americans or British in life styles, ideology, in religion and so on. Macedonians look up to British and American culture and strive to reach it. There is a definite need of clarifying misconceptions, prejudices and misrepresentations of culture, people and country.

Therefore, equipping the students with cultural competence for cross-cultural understanding will shorten the social distance between the two cultures. Perhaps the most important objective that can be achieved through studying English is widening the pupils' cultural knowledge and promoting international understanding.

## **1.6 Changing methodologies, curricula and examinations**

The new document from the Pedagogical Institute<sup>1</sup> concerning the aims and objectives of foreign language education in high schools (gymnazia<sup>2</sup> and vocational<sup>3</sup>) appeared in May, 1999. It was approved by the Ministry of Education. It contains the programme contents and structure of foreign language education, namely: English, German, Russian and French.(See Appendix 1)

There is clearly a whole section on 'cultural learning' containing which information on habits, belief and behaviour of the target country should be included in the curriculum.

Teachers still have doubts about the communicative approach and skill based examination requirements and feel comfortable with the traditional methods of teaching, such as the grammar-translation method. The increasing demands to learn English and the changing needs of society made it necessary to update ELT methodologies and testing methods.

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<sup>1</sup>Education authority, responsible for research into education

<sup>2</sup>High school, lastig 4 years, consisting of 13-14 subjects where pupils obtain a general all-round education in the arts and sciences. At the end of the fourth year pupils take an examination in two compulsory subjects: maths and Macedonian language, and write a seminar work on a subject of their choice. After this they can obtain their high school diploma.

<sup>3</sup>Secondary schools that specialize in certain areas, e.g electronics, engineering etc.

Educational authorities were relatively quick to respond to such demands. Another document that we obtained from the Pedagogical Institute of Macedonia (1996) postulates that all areas of the educational system (pre-school up to higher education) not just foreign language education, are based on general principles with an 'inclination' to integrate educational values with Europe and the rest of the world. In the part of the document concerning secondary education it does not represent a programme structure, a syllabus that can be implemented directly, but defines a general framework in secondary education (15-19 years; gymnazia and vocational). Consideration has been given to the social situation of the country i.e the shifting from one socio-economic system to another, the role of education and its traditions in the country and available resources.

In this document it is stated that:

The aim and objective of secondary education encompasses in itself the ideas included, in particular the acts, documents, of the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, CSCE, most of all the General Declaration for Human Rights. In this context, secondary education is directed towards promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship between nations and racial and religious groups, as well as friendly relations between people and countries with different social and political systems based on respect for human beings and their basic rights.(1996:8)

Apart from these global aims, attempts were made to revise the national curriculum on the basis of functional, notional and skills-based objectives, as laid down in the Threshold Level of the Council of Europe (van Ek & Trim, 1991) .

With regard to testing methods, on completion of the national curriculum (age 18-19) pupils have to pass examinations in three subjects. If they want to continue their education at University they have to pass the University entry examination. Students who have chosen English as their major subject to study at University take the entry exam which rests upon functional principles, intermingled with traditional structural and lexical categories.

On the other hand, the growing number of private schools for learning foreign languages were quick and resourceful at adopting internationally recognized language examinations such as: ARELS, TOEFL, FCE, CPE, from Cambridge, Oxford and Pitman.

## **1.7 Teaching materials**

Before the 1990s the only textbooks for learning English were produced and published locally. Even though foreign coursebooks were not banned or forbidden, it was difficult to obtain them and furthermore, for teachers and learners alike, they were unaffordable. The major private language school in Macedonia, the Centre for Foreign Languages in Skopje, opened its own publishing department in 1982 and has so far published teaching materials from beginner's to intermediate level and sold thousands of copies. The Centre has played a leading role in ELT in Macedonia. The Centre was established in 1954 and started off with only three teachers. Later on it expanded following the model of similar private language schools in Zagreb and Belgrade. Until it produced its own teaching materials, the Centre used coursebooks published in The School of Foreign Languages in Zagreb and The Institute of Foreign Languages in Belgrade.

Due to the political situation, it took longer for foreign materials to establish themselves in this part of the Balkan peninsula. After the war in Bosnia and after the trade embargo imposed on Macedonia by Greece was lifted, imported teaching materials flooded the market. They were attractive because of their up-to-date methodologies and their glossy book covers. The validity and effectiveness for learners of these foreign produced (mainly British) textbooks has raised many questions, some of which will be looked at in one of the subsequent chapters of this thesis. For the present, there has been co-operation with British

well known publishing houses, such as Oxford University Press and Longman, which have opened their bookshops where books can be ordered but there are no licenses for publishing locally, like in other Eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia.

## **1.8 Private schools**

The first private school (not financed by the Ministry of Education) was opened as early as 1954 for the needs of the Ministry of Foreign affairs i.e The Centre for Foreign Languages and developed into a full-scale language school teaching children from the age of 9-10 as well as adults. After 'private enterprise', 'quick profit' became the buzz words, private language schools mushroomed in Skopje and in other larger towns in Macedonia. Their biggest problem is that most of them are run without sufficient quality control (Hartinger, 1993). All private language schools use British produced coursebooks and the learners also buy the books from them.

## **1.9 Problems of EFL in Macedonia**

### *Problem 1:*

*To a certain extent English is deprived of the functions and characteristics of being a language: no communicative competence is required of the students (Hymes, 1971).*

Because of the constant examining in secondary schools and preparations for the entrance examination to University, the first concern of teachers and learners of English is how to get high marks in the subject of English. The teachers usually tell the students such things as: remember the grammatical rule that auxiliaries help to form a tense or an expression, hence the name of auxiliary. They combine with present or past participles or with infinitives to

form tenses of ordinary verbs. We can always hear the teacher emphasizing these skills, such as reciting rules, which will help the pupils to deal with exams. The grammatical rules are learnt the same way as mathematical formulas i.e they should be remembered so that the pupils can apply them to the exam questions.

The two prerequisite skills in face-to-face communication, speaking and listening skills, are thought to be minor in that there are not any oral or audio tests in the university entrance examinations. Being trained in such a way from the beginning of their English learning, students are good at language tests but relatively weak in terms of communicative competence.

*Problem 2: There is cultural awareness, but not sufficient*

Foreign language programs often aim to promote an understanding of other cultures. Through cross-cultural understanding, we further hope that pupils can tolerate and appreciate the diversity of other cultures. Robinson argues:

understanding does not mean just decoding someone else's verbal system or being aware of why someone is acting or feeling the way they do. Understanding refers to empathizing or feeling comfortable with another person. (1988:1)

In other words, foreign language education is not only concerned with the learner's language knowledge, but also with how this knowledge helps him/her to positively relate to, respond to and interact with members of a different culture. As I mentioned earlier, Macedonia is a multi-ethnic society. Foreign language education conducted in the cultural dimension, might help to avoid tensions on a nationalistic basis, and clear up a lot of ethnocentrism. It might help to foster positive attitudes towards a different culture. I believe these kind of problems are more prominent in the Balkans since for centuries the Balkan nations have fought for dominance over each other and to subjugate the smaller nations.

There has been no systematic survey of learners' cultural awareness but there are many informal indications of the weaknesses of learners' cultural awareness.

In a small-scale enquiry we conducted among first year university students, it became evident that the students get their knowledge about English speaking cultures mostly from the media.

We realize that this is a small scale survey but it does show a certain level of knowledge of surface phenomena i.e behavioural patterns, stereotypes but this is not sufficient especially not for upper-intermediate and advanced students.

### *Problem 3 : Existing teaching methods are an anachronism*

The methods of teaching employed in primary and secondary schools as well as the textbooks used, have not shown satisfactory results, as documented by various projects carried out by aid organisations from the USA (USAID, USIS). Classroom language learning consists mostly of form-focused drills as opposed to meaning-focused communication exercises. The importance of context and use of authentic language data have not been sufficiently recognised. Learners are not provided with a variety of language experiences from both oral and written texts. Teachers and textbook writers need to be aware that the learners must be taught strategies for the negotiation of meaning and the needed skills.

### *Conclusion*

The problems, as any practising teacher knows, do not exist separately but are interwoven together. They are the cause and effect of one another. For example we may say that a lack of understanding of the target culture is the result of teaching English as a tool to get high marks in exams. Similarly, the mechanical teaching of grammatical rules results in the students' low interest in learning. Although students have already some knowledge of the customs, habits,

stereotypes of the target culture, this is not sufficient. The teacher on a day-to-day basis improves the content of the lessons but a more systematic way of teaching in the cultural dimension is required. To sum up, the linguistic structures are perhaps sufficient for the students to cope with examinations but insufficient for their overall language competence (see, 2.8). If we consider language study as an initiation into a kind of social practice, that is at the boundary of two cultures then, besides language itself, culture is also a necessary dimension of language teaching.

As we have seen earlier in the document stating the aims and objectives of secondary education the state educational system in its foreign language programs, aims to promote an understanding of other cultures. The concept that language learning includes learning the culture of the country and people where it is spoken is nothing new, but how can we make students understand the cultural aspects? How can we make the designers of English as a foreign language textbooks, whether they are British or Macedonian, to be more aware of the cultural aspect of language learning and to take into consideration the local needs of the learners as well as concentrating on the target culture(s). The analysis of foreign and home produced textbooks will throw light on some of these issues, more precisely it will give an analysis of the cultural content and vocabulary and lexis employed in both textbooks. We will return to these issues after the analyses and see if the above questions can be answered. But first, I will further expound on the inter-relationship between language and culture and how this knowledge can be implemented in the existing foreign language programs in Macedonia.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Language and Culture**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

A new interdisciplinary subject began to appear on the syllabus in many countries in the late 1980s and it was known as British Studies or British Cultural Studies. This subject was linked to the study of the English language and its aim was to study British life, institutions and culture. In Macedonia at the University of Saints Cyril & Methodius British Cultural Studies were inaugurated in 1997. The study of this interdisciplinary subject was based firmly on the belief that successful communication can only take place where there is sufficient awareness of a culture where the language that is learned is used.

#### **2.2 What is cultural knowledge?**

When discussing the importance of culture, language learning theorists are preoccupied with the question: what kind of knowledge is required for understanding another culture? For example the knowledge that a tourist might get in a handbook or phrasebook is hardly satisfactory. At the other end, there are courses that teach British institutions, political life, explaining the parliamentary system and the monarchy, the legal system and so on. Neither of these approaches is completely satisfactory, for contact with another culture involves not only basic information but a complex hermeneutic process for the individual.

Kramer (1990) for example accentuates the hermeneutic process involved in studying any culture. Culture is a complex network of signs, a web of signifying practices, and anyone

studying a culture should construct their own map of knowledge, but at the same time such a map will need to be modified as the cultural landscape constantly shifts and evolves. Further, the drawing of the map will depend on the individual: someone who is born into a culture will have a different perspective from someone who learns about the culture in his adult life, having spent his formative years elsewhere.

### **2.3 Language and Culture**

Cultural learning is a term used to describe a wide-ranging area of study, which encompasses disciplines that belong to the social sciences or humanities. In this chapter the background to cultural learning will be looked at beginning with a definition of 'culture'. This will be followed by looking at the relationship of language and culture through the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The second section will list the components of cultural learning that relate to foreign language learning. The levels of cultural learning or 'acculturation', will be considered followed by the link between TEFL and culture and the goals of TEFL. Subsequently, 'intercultural communicative competence' will be defined as the main objective of TEFL. The importance of English as the world language and its significance as the dominant foreign language in Macedonia will be addressed. In our opinion, a general survey such as this will enable us to locate specific problems and issues within it.

### **2.4 The relationship of language and culture**

It is beyond denial that the most important function of language is to communicate, whether spoken or written form. However people who speak the same language do not necessarily communicate well because good communication does not only mean decoding the symbols

in a language system. It also involves sharing the same or close cognitive knowledge of the world with the interlocutor or the author. Usually people from the same cultures share more similar cognitive knowledge of the world than people who come from different cultures. Therefore in terms of the function of communication, language learning includes learning the language itself as well as a culture which stands behind it. Paulston (1992) indicates the important role that culture plays in the process of language learning:

It cannot be said often enough that language does not exist in a vacuum but is an integral part of a specific culture from which it cannot be separated. Language learning is not merely acquiring a new skill, but it is also learning to adapt to the culture of the language (1992:5).

From the quotation we can see that language and culture are inseparable. What role does culture play in TEFL? What is their inter-relationship? These issues will develop in the following sections.

## **2.5 Definitions of Culture**

In the past, the study of 'culture' in foreign language learning, consisted of reading texts by classic writers with perhaps an outline of the history and geography of a country. This 'cultural' study was reserved for university level students.

In FLT the concept of culture has now widened and includes much more culture on offer. Definitions by language teaching specialists of what culture is, are numerous. Seelye, after stating that there is no general agreement on the subject, offers a wide-ranging definition:

culture emerges as a very broad concept embracing all aspects of human life.  
(1984:13)

What is it that makes people different, or what is culture exactly?

An answer lies in the domain of anthropology but anthropologists have not yet managed to agree on a definitive definition. It is interesting to see some of these definitions, put forward by anthropologists and other scholars, to compare their differences and similarities.

Robinson (1985) proposes a framework of definitions of culture which should be taken as complementary rather than as alternatives.

First she argues that the behaviourist approach treats culture as a set of observable behaviours, the outward manifestations of cultures such as traditions or habits, for example ways of greeting someone. The advantages of using this approach in cultural learning are that students can get a lot of information through observation and they can learn how to respond in certain circumstances. The disadvantage is that the reasons for the behaviour are not understood.

The second definition, based on the functionalist approach, also concentrates on culture as a social phenomenon, but emphasises the reasons and rules behind the observed behaviour rather than the behaviour itself. This approach is particularly useful to outsiders who can infer rules of society just by observing. Both of these approaches require that all aspects of culture are directly observable and that observers notice and interpret the foreign culture in a way they may never apply to their own.

The third definition given by Robinson is the cognitive definition. This defines culture as being internal rather than observable. The method that is used to interpret and classify information, is ethnography. It is a method borrowed from anthropology and it involves

observers trying to grasp the experiences and attitudes of their informants from their own point of view. What we mean is, the learner(s) should experience from the inside ideas, values and ways of organised interaction, instead of being constantly presented with information from the outside (Roberts, C., in Byram, M., 1994).

The final definition is the symbolic definition, which sees culture as a continuous system of symbols and meanings. The meanings are not fixed, they vary from one individual to another according to past experience.

All four definitions are interdependent according to Robinson, and each one has its usefulness. The four definitions put together cover a vast area and maybe for this reason no single definition has been regarded as complete.

Loveday's interpretation covers one or more of the above areas:

It involves the implicit norms and conventions of a society, its methods of 'going about doing things', its historically transmitted but also adaptive and creative ethos, its symbols and its organization of experience. (1984:34)

Loveday also says that culture is "...Something rather abstract and difficult to grasp immediately as one is part of it" (1984:34). Kramsch states that traditional foreign language teaching has ignored the fact that: '...a large part of what we call culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions" (1993:205). However, embodying the concept of 'culture' concretely, we may say that culture, as the expression of human thoughts, feelings and beliefs, is reflected in music, paintings, literature, architecture, customs, wedding rituals, funeral rites, ways of life and so on.

Language, being the medium of communication, is of course one of the important reflections of culture. It not only carries shared symbols, but also has symbolic importance for its users. For example the mother tongue, in some cases, determines and is part of national/ethnic identity and the consequences of suppressing one are too well-known to need explanation (Kramsch, C., 1998). A distinction should be made between national/ethnic identity and citizenship. This is a complex issue and we have introduced it in order to illustrate the symbolic importance of language. Our cultural heritage remains alive in proverbs, folk songs, metaphors - all shared by means of language, so, we may freely say that a society's language is an aspect of its culture. Louise Damen, in her discussion on language and culture says:

language is a tool that human beings have used as a special mode of adaptation and communication in conjunction with culture to change their environments, to manipulate nature, and to protect themselves. It is the cultural functions of language that are our major focus of interest (1987:120).

Perhaps the most clear and concise definition of culture is given by Kramsch:

culture can be defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. These standards are what is generally called their 'culture'(1998:10).

The definition of culture assumed in this writing is that culture represents a framework of ideas, values and shared knowledge common to a particular social group and the manifestations of them in behaviour and artefacts

The different ways of looking at culture and its relationship with language raise the fundamental question: to what extent are the world views, behavioural patterns, patterns of thought, shaped by, or dependent on, the language. In the next section we shall look at the theory that languages do affect the thought processes of their users.

## **2.6 Language and culture based on the Whorfian hypothesis**

The study of the relationship between language and culture has long been one of the parent disciplines of ethnolinguistics. In the 1930s and 1940s, two linguists and anthropologists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, presented a theory of language and culture which underlies the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. It has several labels such as linguistic relativity, linguistic determinism and is intriguing and a source of much controversy. In brief, the idea of the hypothesis is that language is not merely the reporter of human experience, but also and more significantly, the sculptor of human thoughts. It is postulated by Sapir and Whorf that languages contain not only sounds and signs but also human world perspective. Accordingly, differences in languages in fact are the cause of differences in human thought and culture.

Numerous arguments arose after the hypothesis was presented and many questions to this day remain unanswerable. Many scholars questioned the notion that language shapes thought. It would be absurd to think that Hopi Indians cannot have access to scientific thought because their language does not allow them to, or that in order to understand the concept of Newtonian time they have to learn English (Kramersch, 1998).

This strong version of the Sapir-Whorf relativist principle could easily be seen to lead to prejudice and racism, because some languages would be 'favoured' and privileged over others. What has generally been accepted nowadays (Kramersch, 1998) is the weaker version which has been supported by findings that there are cultural differences between speakers of different languages because they don't share the same way of viewing and interpreting reality; they don't categorize experience in the same manner.

According to Kramsch, the work of Sapir and Whorf has led to two important insights:

1. There is nowadays a recognition that language, as code, reflects cultural preoccupations and constrains the way people think
2. More than in Whorf's days, however, we recognise how important context is in complementing the meanings encoded in the language (Kramsch,1998:14).

The first insight relates to culture as semantically encoded in the language itself; the second concerns culture as expressed through the actual use of the language.

The definition of culture which is assumed in this work is based on the fact that: "The relativist hypothesis links language and culture as two sides of one coin" (Byram, 1997:2).

Which comes first - language or culture? Is language influenced by culture or is culture influenced by language? Robinson, also indicated that:

the relationship among culture, language and perception is somewhat like the chicken-egg question: 'which comes first?' (1985:14).

## **2.7 Linguistic relativity and foreign language teaching**

An important effect of this hypothesis on language teaching is to make clear that language learning requires careful attention to the specificity of each language and the thought and culture it expresses.

Although the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis remains arguable thus far, it is not totally valueless to foreign language teaching. It is a truism that languages, whether reflecting or influencing the perception of its speakers, have connections with cultures. Cultural patterns, customs and

ways of life are expressed in it. Accordingly, comparison of diversity between the target language and the native language provides the learners with an opportunity to think “Why are languages different?”, “What cultural patterns are conveyed in a linguistic structure or lexicon?”. Here, Brown’s comment serves to integrate the theses of linguistic relativity and of linguistic universality for foreign language teaching:

While we can recognize different world views and different ways of expressing reality depending upon one’s world view, we can also recognize through both language and culture some universal properties that bind us all together in one world (1987:47).

Comparative linguistic studies by Wierzbicka (1992) have to a certain extent given evidence to support the relativist hypothesis. She states that some areas of language do reflect culture, but she does not advocate that language influences or constrains thought as Sapir and Whorf did. There are differences in the realm of emotions and the way they are expressed in different languages, she says:

English has no word for the feeling encoded in the Polish word ‘tesknic’. Does this mean that native speakers of English do not know (never experience) the feeling in question? Not necessarily. Individual speakers of English have no doubt experienced this feeling. But the Anglo-Saxon culture as a whole has not found this feeling worthy of a special name (Wierzbicka 1992:123).

Learners should be introduced to the analysis of the link between grammatical structures and culture-specific phenomena as well as vocabulary. Of course, the language-culture links at the level of syntax or morphology are more difficult to explain, than explaining key words carrying ‘rich’ meanings which express beliefs and values.

So far, we can conclude that language does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in societies, in the cultures of the people of the world. Language is a socio-cultural phenomenon. Language, culture, the social environment and the local context are interwoven together and interdependent. Language is linked to the culture of its users.

Culture influences language as a means of communication. But this does not mean that language is simply a reflector of cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted. Byram says: “ It is both a symbol of the whole and a part of the whole which shapes and is in turn shaped by sociocultural actions, beliefs and values.” (Byram, 1990:18)

Languages are different because the cultures they represent and embody are different. Any attempt to separate language from culture would be artificial. Languages become extinct only when the cultures they represent fade away. This is probably why artificial languages such as “Esperanto” do not have widespread use or appeal and never acquire the features which characterize natural languages.

An important aspect of foreign language learning consists of acquiring the formal elements of the target language. The link between language and culture in the process of learning a foreign language is reflected in the meaning and usage of the elements of the target language.

## **2.8 Components of Cultural Learning related to foreign language learning**

Since culture encompasses vast areas of human experience, it has many components. We shall focus on the components that relate to foreign language learning. First it might be useful to clarify the central theoretical concept in communicative language teaching- ‘communicative competence’ (Hymes,1971). The origins of CLT can be traced to parallel developments in Europe and North America. In a research project at the University of Illinois, Savignon (1972) used the term communicative competence to describe the ability of classroom language

learners to interact with other learners. By encouraging them to use coping strategies such as, seeking explanation, asking for information and other linguistic or non-linguistic devices, the learners took risks and tried to solve the tasks that were given to them continuously using language other than memorised dialogues. These coping strategies formed the basis for the definition of 'strategic competence' in the three component framework for communicative competence devised by Canale and Swain (1980). The other two components are grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence. We have chosen as a guide, Van Ek's "Objectives for foreign language learning" of 1986 because of its subsequent use by the Council of Europe. In the first volume of this document Van Ek describes the six competencies he considers necessary to achieve comprehensive communicative ability. The definition of sociocultural competence has evolved from 1986 to 1991 in the up-dated version of "Threshold Level 1990" (Van Ek and Trim 1991) and in the preparatory work for the "Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching", which included a suggestion that a study of sociocultural competence should be "expanded to cover such non-functional aspects as attitudes to other cultures and communities" (Trim,1993)

The six competencies that Van Ek describes are: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, sociocultural competence and social competence. These competences, as might be expected, overlap constantly in practical use, but all of them are essential for learning a foreign culture as well as language and will be looked at in further detail.

### 2.8.1 *Linguistic competence*

Linguistic competence is defined by Van Ek (1986:39) as:

“The ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear their conventional meaning. By ‘conventional meaning’ we mean that meaning which native speakers would normally attach to an utterance when used in isolation.”

Linguistic competence is the foundation of all other competences, without some understanding of the vocabulary and structure of the target language it is impossible to grasp the culture that that language represents. As we saw earlier with respect to the inseparability of language and culture, Brown emphasises this connection:

“A language is part of a culture and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture”(1987:123).

At this point the following questions arise. Is it possible to understand another culture without learning the language? To what extent would this be possible? More precisely, to what extent learning the language is crucial?

Kramsch (1998) when explaining that language is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways, says that when people use a language they express facts, ideas beliefs that are understood and communicable because they refer to a common stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Thus, language reflects and expresses cultural reality. Not only do language users, members of a community express experience through language, they also create experience through language. The specific way that people use the spoken, written or

visual medium itself creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to, for example through a speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures. Therefore, language also embodies cultural reality. Finally, language as a system of signs has itself cultural value. Speakers view their language as a symbol of their social identity. Thus, in engaging in language, speakers are enacting sociocultural phenomena; in acquiring language, children acquire culture.

To quote Agar, who understands perfectly the strong link between language and culture in L2 acquisition:

because culture or background knowledge or member's resources are what make the difference between the speechless master of L2 syntax and the L2 speaker who is communicatively competent in a non-native world (1991:175).

Therefore, linguistic competence is crucial in language learning, but it is only one element of learning a language.

### ***2.8.2 Sociolinguistic competence***

Van Ek clearly defines the difference between linguistic and sociolinguistic competence:

“Linguistic competence covers the relation between linguistic signals and their conventional meaning (conventional in the sense of what they are normally, in isolation, supposed to mean), whereas sociolinguistic competence covers the relation between linguistic signals and their contextual - or situational meaning.”(1986:41)

Sociolinguistic competence can be acquired at a very early age in the native culture. Even small children become aware of the different meanings that words acquire in different situations, and which language is appropriate in which situations. A basic level of sociolinguistic competence together with the student's linguistic competence could greatly improve his/her ability to successfully communicate.

### 2.8.3 *Discourse competence*

Van Ek describes what discourse competence is :

We mean by this the ability to perceive and to achieve coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns (1986:35).

This is a skill which is well developed in the native culture but to a certain extent neglected in learning a foreign language and culture. A good example of how important this skill is that it must be learnt by people planning to do business cross-culturally. Knowledge of relevant vocabulary and basic linguistic competence will not be enough. They have to know how to express disagreement, how to open a conversation, how to insist without being offensive, in other words, how to say things diplomatically. We are focusing on the native speaker cultural norms here and we are aware of the difficulty of authentically representing them in a classroom of non-natives. The implications of accepting the native speaker as the norm, and the arguments on linguistic imperialism and political and cultural dominance of English as the *lingua franca* will be discussed later in this chapter. In international discussions, for instance foreign trade, English as a language can sometimes seem strange to foreign students because in international discussions it is seldom used in a direct way. In most other languages people can use very direct language without being offensive. As an illustration, in the business English courses that I taught I gave my students examples of how certain sentences could be made more tentative and open to negotiation simply by making them interrogative. For instance a suggestion like: "That is too late." Could be made more tentative if presented in question form: "Is that too late? Or "Would that be too late?" or the suggestions will sound even more open to negotiation if they are grammatically negative: "Isn't that too late?" and "Wouldn't that be too late?" Also, it is very important to avoid using "no", but rather phrases like: "I'm afraid I've no idea", "Not at the moment thank you", "No, not yet." A direct

translation of 'no' would not be acceptable and students have to be made aware that there are much softer ways of saying 'no' which are necessary to construct and maintain a discourse. In expressing disagreement students are instructed to be aware of the way they use English in order to make their message more direct, more tactful, more diplomatic in meetings with native speakers. Without a certain level of discourse competence, it would be difficult to sustain a conversation satisfactory to both parties.

Discourse competence also applies to written texts. In this domain the cultural learner needs to be able to interpret and produce texts. An advanced learner should be able to write a business letter, taking into account the business correspondence conventions and the type of language normally used by speakers of English around the world, not just native speakers.

Thus, discourse competence is also related to the behaviours and expectations specific to a culture.

#### ***2.8.4 Strategic competence***

According to Van Ek this particular competence involves:

the use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in the language user's knowledge of the code or for breakdown of communication for other reasons (1986:35).

Van Ek goes on to observe that these strategies are used much more often in the native culture of the user, than, as one would expect, in the foreign culture. He lists some of the strategies often used, such as: retracing a sentence, rephrasing, substituting words, describing, demonstration or gesture. These strategies are a normal part of communication and are used to

emphasise, supplement or replace normal language. Van Ek points out that the transfer of native strategies and the acquisition of new strategies is an important part of achieving communicative competence, since a conversation without any of these strategies would sound abnormally rigid and artificial.

### ***2.8.5 Sociocultural Competence***

The use of a particular language implies the use of a reference frame which is at least partly determined by the sociocultural context in which that language is used by native speakers (Van Ek,1986:35).

It is precisely this reference frame which is at the heart of what the cultural learner has to grasp. As we mentioned earlier, any communication involves a cultural context i.e a frame of shared meanings and assumptions which are not made explicit in every meeting. To the foreign learner this frame of shared meanings can present a far greater obstacle to understanding than the language itself. What is accepted cultural knowledge to a native speaker may in fact make a conversation unintelligible to an outsider. This explains why many foreign language students can not understand the meaning of advertisements, TV chat shows, jokes when visiting the target country, even though their linguistic competence is quite satisfactory. Zarate (1986) states that there is a certain world view which is reflected in the linguistic and paralinguistic behaviour of the members of any particular group. Within the group the members conform to the set of shared meanings, but miscommunication occurs when members of different groups attempt to communicate without any adaptation of the native reference frame. Loveday explains this :

Every utterance contains presuppositions of some kind and many are culturally relative... Obviously native speakers and perhaps teachers of their own language take such culturally determined presuppositions for granted and often leave them for L2 learners to incomprehend (1982:38).

Paralinguistic behaviour is also ignored and left to be 'incomprehended', yet, on the other hand it is accepted that non-verbal communication is important in that it reflects cultural norms.

In recent years studies of non-verbal communication are numerous, both in research and popular literature. The basic assumption underlying these studies is that words themselves are limited and that the critical factor in understanding has to do with the cultural aspects that exist beyond the lexical. These aspects include dimensions of non-verbal behaviour (Morain, 1986).

The importance of kinesics in cross-cultural understanding is seen in the fact that for instance, posture and movement are used differently in different cultures to express various attitudes, states and ideas. Morain gives the example of the French-style of walking which is disciplined and space-constrained, as opposed to the American style. Facial expressions, or gazing at the speaker might be considered offensive in some cultures, then again in others it is a sign of politeness. The nodding of the head in Bulgaria and Macedonia means 'no', whereas in most other cultures it means 'yes'. Another dimension of non-verbal behaviour is the distance kept between the speaker and addressee. In some cultures a large amount of physical contact is considered appropriate and a close interaction distance. A foreigner from the opposite culture of low-contact, high distance, would feel uncomfortable entering such a culture if not made aware of these differences beforehand.

All of the examples above show a necessity for cultural learners to try to understand the reference frames and shared meanings which are used by speakers of the target culture. Only in this way their perfectly formed, grammatically correct sentences will sound 'natural' and

will not sound peculiar to the native speaker. The process of attaining sociocultural competence does not have to wait until a later stage of language proficiency has been acquired by the student. It is not necessary to have reached a high-level of linguistic fluency before knowing about the culture of the foreign language that is studied.

### **2.8.6 *Social Competence***

Social competence is the last of the six competencies and is described by Van Ek as:

If two or more individuals are to coordinate their efforts to engage in interaction they must, at least, have the will and the skill to do so. The will to interact involves motivation, attitude and self-confidence; the skill to interact involves such qualities as empathy and the ability to handle social situations (1986:35).

Language and culture learning are social activities which require emotional as well as cognitive commitment on the part of the learner.

Personality factors, such as self-confidence, extroversion and motivation are central to the learning process. All educators know from experience in teaching that the shy, introvert students, lacking self-confidence and the will to interact, achieve slow progress in language fluency. Here, we come to the approach of learning a language without the culture, where the students can use only their cognitive faculties and will not feel 'threatened' by the new and unfamiliar which also questions their existing ideals and values. In spite of the potential threat, it is false to deny the cultural aspects as this results in a separation of language and culture. Byram, discusses the consequences of such a division:

To separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated in the early learning stages as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena. The consequence is that learners, rightly unable to accept this isolation, assume that the foreign language is an epiphenomenon of their own language, and that it refers to and embodies their existing understandings and

interpretations of their own and foreign cultures. Where this arises, as it does so frequently in the early years of secondary education, the pupils cannot be said to be learning a foreign language in the proper sense; they are learning a codified version of their own (1991:18).

The result of learning a language without the culture is either a version of the target language filtered through the learner's existing frames of reference, or a kind of artificial language which holds no meanings or values at all.

The potential 'threat' mentioned earlier, is a result of the fear and insecurity students feel through learning a foreign language and its culture, where the student's own perceptions and world view are changed. Learning a 'codified version' of one's own language is a safe option for students since it requires only cognitive effort to learn the structures that link the words, where the latter symbolise concepts in the native language. Learning a culture as well as the language requires much more effort on the part of the learner. The student has to modify his/her existing ways of thinking and show willingness to accept that his/her world view is not the only correct one.

This is, in fact, the highest goal in language teaching, to develop understanding and tolerance, as well as increase in knowledge. The student's social competence is of considerable importance in this respect.

Van Ek's six competencies provide a framework within which language and cultural learning can be achieved. Since the goal of teaching a foreign language is to enable the student to function properly in the target culture, language teaching should not be confined to purely linguistic competence, but should apportion greater importance to the other, culturally related competencies.

## 2.9 The Intercultural Perspective of Foreign Language Teaching

For some years there has been a reaction against a certain classicism in foreign language teaching where it has been assumed that the language learner's ultimate aim is to be indistinguishable from native users. That learners should conform to native norms and cultural assimilation was considered an indispensable aspect of linguistic proficiency. In a study, one of a number commissioned by the Council of Europe in connection with the development of a Common European Framework for language learning, teaching and assessment, Byram and Zarate challenge the above mentioned assumption, claiming that language learners should not be trained as native speakers, but should develop as intercultural personalities, bringing the two cultures into relation and becoming more mature and complex people as a result. To expect learners to model themselves on native speakers in sociocultural competence is to misunderstand learners' social situation. Byram & Zarate explain:

Native speakers live at the centre of a system of values and beliefs, from which they - ethnocentrically- perceive their own sociocultural experience and their contact with other cultures. Language learners have a different outside perception of that same culture, from their own -ethnocentric- perspective...It is for this reason that we shall argue that the learner must be described as an "intercultural speaker"(Byram & Zarate:1997:9-10).

The language learner, not only has a socio-professional status, but s/he is also defined as an individual who has been socialized in a given culture. Quite frequently s/he takes the initiative or accepts geographical or professional mobility, in so doing, the language learner - a social actor - does not have to imitate all things native. It is rather the other way round, s/he travels already with a stock of concepts, cultural resources which s/he has no intention of renouncing during his/her period abroad.

Language learning must mean to take on a new social status, that of a representative of one's native country, which is what s/he is and other members of the target community will regard the learner as a foreigner, no matter how proficient s/he is in the target language. Furthermore, the language learner is a newcomer to a community whose conventions and rituals s/he will have to learn and finally, s/he is a cultural intermediary i.e intercultural speaker between the cultures with which s/he is connected.

## 2.10 Intercultural communicative competence

From the above discussion, it may be possible to define "intercultural communicative competence". Byram and Zarate's definition is based on the concept of the 'intercultural speaker': someone who has linguistic skills but not those of the native speaker, and someone who has the knowledge and understanding with which to interpret one way of life in terms of another, to relate two cultures and cultural practices, to be a mediator between two cultures (Byram and Zarate,1994).

It might be useful at this point to clarify and point out the difference between what is meant by *intercultural* and *multicultural*. Kramsch (1998) defines the terms as follows:

*intercultural* 1. Refers to the meeting between people from different **cultures** and languages across the political boundaries of nation-states.  
2. Refers to communication between people from different ethnic, social, gendered **cultures** within the boundaries of the same nation.

*multicultural* Political term used to characterize a society composed of people from different cultures or an individual who belongs to several cultures.

(1998:128-9)

So, the first meaning of ‘intercultural’, referring to the communication of people of various cultures, would be the relevant one in foreign language teaching.

Learners must strive to develop intercultural communicative competence and this is why FLT must be performed having the intercultural perspective in mind. The aims of this kind of teaching would be to teach the learners skills in order for them to become intercultural speakers, constantly mediating between their culture and others, interpreting and reinterpreting meanings.

## **2.11 The Goals of Foreign Language Teaching**

Once the importance of cultural learning has been accepted, it is necessary to examine what exactly it involves. This section will consider what is aspired to in cultural learning and what levels of cultural learning could be achieved.

If a goal is to be attained it first has to be clearly defined and specified. The fact that “there are no immutable and ideal objectives in language teaching” (Wilkins, 1974:58-59), has been confirmed by the variety of classifications of language teaching aims. A great deal of overlapping can be noticed among different classifications. However, cultural goals have only marginally been included. It is only recently that they have gained more attention.

A comprehensive categorization of FLT aims has been proposed in a document from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate, the Ministry of Education in England (Byram et al., 1991:103-4), where according to their effects on the pupil’s experience, goals are divided into two groups:

linguistic and literary, and human and social. The human and social aims consist of promoting an awareness of differences in social customs and behaviour, cultivating positive attitudes towards other countries, arousing curiosity about foreign cultures and lifestyles. These human and social aims can be identified as cultural but their implementation is seen as dependent on mastering the linguistic objectives.

Similarly, Djordjevich (1975) maintains that the introduction of linguistic elements should be accompanied by infiltration of cultural information. It ensues from the factors influencing the process of culture learning and the nature of intercultural communication already discussed, that teaching culture in the EFL classroom should pursue the following goal:

Foreign language teaching should enable learners to communicate using a foreign language in different way. This is communicative teaching and the term “communicative competence” which is progress compared to grammar-translation method employed for so many years. It is concerned with language in use but still mainly focuses on acquiring linguistic skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing).

In its fullest, richest meaning, teaching should strive to give learners “intercultural communicative competence”, which involves aspects of the pupil’s personality and experience. This kind of teaching provides students not only with a skill but also contributes significantly to their overall education. This is what culture and language teaching should be about.

The learners need ‘cultural awareness’, i.e a recognition that their own culture-specific meanings may not be understandable to other speakers of the language. Being aware of the differences, they can anticipate the problems which may arise in cross-cultural

communication. Cultural awareness involves a consciousness of how the culture-specific meanings of the learner as well as his/her identity is perceived and interpreted by the speaker of another language and how these factors influence the communicative process. In other words, learners should be provided with an insight into the characteristics of the target culture and awareness of its distinctiveness for the purpose of cultivating positive attitudes and tolerance of other people and civilizations, which is essential for successful intercultural communication and interaction. Acquisition of knowledge about other people's ways of life will broaden the horizons of the learner and enable him/her to surpass the narrow boundaries of ethnocentrism and prejudice that often stem from ignorance. Teaching culture is a mighty pedagogical device for facilitating personality growth. In addition, learning about other people's ways of life brings some fresh air into the 'often dull and lethargic classroom atmosphere' (Djordjevich, 1975), no matter how energetic and enthusiastic the teacher is. Hence, a secondary or implicit cultural goal may be discerned: teaching culture in order to reinforce the motivation of the learners for language learning.

Since the emphasis is on communication, FLT focuses on the individual as a participant in social situations and this participant needs a number of skills - linguistic, non-verbal, social- and most important a specific knowledge of a country and society and the capacity to extend that knowledge to new communication situations. Any generalised knowledge learners have provides a framework, a system of references within which interaction can successfully take place.

It may be useful here to consider what cultural learning is not. Culture teaching does not aim to produce born again French or Englishmen, anymore than religious education aims to convert students to Hinduism by teaching about it (Parmenter,1993). When learning another

culture the student does not have to relinquish his/her existing cultural identity nor does it mean that he/she has to wholeheartedly embrace all aspects of the foreign culture. "What cultural learning does aspire to is relativisation, understanding and empathy" (Parmenter,1993:26).

An important stage of cultural learning is an awareness of one's own language and culture and an ability to relativise it. Through studying other cultures, students can be helped to realise that their own culture is not the only 'right' way and there are aspects of their own culture which others might find strange, peculiar. This is an essential step to intercultural understanding. Byram explains this concept:

To bring about change in pupils' schemata of their own ethnicity, we need to confront them with new experience of their ethnicity. This can be done by presenting them with a foreigner's view of their ethnicity, with the intention that their existing schemata of their own ethnicity shall change when they cannot cope with the new experience. Such new experience needs, of course, to be agreeable and non-threatening, so that pupils are prepared to change their schemata rather than reject the experience by assimilating it to their existing views of foreigners: they must be helped to take seriously foreign views of themselves which differ from their own, and to adjust their own to give recognition to the foreign views (1989:117).

This ability to accept foreign views of one's own native culture is a prerequisite to successful learning of another culture. Valdes (1986) stresses that it is understanding and acceptance which are aimed for in intercultural communication. She gives an example of a role-play where American and Malaysian attitudes towards helping an old lady carry a heavy burden were examined. A similar example in relation to Macedonian would be the fact that young people are expected to relinquish their seat in a bus or train if an elderly person comes along. Children are brought up to respect the ageing, help them cross the street for example, and as in the case above, help them with a heavy burden. The elderly also expect such a behaviour from young people. But this kind of custom is slowly giving way to the American attitude i.e that

young people should respect the independence of the elderly and their pride in doing things for themselves. Of course, the objective of the role-play was not to stop the young helping the old, but to help them understand the differences in points of view, and to understand why the American students reacted the way they did.

This is where we come to the concept of empathy. Brown (1987:107) describes empathy as:

“..reaching beyond the self and understanding and feeling what another person is understanding and feeling.”

It is probably this ability to “feel” what another person is feeling which carries empathy beyond understanding and accepting.. Brown goes on to say that :

Psychologists generally agree...that there are two necessary aspects to the development and exercising of empathy: first, an awareness and knowledge of one's own feelings, and second, identification with another person (1987:107).

So, students who would like to learn the skill of empathising with their target group must first learn to become aware of and relativise their own cultural values and if they are able to show empathy, they have been initiated in one of the most essential skills of cultural learning.

Therefore the essential processes in cultural learning are: awareness, relativisation, understanding, acceptance and empathy. By mastering these elements, the ultimate aim of cultural learning would be achieved. According to Seelye (1984:56) “..knowledge of another culture is tantamount to moving out of a dark dank corner of the cave into more illumination.”

Cultural learning thus aspires, not only to provide knowledge and skills, but through the cognitive processes such as reflection and understanding contributes to the overall education of the individual.

As mentioned before, foreign language learners become interpreters of the frameworks of their interlocutors and of their own framework to their interlocutors, so they are intercultural speakers of a language, mediators between two frameworks and the cultural practices which take place within them.

## **2.12 Levels of Acculturation**

We have so far ascertained that one of the most cherished goals of foreign language teaching is the promotion of international, cross-cultural understanding.

However the goal cannot be achieved by teaching language itself. It is a false assumption that a bilingual is naturally a bicultural because it is not definite that a person who speaks two languages would perceive the cultures of his first and second languages in an equal and non-biased way. It is human nature to judge the latter experiences with the value and belief of previous experiences. If foreign-language learners assess the target-language culture and people with his/her native-culture cognition, misjudgement is in most cases inevitable.

### ***2.12.1 Stages of Acculturation***

It follows that a great deal will depend on the inclusion of the cultural dimensions of the target language if the goal to promote international and cross-cultural understanding is to be achieved. Here we can take Brown's (1980) proposal about SLA (Second Language Acquisition) for reference. He states that SLA is related to stages of acculturation (i.e the

ability of the learner to relate and respond easily to the foreign language culture). Brown identifies four stages of acculturation:

1. initial excitement and euphoria
2. culture shock leading to feelings of estrangement and hostility towards the target culture;
3. culture stress involving a gradual and vacillating recovery from hostility towards the target culture(s)
4. assimilation or adaptation to the new culture

The third stage is the key point which decides the foreign-language learner's perception of the target-language culture(s) and people. When the learner encounters a new language and culture, they first feel curious and fresh. Then they sense the differences which challenge their old cognitive experiences. If the period passes without learners having reached or surpassed a certain acculturation threshold, they may well become 'fixed' where they are, highly resistant to change both linguistically and socially. Provided that at this stage we offer the learner the target-culture(s) knowledge in a non-biased way, it helps to foster their positive attitude and cognition toward the language and culture they learn.

This is another reason why cultural studies should be a systematic part of the English curriculum in Macedonia. It is hoped that the teachers of English will be also prepared to introduce a target culture in an objective way. The teacher should point out to the pupils the concept that the diversities of languages and cultures are merely a kind of difference, having nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. In other words the teacher has to prevent students from experiencing the typical chain reaction of different - inferior or superior - hostile. Only under the objective and non-biased perception can communication and understanding exist between people from different cultures.

## 2.13 Conclusion

Thus far, this chapter has been looking into the relationship between language and culture, language and thought and the significance of this background theory to language teaching and learning.

The definition of 'culture' used in this thesis was formulated. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was considered in order to illuminate the fundamental question, which is to what extent are world views, behavioural patterns, patterns of thought, shaped by, dependent on language. The insight given by the work of Sapir and Whorf is that culture is semantically encoded in the language itself and also the context in which the language is spoken complements the meanings encoded in the language. Language as a code both reflects cultural preoccupations and constrains the way people think. The important implications of this theory of linguistic relativity for foreign language teaching and especially for the specificities of this thesis, is that learners should be introduced to the analysis of the link between grammatical structures and culture-specific phenomena as well as vocabulary.

The six competencies that relate to foreign language learning were considered. All of these competencies overlap in practice and language teaching should not be confined solely to develop linguistic competence in learners, although we have seen that linguistic competence is crucial.

In the next section, we looked at the essential processes in cultural learning. By mastering the elements of awareness, relativisation, understanding and empathy, the ultimate aim of cultural learning would be achieved, which is intercultural communicative competence, involving

aspects of the learner's personality and experience. Thus, language learners become intercultural speakers of a language, mediators between two frameworks and cultural practices which take place within them. Finally, in order to achieve this goal, the levels of acculturation related to Second Language Acquisition were looked at, where the third stage of acculturation was seen as the key point which decides the foreign-language learner's perception of the target-language culture and people. The learner should be offered target-culture knowledge in a non-biased way which will help to foster positive attitudes and cognition toward the language and culture they learn.

We have gradually reached the specificities of this thesis, namely the analysis of the cultural contents of two textbooks for learning English with a special emphasis on the sociocultural content of vocabulary. The link between language and culture has been established therefore we shall proceed to the practical /empirical issue of analysing to what extent the theory is reflected in the two textbooks.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Criteria for cultural content analysis**

#### **3.1 Basic Principles**

The implementation of cultural studies in foreign language education involves a whole series of educational, pedagogical and methodological procedures. Since this study will focus on the cultural contents of two textbooks, one locally produced by Macedonian authors and the other published in Britain, it will concentrate on which principles underlie the criteria which will be used later on for analysis. Special emphasis will be given to the cultural aspects of vocabulary used in the textbooks. The criteria for sociocultural content of vocabulary will be established in the following chapter, where current issues on vocabulary teaching and learning will be considered.

Understanding the underlying assumptions is of utmost importance if an informed evaluation and analysis is to be made.

If we may reiterate the well-known quotation from Zen Buddhism: ‘insights are gained not through answers but by asking the right question’, it is reasonable to expect that through evaluative questioning some common core of aims and objectives i.e principles for establishing criteria for cultural content analysis could be reached.

As an introduction, let us look at some of the general guidelines offered by FLT experts and scholars on the analysis of the content of FLT textbooks. These principles are crucial and can

be also used to derive criteria for analyzing cultural content in textbooks.

Doughill (1987) relies on four cardinal points :

*Face validity*

The extent to which the course is transparent, i.e the aims and underlying intentions are clear.

*Generative push*

The extent to which the course enables students to generate language outside the classroom.

*Coherence or pattern*

The extent to which the course hangs together as a package.

*Affective depth*

The extent to which the content touches the inner person.

These four fundamental points can be applied as underlying principles for establishing criteria for cultural content analysis as well. As we have already seen in Chapter 2, language and culture are inseparable. A written text, whatever its kind is never neutral. Learners are bound to come across cultural content of some kind.

The present cultural content analysis as well as vocabulary cultural content analysis will be based on the universal, general guidelines which are thought to be necessary. Guo (1997) used these principles to formulate criteria for the analysis of the cultural content of Chinese foreign language textbooks. Apart from these principles, we shall also look at the issue of authenticity and cultural authenticity which will be an important part of our forthcoming

analysis, and in this survey of principles and guidelines, will be a part of the fourth principle “Reflection of social reality”. All of these principles will be taken into account in the process of formulating sensible criteria which are also intended to be applicable for the analysis of the cultural dimensions of any foreign language textbook. They are as follows:

1. Culture contents within the linguistic capacities of learners.
2. Facilitating both the development of an understanding and competence in intercultural communication and acculturation.
3. Understanding the most fundamental features of the target culture
4. Reflection of social reality.
5. Authenticity and cultural authenticity
6. The issue of English as the *lingua franca*

Let us look at each one of these principles separately.

### ***3.1.1 Culture contents within the linguistic capacities of learners***

The cultural contents have to be at a level to fit the learner’s linguistic skills. Considerable linguistic skills are needed if interpretation of meaning is to be performed at any depth. Even at a very basic level, learners should be introduced to some social features, and as learning will progress, their understanding of the target culture will also advance.

We should also consider the importance of the relevance of the cultural material to the age of the learners. So, we should also take into account the appropriateness of age as a criterion.

Closely tied with this criterion is motivation. It might be expected, perhaps, that if the cultural information is appropriate, compatible to the age of the learners i.e their interests, way of life and so on, they could be motivated to learn more, which in turn could give rise to a greater degree of empathy and understanding of the target culture.

### ***3.1.2 Facilitating both the development of an understanding and competence in international communication and acculturation***

It is important that the learners become aware of the difference between their own culture and that of the target language culture(s). This will help them to look at their own values and beliefs in a different light. It will make them more flexible in cross-cultural communication, and they will develop the skill to search for new meanings. Cultural awareness has also deeper educational aims, such as developing empathy and learners' cognition. Byram proposed that cultural awareness:

would cause learners to reflect on and explicate their own key cultural concepts, however disconcerting this may be, thereby making them see themselves as others do and modifying their existing schemata and cultural competence (1989:144).

As we have already seen, the ultimate goal to be reached in language and culture learning is intercultural communicative competence. Since it is not realistic for learners to achieve native standards (they can never be natives, they will always be foreigners and will be perceived as such by the native community) neither linguistically nor socioculturally (this is very rare), the term is devised on an extended vision based upon different cultures. The learners should ideally achieve a better understanding of themselves and use their own cultural experience to play an active role in this extended new vision. Byram and Buttjes explain this very well:

it would be misguided to teach as if learners can acquire foreign cultural concepts, values and behaviours as if they were *tabula rasa* : just as it is misguided to teach language structures as if there will be no transfer from the first language. Equally it would be short-sighted to assume that the first language cannot be used to help learners grasp aspects of the foreign culture (1991:18).

### ***3.1.3 Understanding the most fundamental features of the(a) target culture(s)***

Learners need to know the most fundamental characteristics of the target society and culture. It is logical that there are some parts of what is a huge system that are commonly shared and are more basic than others. These are the so-called 'key concepts' which are dominant over a cultural system ( Byram,1991). In order to understand a culture as a whole, one needs to know the more fundamental parts which will provide the key to the culture.

Therefore, materials for teaching and learning a foreign language and its culture should provide learners with this kind of fundamental cultural information which in turn will help learners interpret meanings close to the way a native would do.

### ***3.1.4 Reflection of social reality***

When discussing cultural references in European textbooks, Risager (1990) stresses the importance of social realism in European textbooks. She says that textbooks have been influenced by the postmodern trend, which involves fragmentation - i.e reality is expressed in fragments, in flashes, interest in the glossy surface, lack of personal feelings and lack of historical perspective. The newer textbooks, Risager explains, are much more realistic than the social narrowness predominant in the textbooks of the 1950s an 1960s. However, this

realism is not “socially and culturally structured, it is fragmented. Reality is described in flashes” (1990:190).

Since the actual language practice in the classroom environment is related to life and experience of the pupils themselves, Risager emphasises that “the general function of the sociocultural content of the textbooks is to go beyond this self-centred perspective” (1990:188). Therefore, textbooks should go beyond representing the middle-class family, living in an urban environment carrying out trivial conversation in situations of spare time. The dialogues should be made more imaginative even at the elementary level. The characters should not be ‘half-persons’, but ‘real’ people with feelings. Even at the elementary level characters can be made more realistic by using mother-tongue texts, photos and by expanding the reference to authentic persons already known by some of the learners.

Another observation made by Risager is that all textbooks are characterised by a neutral style, whereby everything that is contentious or might cause conflict is avoided. This, she goes on to explain, implies that all cultural matters have equal worth and have a right to exist, but on the other hand it also implies that one should not criticise them. This kind of cultural relativism destroys gradually the capacity for free thinking in learners and is damaging to pedagogical aims of discussion and engagement.

Whatever is selected in the learning materials and which reflects the culture of that language needs to be authentic - close to real life. The learners need to be informed about real-life situations and people otherwise there will be no understanding of the target culture and learning would be hindered. For instance, Byram (1991) gives an example of a teenage boy studying French. When asked about his impression after his visit to France, the boy said that

he was surprised that all the French women were working full-time, whereas in the textbook, the French women were all depicted as housewives, in the kitchen. So, artificial contexts mislead learners and learners have to experience a new culture from within to get hold of its full meaning.

The importance of using genuine or actual, authentic texts needs to be addressed here in more detail. Authenticity, and more specifically cultural authenticity, plays a crucial role in the analysis of cultural dimensions in any textbook.

### ***3.1.5 Authentic texts and Cultural authenticity***

There has been a commonly accepted definition in discussions of authentic language in language teaching that authentic texts in a particular language refer to all materials in that language created in natural communication other than the prefabricated artificial language materials used in many traditional textbooks (cf. Kramsch,1993; Little, Devitt and Singleton,1994). Typical sources of authentic materials used in EFL/ESL textbooks include newspapers, magazines, novels, poems, advertisements, restaurant menus, instruction manuals, notices, recipes, telephone directories, conversations, radio broadcasts, television programmes, films, computer programmes and multimedia. Studies by Peacock (1997), Morrison (1989), Swaffar (1985) have shown that there is an overall positive outcome of using authentic texts in view of motivating students in learning the target language and in terms of developing in them communicative and socio-cultural competence. Moreover, these studies seem to prove that authentic texts have the capacity of enhancing the quality of interaction in the target language if they are carefully selected to address learners' pre-occupations, to activate their knowledge of the world and to stimulate their interests.

Widdowson (1979) made a distinction between two types of instances of language use: namely genuine and authentic. While genuineness of a text is defined as the quality of the text itself, authenticity refers to the correspondence between the text producer's intentions and the reader's interpretation. Most texts used in many EFL/ESL textbooks are genuine examples of discourse. However, authenticity can not be realised without a high degree of relating the text to the reader/hearer. If these texts are used solely for grammar practice, reading aloud, vocabulary study, translation and so on, authenticity will not be achieved.

The discussion on authenticity and language teaching put forward by Widdowson has now moved into a new phase, namely that of cultural authenticity (Nostrand, 1989). The relationship between authentic texts to educational aims has been re-examined, resulting in a concern that "authentic texts from one culture may give a false impression to a student from another culture, unless they are presented in an authentic context which makes clear precisely what they exemplify" (Ibid. p.49). An English recipe, for example, is an authentic text and the cultural authenticity of the recipe is embedded in a whole set of social and symbolic relations in the culture. These may include a system of weighting, ingredients, cooking utensils, the usual cooking methods and favoured taste, all of which may be different from their counterparts in the learners' native culture. If the recipe is exploited in the classroom to practise ways of using infinitive forms of the verbs, the response to the authentic text is inappropriate and thus cultural authenticity is not realised.

For pedagogical purposes, Kramsch examined four aspects which are relevant to cultural authenticity in foreign language teaching: representative usage, cultural competence, critical understanding and authentic language learning. She takes the cultural context as her point of departure and suggests "to include the creation of a 'sphere of interculturality', through the

use of culturally authentic texts”(1993:13). This actually means direct experience of the foreign culture but in a classroom environment. Not all cultural experience needs to take place in the foreign country. The learning involved would be similar to a stay in the foreign country but it would not be so complex and rich. For instance learning to cook a certain food which is focused on a specific culture would be similar to eating the food in the foreign country (Byram,1990).

In Macedonia the artificiality of the classroom situation, which emphasizes memory exercises, verb paradigms and applies the grammar-translation method, is the barrier of acquiring appropriate cultural competence that underpins communicative competence. As we have seen in Chapter 2 full communicative ability lies in linguistic competence as well as cultural competence.

In foreign language teaching, how can the instructors help learners gain access to the central the target-language culture? Here, using culturally accurate texts serves as a possible solution. Actual texts (authentic texts) refer to texts spoken and written by users of a language for the purposes of communication with other users of that language. They display the way language is used in non-pedagogic and natural communication in contrast with texts which are artificially produced to highlight particular structural or formal features. Kramsch gives a more explicit explanation of actual texts:

In their written form, everyday texts of information require readers to adopt the communicative reading strategies of native speakers: skim and scan for desired information, capitalize on the natural redundancy of a text and get clues from its context, recognize authorial intention and act upon it - for example, stop at a stop sign or bake a cake according to a recipe. As spoken exchanges, authentic texts require participants to respond with behaviours that are socially appropriate to the setting, the status of the interlocutors, the purpose, key, genre, and instrumentalities of the exchange, and the norms of interaction agreed upon by native speakers (1993:177).

When using authentic texts as teaching materials, the emphasis is on what the learner does with the language rather than what s/he knows about the language. For example, an English operation instruction for a washing machine is 'a piece of cultural realia' (Kramersch, 1993:178), but if the teacher analyzes its sentence structures or other grammatical items in the classroom, she has not used it in the way native speakers do when they want to operate a newly bought washing machine. Therefore, teachers have to change their old concept of teaching. For example, when using a recipe as 'a cultural realia', the teacher can explain the various ingredients which are seldom used in our Macedonian cuisine, can further explain the special discourse for writing recipes and most of all enhance the students' understanding of the dining habits and customs common in some English speaking countries.

Since the choice of texts is of crucial importance in a textbook, before we proceed with the analysis of the cultural contents of the textbooks we should have in mind that, on the basis of recent discussions of authentic texts and cultural authenticity five major dimensions emerge as an evaluation of authenticity of English as a foreign language textbooks. These are:

1. Contemporaneity of genuine texts
2. Degree of originality
3. Heterogeneity of cultural representations
4. Discourse contextualisation in exercise designing

#### *Contemporaneity of genuine texts*

One of the important roles of foreign language textbooks is to expose the learner to the contemporary culture(s) of the target language. In Byram and Essarte-Sarries's words, the culture should be presented as "it is lived and talked about by people who are credible and

recognisable as real human beings” (1991:180). As documented by Kane (1991), the selection of texts mainly from outdated sources may cause a reduction of authenticity and projects an inaccurate picture of a modern society. This does not mean that in selecting materials, writers should focus only on the dates of the texts as many up-to-date authentic texts have only ephemeral value and interest. Perhaps some encyclopaedic essays, biographies which have lasting significance and are interesting might be taken into account. The main issue here is that textbook writers should be fully aware of this dimension, and when selecting materials they should give priority to those contemporary authentic texts rather than the ones that are antiquated or pre-fabricated.

### *Degree of originality*

If adjustments are made to an authentic text this would of course lessen its authenticity, to a greater or lesser extent, which in turn would have an effect on the overall quality of learner’s language competence especially at the discourse level. Little, Devitt and Singleton point out that precisely because authentic texts keep “ all the savour, stench and rough edges of life beyond the school walls, they are likely to be markedly more successful in provoking pupil reaction and interaction than the somewhat anaemic texts” (1994:6). Every effort should be made to avoid adapting authentic texts. Nevertheless, authentic texts are often adapted for pedagogical reasons in order to fit the requirements of learners of lower levels. In such cases, care should be taken to maintain the originality of the content, the individuality of style and genre and theme. A well-known example was noted, the adapted text has the sentence, “The school was a red house with big windows”, whereas the original describes the school as “a dreary, gabled Victorian house of red brick with big staring sashwindows”. In this example, difficult vocabulary was avoided having in mind the level of the learners but the original meaning of the author was misrepresented.

A high degree of originality should be maintained because the most important objective of foreign language teaching is to help learners deal confidently with genuine instances of communication, not just exposing them to prescribed vocabulary to pass exams.

### *Heterogeneity of cultural representations*

This issue deals with the representations of various social dimensions of the culture(s) and the people of the target language. We have already stated that learners need to understand the key concepts of the target culture, but they also need to have this understanding over a wide range of sociocultural representations. Since we are dealing with the analysis of the cultural dimension of two textbooks we shall discuss this issue further in the next section of this chapter when we formulate our criteria. It suffices to say at this point that cultural representations in textbooks should include: the micro-social level, macro-social level, the viewpoint taken by the author, the intercultural level of mutual representations. This last dimension is crucial for the achievement of intercultural communicative competence, since the learner's own culture(s) and the target language culture(s) are compared and contrasted and in such a way greater understanding and awareness are made possible on the part of the learners.

The textbook has to give a variety of cultural representations covering a wide range of sociocultural phenomena. At the intercultural level, mutual representations between the learners' own and the target culture(s) should also be included in the textbook.

In the specific case of the analysis of the British textbook, which is the topic of this study, it could be said that the focus of the authors of the textbooks on *national* culture should not be narrow. Various sub-national cultures that comprise the Britain of today do not seem to be

taken into consideration. Textbook authors should have in mind that in the same way that languages change, so do cultures of the people who speak the language in question. Therefore, the multi-cultural setting of Britain should be portrayed including the various cultures that people from the former colonies have brought with them namely, the West Indies, the Indian Sub-Continent and African states as Phillipson has termed them 'core-English speaking countries' and 'periphery-English speaking countries' (1993:27).

The latter are countries where English was imposed on in colonial times and include India, Nigeria and they are considered 'peripheral' because they tend to follow the language norms of the core-English speaking countries (Phillipson, 1993:27).

So, in our forthcoming analysis we should be particularly sensitive to the criteria of 'realism' and the point of view of the author, since a realistic, authentic picture of the culture whose language is being learnt, greatly depends on the ethnocentric or cosmopolitan views of the author. The language textbook is a 'window' through which learners acquire glimpses of the target culture, and it is very important that they do not obtain distorted views that will give rise to misconceptions and lack of understanding of the beliefs, values and practices of the people whose language they are learning.

#### *Contextualisation of discourse in designing exercises*

The last dimension refers to exercises in textbooks and the exploitation of authentic texts in an authentic manner. It is not enough to provide learners with genuine texts, they need to be explored with appropriate contexts and in an 'authentic' manner.

In classroom situations, Little, Devitt, and Singleton point out that the exploitation of authentic texts "should be shaped by a general awareness that they were written for a

particular communicative purpose” (1994:26). Therefore, in designing exercises, textbook authors should lessen the artificiality by contextualising the discourse thus enabling the learners to absorb the text in a real user’s manner, and in addition to that, help them with necessary language skills. What this means is that language and culture should be brought into a more interactive relation with approaches like the above mentioned. By putting authentic texts in an appropriate context we are striving to produce a “successful discourse” which will enable us to “look outside language and to see how it works within a broader cultural framework” (Bowers,1986:403).

In conclusion, ‘a content for language and cultural studies should reflect some of the most common situations of real life, and some of the most culturally identifiable social behaviours of real people’ (Guo,1997:59). As well as providing a basis for developing skills for intercultural communicative competence the cultural content in language learning materials should be adapted and presented at such a level that would suit the learners’ linguistic competence. However, adaptations should be made only when absolutely necessary, and even then the original style, genre and meaning of the author must not be misrepresented.

### ***3.1.6 Specificity of English as an International Language***

Another issue to be considered that will also influence our choice of criteria, is whether textbooks for learning English as a foreign language should be different from other foreign language textbooks because of the cultural, political, scientific role of English in the world. The ‘global’ character of most textbooks for learning English testifies to the fact that steps should be taken to overcome misconceptions arising from this ‘to-whom-it-may-concern’ character of the textbooks since in most countries around the world they have been criticised as being unsuitable for learners (Pennycook,1994).

The unsuitability for learners is also documented by Phillipson (1993), who explicitly says that since learning environments are completely different it follows that the language learning needs are also different. Therefore pedagogical strategies should reflect this diversity. Phillipson dwells upon the often misleading distinction between EFL and ESL. This blurred terminology leads to wrong pedagogical approaches. For instance, you can not have a learner in Kenya or Hong Kong, where English is the language of commerce, government and law to use the same textbook for learning English as an immigrant in the USA, Canada or Britain where the exposure to the English-speaking environment is far greater for the learner. The EFL learners have minimal exposure to the English language and very few possibilities to practise it, therefore it is all the more important that, apart from being a good tool for language learning, the textbook for learning English should acquire a new role as an instrument of culture teaching. To use Risager's words "textbooks should present the country in a nutshell" (1990:191). Most importantly, the textbook should reflect the needs of the learners and take into account the specific context of learning English as a foreign language.

We would expect textbook designers to sensitise learners to the different varieties of English and the various cultural norms, beliefs, behaviours, customs, that is cultural representations of various aspects of the culture of the English-speaking countries outlined above. The important thing to have in mind is to raise students' awareness that not all English-speaking countries are the same. In Macedonia, 'English' is often used as a synonym to denote 'British'. With regard to Britain, Barley testifies to the fact that even English people confuse what is English with British (Barley, 1990:8). Learners should be aware of the multi-layered society that constitutes contemporary Britain.

## 3.2 Criteria for Cultural Content Analysis

Since the basic principles have been established, it is now possible to choose the criteria for cultural content analysis. Several existing criteria will be looked at briefly of which the last two formulated by Byram and Morgan (1991) and Risager (1991) will be discussed in more detail .

### 3.2.1 Choice of themes/topics

The importance of the choice of themes and topic for cultural studies has been stressed by Brooks, who includes surface phenomena such as social etiquette, social institutions, social welfare and so on and less observable phenomena, such as values, beliefs and attitudes towards life, relevant to teenage learners (Brooks, 1986:124-8). Some examples from the list are:

- *Greetings, friendly exchange, farewells.* How do friends meet, have a casual conversation and say good-bye? What are the typical topics of small talk? How are strangers introduced?
- *Patterns of politeness.* What are the commonest forms of politeness and when should they be used?
- *Verbal taboos.* What common words or expressions in English have direct equivalents that are not tolerated in the target culture and vice-versa?
- *Pets.* Which animals are usually received in the home as pets? What is their role in the household?
- *Comradeship.* How are friendships formed and what provisions are made for fostering comradeship through clubs and other group organizations?
- *Tobacco and smoking.* Who smokes, what and under what circumstances? What are the prevailing attitudes towards smoking?
- *Competitions.* In which fields of activity are prizes awarded for success in open competition? How important is competition in schools, in the business world, in other professions?

- *Learning in school.* What is the importance of homework in compulsory education? Do the elder members of the family also teach and what do they teach?
- *Meals away from home.* Where does one eat when not at home? What are the equivalents of our lunchrooms, cafeterias, wayside inns, restaurants?
- *Careers.* What careers have strong appeal for the young? How important is parental advice in the choice of career? What financial help is likely to be forthcoming for those who choose a career demanding long preparation?

The author focuses on the fact that the learner should come to see, through being exposed to situations of everyday life in the target culture, how the target group interpret the world and why they behave as they do. He observes: "...the point of view should be that of a young person of the age and status of the students being addressed, and the perspective should be that of such a person as he goes about his daily tasks" (1986:124). The list includes many aspects of daily life with particular reference to students, as well as life styles, living conditions, social institutions, public services, in order to give a more realistic picture of the target culture, rather than impose an abstract impression of the culture in question.

A completely different approach has been suggested by the American Language Institute for cross-cultural courses (Dunnett et al, 1986, 152-53) where the emphasis is for the learners to acquire an understanding of the American culture in general. The list includes basic structures of American society and some more obvious features of it. For example:

1. The United states - The Melting Pot Society
  - diagram of American ethnicity - has the melting pot idea succeeded?
  - discuss mainstream America
2. Mexican Culture
  - attitudes of and toward Mexican-Americans
  - Spanish and Mexican influences in many parts of the United States

3. Blacks in America
  - attitudes of and toward
  - Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement
  - Uncle Tom's cabin excerpt/short stories written by Black Americans
  
4. Native Americans
  - contributions of
  - Indian folk stories
  - American Indians as depicted by films
  
5. Religion in America
  - attitude toward
  - different kinds
  - effects on culture
  - cults and organized religion
  
6. Women in America
  - contributions of
  - attitudes of and toward
  - ERA and anti-abortionists
  - anti-abortionists
  
7. The American family
  - structure
  - values
  - level of closeness
  - dependence/independence
  
8. American customs
  - multiplicity of
  
9. The American character
  - stereotypes

- myths
- various types

#### 10. Big Cities vs. Small Towns

- ways and attitudes

#### 11. American business

- how does it affect relations and attitudes?
- commercialization: Christmas and Easter

#### 12. Pop Culture

- poetry
- abstract painting / Andy Warhol's 'Campbell Soup Can'
- rock music
- disco music

#### 13. American attitudes

- toward themselves
- toward the world

#### 14. A View from the Outside

- looking at the arts and literature from abroad, how are Americans viewed in other countries?

(Dunnett et al., 1986, pp. 152-53)

As is evident from the list, it gives an overall picture of Americans so as to enable learners to get an outline of what American culture is about and how Americans see themselves. The multi-cultural background of America is clearly presented and its main characteristics but not the interactions of its people and how they function in their everyday lives and activities.

In comparison, Brook's list provides a framework for the learner to look into the behaviours and life experience of the natives more closely so that they learn how they feel and think as well as behave. However, this list concentrates only on presenting aspects of the life of teenagers, so in scope it does not cover a wide range of socio-cultural concepts as the list quoted above dealing with American culture. On the other hand the list quoted by Dunnett et al., (1986) gives a broader view of the fundamental characteristics of American culture which immediately distinguish it from all other cultures and which are very useful for the learner to grasp. The main drawback of this list is that it does not delineate a finer picture of American individuals' everyday lives and behaviours, and more precisely how the 'spirit' or 'essence' of America is reflected in peoples' behaviours. In particular there is no mention of the multi-lingual society that comprises America and the various national identities and their languages. Nevertheless, learners are encouraged, through comparison, to view aspects of the target culture from a wider scope. The learners will get an idea of how the Americans view themselves and others, which may contrast with the way they are perceived by others and vice versa.

Risager, in analysing the cultural content of European textbooks points out that since the 1950s foreign language teaching textbooks '...have been ascribed an increasingly important cultural role as well: linguistic examples have been dramatised to a larger extent, interlocutors have become flesh and blood by way of drawings and photos, and the everyday life, the social context, and the natural environment of the foreign countries concerned have been gradually introduced' (Risager, 1991:181). The demand for 'realism' is central to the four-dimensional normative framework that she developed for evaluating cultural contents of foreign language textbooks. Her analysis is based on a model which, as she states, has been elaborated from different models (Ibid,:182). It consists of the following categories:

1. The micro level - phenomena of social and cultural anthropology:
  - a. the social and geographical definition of characters;
  - b. material environment;
  - c. situations and interaction;
  - d. interaction and subjectivity of the characters: feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems.
2. The macro level - social, political and historical matters:
  - a. broad social facts about contemporary society (geographical, economic, political, etc.)
  - b. broad sociopolitical problems (unemployment, pollution, etc.)
  - c. historical background.
3. International and intercultural issues:
  - a. comparisons between the foreign country and the pupil's own.
  - b. mutual representations, images, stereotypes;
  - c. mutual relations: cultural power and dominance, cooperation and conflict.
4. Points of view and style of the author.

(Ibid.:182-3)

The third dimension, the intercultural representations, requires textbook writers to compare the target culture(s) and learner's native culture by reciprocally representing them through, for example, stereotypes. Mutual representation is necessary because foreign language learners may have formed their own stereotypes of the target culture and their understanding of the target culture needs expansion of their existing culture-specific frame of references. (Byram and Esarte-Sarries, 1991). To develop learners' intercultural competence, stereotypes can be used but learners should be made fully aware of the complexity of people and society and therefore textbooks should help learners modify the stereotypes through meaningful treatment of them. Without keen awareness of this relationship on the part of textbook authors, the presentation of stereotypes would definitely have a negative effect on learners.

Stereotypes should be presented in a comparative approach. Many foreign language educators (Robinson, 1988) and textbook authors incline towards the ethnographic approach, seeking to explore the target culture(s) while neglecting the equally important task of helping learners

explore their own culture and selves for the purpose of comparison. At the centre of the ethnographic approach is that language is no longer separated from social and cultural knowledge but 'lived' and developed within a community in which the learner participates or studies. In this way, the language learner becomes an ethnographer. This approach is modelled on anthropological methods. Ethnography provides the methodology which enables the students to learn new cultural practices and systems from the inside. The insider perspective is achieved through informal interviews in which informants are guided and encouraged to describe and account for the cultural practices of their day to day lives (Barro, A., et al., 1992).

With regard to this discussion, Byram promotes comparative studies by stating that learners should be made both ethnographers and informants.

In the process of comparison from two viewpoints there lies the possibility of attaining an Archimedean leverage on both cultures, and thereby acquiring new schemata and an intercultural competence. (1991:25)

Textbook writers should take into account mutual representations of the cultures. They should aim at best to depict the target culture(s) from both an observer's and an informant's perspectives. Textbooks should demonstrate how the target culture(s) is/are perceived by its own people and other people including the people representing the learner's own society, how the learner's culture is perceived by the people of the target culture and their own people and, on the basis of these double presentations, how the learners could be made capable of understanding themselves and the people of the target culture.

It can be clearly seen from the above model that whatever kind of cultural content is selected and presented it will reflect the author's point of view which could be culturally biased.

Risager proposes that textbooks should be evaluated with regard to the degree to which textbook authors express particular “attitudes - positive, negative, critical - towards the country and the people”, criticising that the “predominant style is objective, pragmatic, tending to avoid expressions of attitudes towards sociocultural issues” (1991:188). Sercu argues that insights from research into textbooks’ authors’ bias in interpreting the world for pupils, has shown that when authors take on a monocultural, nationalistic, ethnocentric or other kind of biased perspective of the world, this may prohibit intercultural learning since the latter is dependent on the ability to construct new meaning when coming across what is known and what is foreign (Sercu, 1998).

As mentioned earlier, Risager demands interculturalism and internationalism in terms of realism. This can now be also understood as a demand for a presentation of the world which is “free of monocultural, monoperspectival ethnocentric nationalistic bias” (Sercu, 1998:336). The different cultural phenomena are inter-related and what learners need to understand is that culture is a complex system and not a combination of different information. Therefore the themes in Risager’s model ought to be dealt with, in teaching practice, in an integral way.

The list of cultural themes devised by Byram, Morgan and their colleagues is based on principles which also underlie Risager’s model. The two proposals have a lot in common in that they accentuate the need of the learners to acquire cross-cultural communication and at the same time promote a wider world perspective in learners.

Both the model and list of themes consist of a wider scope of cultural information than the previous two lists. Nevertheless, the list gives a more detailed view of what exactly the learning is after and what more specifically could be included in cultural content:

## MINIMUM CONTENT: AREAS OF STUDY

- *social identity and social groups*: groups within the nation-state which are the basis for other than national identity, including social class, regional identity, ethnic minority, professional identity, and which illustrate the complexity of individual's social identities and of a national society (NB the issue of national identity is dealt with under 'stereotypes');
- *social interaction*: conventions of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in social interaction at differing levels of familiarity, as outsider and insider within social groups;
- *belief and behaviour*: routine and taken for granted actions within a social group - national or sub-national - and the moral and religious beliefs which are embodied within them; secondly, routines of behaviour taken from daily life which are not seen as significant markers of the identity of the group;
- *socio-political institutions*: institutions of the state - and the values and meanings they embody which characterize the state and its citizens and which constitute a framework for ordinary, routine life within the national and sub-national groups provision for health-care, for law and order, for social security, for local government etc.;
- *socialisation and the life-cycle*: institutions of socialisation - families, schools, employment, religion, military service - and the ceremonies which mark passage through stages of social life; representation of divergent practises in different social groups as well as national auto-stereotypes of expectations and shared interpretations;
- *national history*: periods and events, historical and contemporary, which are significant in the constitution of the nation and its identity - both actually significant and, not necessarily identical, perceived as such by its members.
- *national geography*: geographical factors within the national boundaries which are significant 'in members' perceptions of their country; other factors which are information (known but not significant to members) essential to outsiders in intercultural communication (NB national boundaries, and changes in them, are part of 'national history');
- *national cultural heritage*: cultural artefacts perceived to be emblems and embodiments of national culture from past and present; in particular those which are 'known' to members of the nation - e.g Shakespeare in Britain, the Impressionists in France, Wagner in Germany - through their inclusion in curricula of formal education; and also contemporary classics, not all of which may be transient but significant, created by television and other media - e.g Truffaut's films in France, Agatha Christie in Britain, Biermann's songs in Germany;
- *stereotypes and national identity*: for example, German and English notions of what is 'typically' German and English national identity; the origins of these notions - historical and contemporary - and comparisons among them; symbols of national identities and stereotypes and their meanings, e.g famous monuments and people.

(Byram et al 1994, pp. 51-52)

From the list devised by Byram, Morgan and colleagues there are concrete suggestions on what kind of cultural knowledge could be incorporated in language learning courses (and coursebooks) in order to achieve the aims discussed earlier. For instance, in the category of *social identity*, the list gives examples of the complexity of an individual's social identities. Each person assumes different social identities during his/her life span. In the family, national identity, in the work place, as a member of an age group, ethnic group or other social groups. From the point of view of *social interaction* it is necessary for the learners to have a knowledge of the specific beliefs and practices of these social groups. The learners will understand the target group and this will help them to function properly in given social situations in that culture. The social identities are presented in different social contexts and in this way learners are able to get an insight into the native's understanding of social roles, situations and norms of behaviour.

In *socialization and life-cycle* the connection of social institutions and beliefs and behaviours can be more clearly observed. In the list, it has also been suggested that when dealing with historical topics, attention should be focused on segments, parts of historical events that have affected the way people perceive their social identities and the way they perceive the world, not what the author would think important or interesting, in purely historical terms, nor what would be done in a history course. Also in relation to socio-political institutions the authors think that those to be presented should be related to the ordinary life and concerns of the people. In the category of *national cultural heritage* the inclusion of contemporary classics is suggested (not just Shakespeare, Dickens) i.e representatives of a culture which may be transient but nevertheless significant to members of the nation, in most cases created by the media. From all of the above, it can be concluded that the categories presented in the list aim to create an integral vision of the culture.

Since, both Risager's four-dimensional framework and Byram and Morgan's list provide a sound basis for an overall cultural content analysis, our approach will combine these two proposals in the form of investigative questions. These investigative questions will guide the presentation of findings obtained from analysing the general cultural content of the chosen textbooks.

### 3.3 Summary: Analytical Criteria

The criteria guiding this present textbook analysis should take into account the following:

1. How do the textbooks compare with regard to the *degree of realism* in presenting the foreign culture? Having in mind here the discussion on authenticity of texts and cultural authenticity, we shall consider whether the textbooks have incorporated authentic texts and whether these texts are exploited in an authentic way in class.
2. How do textbooks compare with regard to their *distribution of culture* over the *micro-, macro- and international/intercultural levels* of culture?

On the micro-level this involves a knowledge of the relationships between individuals and social groups, this also includes the complexity of social identities, social behavioural norms and the values and beliefs attached to them. On the macro-level an understanding of the values-belief system of the target culture(s), which means learners should adopt a wider perspective as opposed to their ethnocentric perspective.

Even though both Risager's model and Byram and Morgan's list (see 3.2.1) are wide enough to cover all the above mentioned aspects, the principles and guidelines presented earlier in this chapter will also be taken into consideration during the course of our analysis. We will

use Byram and Morgan's list for the forthcoming analysis and take into account the questions above.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have first of all formulated the basic principles for analysis of culture contents and following this we discussed briefly the specificity of the forthcoming analysis, that is how Britain is portrayed and the specific issue of English as a world language . These are important issues which influence our choice of criteria. After a survey and critical evaluation of existing criteria, we have shown what could be achieved with an intercultural approach.

The present textbook investigation has now been defined as an analytical study, inquiring into the ways in which foreign language textbooks present cultural information. The main dimensions of the books to be researched have been identified as 'cultural contents' and as a sub-dimension of the general cultural content - vocabulary culture content. We have defined the criteria for cultural content analysis of the chosen textbooks but the criteria for vocabulary cultural content remain to be defined.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Vocabulary in ELT**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to look at ways in which vocabulary learning has been incorporated in ELT syllabuses from the 60s and 70s until the present day. It will begin with a survey of the literature on vocabulary/lexis and several key themes or issues concerning vocabulary/lexis will be looked at; for instance, the problems and complexity of vocabulary teaching and learning in general and specifically the teaching and learning of the sociocultural content of the vocabulary/lexis syllabus, which will include looking at connotations and associations, collocations and keywords, and register. The whole chapter will evolve around the premise that vocabulary has an important role in ELT. This chapter will also show that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of vocabulary/lexis in ELT and this arises from the knowledge we are gaining about vocabulary from computer corpora. The whole chapter can be divided into three main sections. The first section will look at key issues in vocabulary learning and teaching and establish the importance of the socio-cultural dimension of vocabulary in the foreign language syllabus, which has to a certain extent been neglected in the past. The second section will consider incorporating vocabulary into the syllabus and look at the principles and guidelines on which teaching of vocabulary items should be based. Finally the criteria for analysing the sociocultural aspect of vocabulary will be presented.

## **4.2 Vocabulary as a vital aspect of language learning**

It is striking to notice that over the past 25 years theorists and material developers infrequently mention vocabulary/lexis before the late 1980s.

There is no doubt that vocabulary teaching and learning is a vital aspect of language. Why was the teaching of vocabulary neglected in the past?

Several authors, Allen (1983), Wallace (1982) and others, state that the reason why vocabulary was neglected in the period 1940-1970 was that it had been emphasized too much in language classrooms during the years before that time. How words worked together in sentences was the emphasis of teaching and this is why grammar was focused upon in teacher preparation programmes in that period. Little was said in methodology courses on teaching words and their meanings, because certain specialists in methodology believed that 'meanings of words could not be adequately taught', so it was better not to try to teach them. Learning a word is not simply translating, or finding the equivalent from L1 into L2 or vice-versa. Much more needs to be learned. There were those who felt that the complexities were too great to be dealt with in class. Advice was given to teachers that word meanings can be learnt only through experience.

Each of these standpoints is true to a certain extent, because often so much time goes into explaining new words that there is not much classroom time left for anything else. Similarly, the belief that experience is the best vocabulary teacher is also true.

Taylor (1990) agrees that vocabulary teaching and learning is an area ignored to a great extent by Applied Linguistics. The only systematic work on vocabulary was done in the 1940s and 50s that produced limited vocabularies on frequency counts. This work strived to reduce the learner's workload by requiring him/her to learn fewer words. However, this research did not explain the following:

- Why and how is vocabulary learning a problem?
- What does the learner have to do to acquire vocabulary presented to him?
- How does he integrate it with the stock of words already in his memory?
- How does he manage to use it once he has acquired it?

Wallace (1982) in arguing that vocabulary is a vital aspect of language learning, lists the dangers of bad vocabulary learning and teaching. Many things can go wrong, for example:

1. Using vocabulary that is inappropriate to a given situation

The students think that they 'know' a word but they can not use it in a proper context. They can not fit it in the right language situation.

2. Use of vocabulary at the wrong level of formality:

This is similar to the previous problem, inappropriateness of usage.

e.g 'be seated, please', have a seat, 'sit', or 'take a pew' etc..

3. Using vocabulary in an unidiomatic way:

The use of too formal language for a certain topic; uneasy mixture of informal and formal language.

All of the above manifestations of wrongly learnt or taught words suggest that care must be taken to ensure that students as well as teachers should be made aware of the enormous amount of 'hidden', 'deep' meanings that a word has, and that all of these meanings should be presented depending on the level of proficiency of the learners. It is this knowledge of the 'deep' meanings of words which makes up the sociocultural content of vocabulary. We shall focus specifically on this aspect of vocabulary since it is the theme of this thesis. Nevertheless, we shall also consider some important issues such as how vocabulary should be learned, and what needs to be learned about particular words.

Nation, (1997) when looking at the place of vocabulary in a language course clearly formulates the major question: what needs to be learned about particular words? There are many things to know about each word and the learning process is a long term cumulative process. According to Nation, this process of learning involves knowing the *form, meaning* and *use* of each word. This knowledge is both receptive (knowledge needed for listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing). Knowing the form of a word involves knowing its pronunciation, its spelling, and if it is a complex word, its word parts. Knowing the meaning of a word involves knowing the concept that lies behind the various uses of the word, the particular meanings it has in certain contexts, and its various associations, such as opposites, synonyms and members of the same lexical set. Finally, knowing the use of a word involves knowing its grammar, its typical collocations (Sinclair,1991), and the constraints on its use such as UK vs US usage, formal and colloquial use, and so on.

Clearly, knowing the meaning of a word involves much more than simply stating the equivalent in the mother tongue. There exist underlying primitive or universal meanings, but the way these are expressed differ across language and culture groups. There are variations in

the ways speakers of different languages use words to convey meanings. We shall follow Nation's clear distinction of what 'knowing the meaning and use of a word' entails. The various associations words have and their variation in meaning in various contexts, suggest that a deeper level of knowledge is needed and this is where the link between culture and vocabulary comes into focus, and where the learners' knowledge of the world comes in useful.

This is what is meant by knowing words that are 'culture bound'. In the following sub-section we shall look at what is included in the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary i.e associations that certain words have, connotations, the meaning of collocations and their link with keywords and culture. But before we proceed to do this, let us look at ways 'how vocabulary can be learned?' as well as the distinction between productive and receptive vocabulary which is also a part of the vocabulary acquisition process.

### **4.3 How can vocabulary be learned ?**

Nation (1997), says that there are four strands of learning which overlap and it is important to see the various ways of learning vocabulary as complementing each other. These strands are: learning through input, learning through output, direct teaching and learning, and fluency development. He also gives the distinction between learning vocabulary incidentally and intentionally, where the latter ensures faster and more secure learning. The four strands listed above relate to intentional learning i.e planned vocabulary teaching.

Although teachers feel that vocabulary needs to be learned in context, there is considerable research (Bauer and Nation,1993) which shows that the direct study of words using word cards with translations is a very effective way of quickly expanding vocabulary knowledge.

Such learning needs to be supplemented by other strands of learning. For instance, Nation suggests that learners can also benefit from training in dictionary use. In dealing directly with words, teachers should decide if they should provide rich instruction (Graves,1987) or deal with the word quickly. Rich instruction involves spending time on the word, explaining to the learners its form, meaning and use and involving the learners in thoughtfully processing the word so that it is imprinted in their memory. According to Nation, a word deserves rich instruction if it is a high frequency word and if the goal of the lesson is vocabulary learning (Nation, 1997).

Hatch and Brown distinguish five steps in the vocabulary acquisition process, these are as follows: encountering new words, getting the word forms, getting the word meanings, consolidating word form and meaning in memory and using the words (Hatch and Brown, 1995). Learners not only need to know vocabulary, they need to become fluent in its use, either receptively or receptively and productively. Fluency development activities should involve meaning-focused listening, speaking, reading and writing (Nation, 1997).

In order to learn vocabulary through meaning focused listening and reading, learners need to already know 95 percent of the words in the text (Nation,1997). For many learners this will mean using simplified readers and there are graded readers at various levels (Day and Bamford, 1998). Research has shown that small amounts of vocabulary can be learnt through inferring from context, and if learners increase their reading these small amounts can become larger amounts (Nagy, Herman and Anderson,1985). Glossing words in written texts also aids learning. According to Nation (1997), the strategy of inferring words from context is the most important of all the vocabulary learning strategies and it deserves attention in training learners to use this technique.

Vocabulary learning can be increased to reach the optimum level by giving careful consideration of what vocabulary to focus on, and how to focus on it. Later on in this chapter we shall look at criteria for the selection of vocabulary and also various vocabulary teaching approaches or methods.

#### **4.4 Receptive and Productive Vocabulary**

Another issue often discussed regarding vocabulary learning, is the division between receptive and productive vocabulary. Previously, and some scholars and teachers still use them, 'passive' and 'active' vocabulary was used. It was argued by Belyayev (1963) that reading and listening should not be considered passive skills and therefore it follows that the vocabulary needed for those skills is not passive either. Hatch & Brown (1995) define the terms as Haycraft (1978) does : receptive vocabulary is "words that the student recognizes and understands when they occur in a context, but which he cannot produce correctly", and productive vocabulary is "words which the student understands, can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing".

There is not really a division here, but a flow of knowledge. Crow and Quigley(1985) suggest that the learners may learn core, basic meanings sufficiently to know what they hear or read without knowing enough about the syntactic rules governing the words, or appropriateness of usage or collocations that are necessary in order to produce the words. Furthermore, the most important aspect of the productive/receptive discussion is that it suggests that there are different ways to "know" a word, and what is sufficient knowledge under one circumstance may not be sufficient in another (Hatch & Brown:1995).

We may know a lot of words in our native language but we may never use them, so the author concludes that lack of production may be due to choice rather than lack of knowledge. For example, we may recognize the meaning of taboo words or non -standard words such as 'ain't' but avoid saying them because we are concerned with what people will think of us. This productive/receptive division is more complicated than it appears at first sight, and could also be connected to the "self-image" that a speaker wants to portray. We avoid saying a lot of words because they are not socially acceptable.

Hatch and Brown in conclusion say:

knowing vocabulary may, therefore, also consist of knowing enough to use words which represent the image we wish others to have of us. Any theory or model of vocabulary learning must account for these different levels of knowledge about and use of words (1995:399).

#### **4.5 The sociocultural dimension of vocabulary**

Experience teaches us that many of the meanings of the word do not have equivalents in another language. To quote Allen:

Full understanding of a word often requires knowing how native speakers feel about what the word represents, some meanings cannot be found in a dictionary (1983:4).

It is necessary to know something about the customs and attitudes of native speakers if we are to know what words really mean. Consider for example the word 'wall'. Every language has a word for a thing that English calls a wall, but how people feel about walls can be very different in different parts of the world. For instance, what kind of feelings and memories does the Berlin wall have for thousands of people from East and West Germany. Those feelings and images, associations that the word conjures up in different cultures to different people, all form part of the meaning of the word.

Knowing the sociocultural meaning of a word also requires knowledge of the style of speaking or writing appropriate to a particular social situation which can be formal, informal or neutral. This is known as **register**. Thus slang is an extremely informal register and is only used by people who know each other very well. **Colloquial** refers to language suitable for conversation e.g *He's a nice guy*. Register encompasses subtle nuances of style, but since the focus of this work are textbooks for intermediate level of foreign language learning, we feel that the above distinction is sufficient for the sake of clarity.

#### ***4.5.1 Connotations and Associations***

One of the most recent books written on vocabulary teaching and learning is by Snow "Words: teaching and learning vocabulary" (1997). He clearly states the need to focus on the cultural dimension of vocabulary, and quotes the Harris report where it was pointed out that without a growing awareness of the culture of the target language speakers "comprehension of even basic words may be partial or approximate". It is most interesting and appealing that he uses the word 'explore', namely that 'teachers may wish to explore with their students' the cultural dimension of certain words. Certainly it is an area full of surprises and innovation, since language is never rigid, normative which is best seen in the intricate web of its vocabulary. He explains that the cultural content of words is in their connotations that words have for a particular group of people and says that " by exploring these connotations students can begin to appreciate the cultural aspect of vocabulary" (1997:50)

He suggests three ways of investigating connotations:

The first is word associations, the second a combination of techniques (see Snow, 1997:51) and the third, corpus linguistics - the approach of building very large data banks of words in their contexts. This is a new field but very useful for getting to the 'deeper' meaning of words.

For example, connotations relate to the system of the language, whether we use 'plump' or 'resolute' which has favourable connotations or 'fat' or 'pig-headed' which has unfavourable connotations. According to Wallace (1982) the difference between connotations and associations is that associations relate to the individual or the culture of the speaker. On the other hand, connotations relate to the language apparatus itself and could also have a historic perspective as the language changes through centuries of usage. For instance, if we take the word 'abolition' - it has taken a specific meaning in the context of debates about slavery in the United States. Also, 'choice' has taken a specific meaning in the context of debates about abortion (Nagy, 1997:68).

Evidence that associations relate to the individual and his/her cultural background is for instance, if we take the word 'market'. It may have different associations for someone coming from a rural environment to someone living in a city in Britain.

In saying that not much can be done about the private associations which words have for individuals, she gives as an example the word 'father' and 'home' which for many people have pleasant, favourable connotations and associations for some people they may have unfavourable associations due to a difficult childhood etc., he states that:

but the teacher may well feel that associations which relate the culture of the target language, and certainly the connotations of a particular word are part of the 'meaning' which has to be learned (Wallace, 1982:20).

### 4.5.2 Collocation

**Collocation** refers to words which frequently occur together, e.g. *torrential rain*, *auburn hair*.

Collocations teach students what kind of language can follow from what has preceded. By being familiar with collocations like a *convenient situation* and a *convenient time* but not with ones like a *convenient person* \* or a *convenient cat*\*, students may realize that the adjective *convenient* is only used with inanimate nouns.

### 4.5.3 Multi-word items

Similarly, **multi-word items** i.e. fixed phrases, idioms, phrasal verbs, proverbs, such as: *sit on the fence*, *pearl of wisdom*, *little wonder*, *it's up to you*, *get the sack* and so on (Moon, 1997:61). Moon interprets these multi-word items as being - extreme collocations (Ibid: 63), since the contexts that they are used are specific and limited. The sociocultural connotations and associations that these vocabulary items carry, although difficult for foreign language learners, should be taught sparingly as receptive vocabulary items. Learners ought to be aware of subtle but crucial distinctions in meaning, usage and register which may lead to misunderstandings and misreadings. In recommending the teaching of only 'useful' multi-word items, Gairns and Redman comment:

in deciding what is useful, it is worth considering whether an idiom can be incorporated into the student's productive vocabulary without seeming incongruous alongside the rest of their language. Certain native speakers might 'get the ball rolling', but few foreign learners could carry off this idiom without sounding faintly ridiculous (quoted in Moon, 1997:60).

Scholars today are taking a new interest in the study of word meanings. A number of research studies have recently dealt with lexical problems (McCarthy 1990, Nation 1994). These

studies have shown that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication. Communication breaks down when the right meaning of a word is not used and the context is not properly chosen. How can teaching be upgraded in order to allot enough time for the study of new words in view of the necessity to teach meanings of words that are 'culture bound'?

#### **4.6 Teaching and Learning the Sociocultural content of vocabulary**

Allen (1980) suggests that teachers can help students learn 'social meanings' simply by making them aware that social meanings exist. This should be done through the study of texts, for example, stories about English speaking people. The example that is given is the common word 'school' which has an equivalent in almost any language that has some kind of education system. Through a paragraph that reveals some of the 'cultural' meanings of 'school', a student's attention is drawn towards the ideas, feelings and customs that combine to form part of the meaning of a common English word - a word which may have a somewhat different meaning in the student's native language.

Obviously the choice of texts is very important as well as their authenticity and cultural content. The teaching and learning of the sociocultural content of vocabulary is closely linked to the choice of texts. Theme-based approaches to teaching vocabulary enable the learners to first of all encounter words that are 'culture bound' and in this way it is natural to link vocabulary to the subject matter of the context, this in turn allows for the natural use of words to be learned, thus facilitating learning .

When talking about learning vocabulary in the mother tongue and in the target language,

Wallace says that:

the language (L1) is nearly always encountered in an appropriate situation and in the appropriate context. So he /she will probably not have too many problems with appropriateness or collocation. (1982:31)

According to Wallace, there is no reason why the vocabulary of L2 should not be learnt in the same way as the mother tongue, L1. He thinks this can be done by choosing the 'appropriate context' in the 'appropriate situation' but she does not say what constitutes 'appropriateness' and to what extent it can be achieved in a classroom learning environment.

It does not necessarily follow that if L1 learners have notions of appropriateness in their mother tongue that this knowledge of when to use formal vs. informal language, neutral vs. pejorative language will be automatically transferred to the target language. Learners need to be sensitised to the existence of the various associations that particular words carry. Moon (1997), expounding on the sociocultural connotations and associations that multi-word items have, explains that even where analogous multi-word items exist in both L1 and L2, it is unlikely that they will be exact counterparts. Multi-word items are extreme collocations, and L2 speakers use them in inappropriate semantic or discoursal contexts "leading to further communicative errors" (Moon,1997:58).

Recent research into the subject of second language vocabulary acquisition has shown that there is mother-tongue interference, in the student's readiness to accept a new word if does not 'fit' into his mental lexicon or interferes with his cultural identity (Harley,1995).

The Lexico-semantic theory tells us that humans store words and as their number increases, the mind is forced to set up systems to organize the words in the memory and keep them ready for retrieval (Lado,1990). The mental lexicon - how word meanings are actually represented in human memory - is a web-like structure, a network of links and associations. Having this knowledge in mind, teachers should help students build up those associations and set up links. One way of doing this is drawing on the L2 learners' background knowledge, their schemata, where they make a connection with the already known word and the new word and learning takes place. Nagy (1997) explains this very well when he discusses acquiring vocabulary knowledge and the role of context.

He says:

Inferring the meaning of a word from context involves a relationship between the situational model (the reader/listener's model of meaning of the text) and the text model, as well as knowledge of the possible mappings between the two. These, in turn, draw on the *learner's world knowledge, his or her theory of the conceptual domain to which the word belongs, and knowledge about the way in which the relevant part of the lexicon is organised* (Nagy,1997: 83)

Research clearly indicates that vocabulary growth can be achieved through a combination of definition-based learning (which involves memorising brief definitions of a word to be learnt) and instruction involving deep processing of information about the words (Stahl,1986 in Nagy, 1997).

However, for successful language learning and a high rate of vocabulary growth, Nagy recommends that only constant, sustained exposure to comprehensible input will give the necessary results (Nagy,1997).

Nattinger (1989) when discussing the usefulness of teaching lexical phrases, asks the question 'how learners go about learning language' and most important, 'why they learn it'. Research

into L1 acquisition has shown that the answer lies in social motivation: children learn as part of social interaction when they have a need to say something. Stevick (1976:36) says: "language is best learnt when it connects with our plans, with our most important memories and with our needs". This sociolinguistic dimension provides the crucial point in successful acquisition of lexical phrases.

We have already explained that vocabulary is stored redundantly not only as individual words, but also as parts of phrases, or even longer memorized chunks of speech, that are retrieved from memory as these preassembled chunks (Nattinger, 1989). Teachers have always recognized the need to include more than single words in their lessons. This is why teaching collocations is very useful for language production as well as comprehension. Nattinger says that, most importantly, students will not have to reconstruct language every time they want to say something, instead they can use these collocations as 'pre-packaged building blocks'. (1989:75) Instead of focusing on the individual word, the learner can focus attention on the larger discourse and on the social aspects of the language used i.e register and culture influenced contexts.

#### **4.7 Keywords, Collocations and Culture**

Since the focal point of this research project is the analysis of the cultural connotations of vocabulary in two textbooks for learning English as a foreign language, I will present some findings and methods and techniques that have been developed by Stubbs (1996) in the field of corpus linguistics.

Stubbs (1996) shows how data from a large corpus can be used to study the cultural connotations of words and he presents the main findings in the form of typical collocations of

words which are central to British culture. The main data analysed is from the Cobuild corpus, but he also uses a corpus of 130 million words of which 90 million are from various newspapers, magazines and radio, 40 million from fiction and non-fiction books and conversation.

Stubbs' aim is to show how this computer assisted method is used to identify fixed and semi-fixed phrases in large corpora, how such methods can document the characteristic use of words much more reliably than by intuitive reading of individual texts: "it is beyond the observational powers of a human analyst to scan such large corpora for significant collocational patterns" (1996:158).

Stubbs shows how quantitative techniques of corpus analysis can be used to analyze meaning and use of cultural keywords. The main concept is that words occur in characteristic collocations, which show the associations and connotations they have and therefore the assumptions which they embody. He goes on to say that "the native speaker's intuitions about collocations are very inaccurate." Therefore he proposes that new techniques are needed to identify the most typical and significant units according to frequency counts in large corpora. The basic concept and criterion that other researchers before him lacked, is 'frequency'. Firth (1935), Williams (1976) provided no data on the relative frequency of words in large corpora. Firth's proposal is to study words in areas such as 'work', 'labour', 'trade' and 'leisure' in sociologically significant contexts. Firth's famous definition of collocation is 'the company a word keeps' (Stubbs, 1996:165). Stubbs goes a step further and illustrates how Firth's project can be carried out with computer-assisted methods and further develops a dictionary of keywords in British culture.

## 4.8 Williams on Keywords

First of all we need to define the term *keyword*. Firth used the terms *focal* and *pivotal* words. Williams (1976) according to Stubbs (1996) was not familiar with Firth's work, but had something similar in mind when he introduced his concept of *keywords*.

In his work, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* Williams classifies keywords into sets which have to do with society and how it is organized. Many entries concern social organization: family, the individual, education, employment, society and nation. Other semantic fields include: high culture (aesthetic, art, literature), politics (including marxist terms: alienation, bourgeois, capitalism, democracy, dialectic, hegemony, revolution). There is no clear-cut categorization and this is one of Williams' main points, since he has to make constant cross-references between entries because words in such semantic fields are by their very nature ambiguous. For example, the words *culture* and *cultivated* have meanings in farming (agriculture) as well as in the arts:

the *cultivated* area was under irrigation he is a *cultivated* man with a soft, rich voice (Stubbs,1996:166)

Williams took his data from the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary which is based on historical principles and allowed him to carry out a diachronic study of changes in meaning over time. Williams presents the same argument for words which have multiple meanings as eminent linguists before him, namely Saussure and later Labov (1970). For example, Williams (1976:76-82) shows that *culture* has a variety of meanings because of semantic extensions at various times in the past and these extensions have left layers of meaning which have been deposited over time. The earliest meaning of *culture* was 'tending crops or animals', then the word was extended to mean 'human development' in the 1500s and finally from the late 1700s

it extended to acquire social class connotations. We now have the different meanings of the word in uses such as *sugar-beet culture*, *germ culture* and culture in the sense of 'music, literature and the arts'.

The fact that the OED is now available on CD-ROM allows many ways to develop his study. For example, one might search for all the occurrences of the word form *work* in the definitions of other words, like *duty* ('work one has to do'), *labour* ('hard, often unskilled work'), *toil* ('physically tiring work') and so on (Stubbs,1996:167).

As mentioned earlier, these quantitative techniques of corpus analysis can be used to analyze the meaning and use of cultural keywords. The main concept is that words occur in characteristic collocations, which show the associations and connotations they have and therefore the assumptions which they embody. Sinclair (1991a), quoted in Stubbs, points out 'One of the principle uses of a corpus is to identify what is central and typical in the language' (1996:174). The frequency of each collocation is important, since what is sought for are the recurrent phrases which encode culturally important concepts.

The analyses and frequency counts discussed above were based on a large corpus i.e a collection of texts regardless of who has spoken or written them. The advantage of such a method is that usages can be picked out without regard to authors and their intentions. The corpus analysis of fixed and semi-fixed phrases presents data on collocations which occur across many texts and authors. As Stubbs concludes: 'By searching out frequent collocations, we can glimpse the recurrent wordings which circulate in the social world, and glimpse how linguistic categories become social categories.' (Stubbs 1996:194)

One of the important implications that these recent empirical methods for studying culturally important keywords have for the theory of ELT and culture is : "It's not what we say, but the way we say it." In other words, connotation is important and often underemphasized.

It is evident that this methodological breakthrough will have a profound effect on the teaching and learning of the English language because it provides insights into the teaching of lexis in the foreign language classroom.

#### **4.9 Incorporating Vocabulary into the Syllabus**

In this section I will look at some theoretical issues relating to syllabus design and look at criteria for selecting and grading vocabulary. As has been shown, the trend over the past 25 years has been for both theory and practice to assign greater importance to vocabulary work in TEFL. The aim of this section is to reflect on the current trend to assign greater importance to the place of vocabulary in the syllabus and show how this can be achieved. In order to do this we will need to consider three key questions or directions relating to the incorporation of vocabulary in present and future syllabuses. This knowledge will help us devise a sensible set of criteria of our own to analyse the sociocultural component of vocabulary in the two chosen classroom textbooks. Finally we will discuss specific criteria for analysing the sociocultural content of vocabulary.

First of all, let us begin by defining 'syllabus'. Sinclair and Renouf (1988:140) define it as follows:

An EFL syllabus is a set of headings indicating items which have been selected by a language planner or materials writer, to be covered in a particular part of the curriculum or in a course series. Its content is usually identified in terms of language elements and linguistic or behavioural skills.

The key question is of course which particular language elements and linguistic or behavioural skills are appropriate or sufficient to include in a syllabus, and it has been answered differently by language planners and syllabus designers in the past decades.

But, before we look at the place of vocabulary in a particular syllabus and in order to facilitate the forthcoming analysis of the vocabulary content, it might be appropriate to look at some models of syllabus design.

In the 1970s there was a reaction to the grammar-translation syllabus and to the audio-lingual/behaviourist methodologies that had become popular at the same time.

The drawbacks that these methods had in ELT are well-known and there is no need to expound at this point on this issue. To avoid the problems of the above mentioned methods, syllabus planners emphasised the words 'communicative', 'notions' and 'functions'. Vocabulary, as pointed out earlier, was subservient to the more important tasks of learning grammar and functions.

Out of the multitude of possibilities of syllabuses, such as communicative syllabus based on defining learners' needs (Mumby, see O'Dell, 1997) and Nunan (see O'Dell, 1997), an expansion of the notion of learner-centredness and its placement at the heart of the syllabus, some theorists have presented an overview of the various possibilities open to those designing courses for ELT. These writers point out a basic division of Type A and Type B syllabuses,

(White, 1988) or product-based and process-based (Nunan, 1988b, see O'Dell 1997). Product syllabuses can be either structurally or functionally based but their content is determined in advance by an educational authority of some kind (teacher or administrator). This authority determines what the learner should learn and also how the learner should be taken through that syllabus. External achievement tests are usually used to evaluate success.

Process syllabuses are subdivided by Nunan (1988b:40-50) into procedural, task-based, and content syllabuses. The process syllabuses are concerned with the actual learning process rather than a predetermined set of knowledge for all learners to learn. The learner negotiates with the teacher how to meet the objectives and decides what s/he wishes to learn. Assessment of the success of learning is made according to the learner's own criteria of success and not by any external test. Let us see now how vocabulary fits into these models of syllabus design.

In a product syllabus, the vocabulary to be taught will be determined in advance and the syllabus designer has to decide which vocabulary items to include and at which points in the teaching programme.

Let us now consider three key questions or directions for incorporating vocabulary in present and future product syllabuses. According to O'Dell, these are:

1. How should the syllabus select what vocabulary is to be taught?
2. How should the place of vocabulary in the syllabus vary from level to level?
3. How can the syllabus help students to learn vocabulary items more effectively?

(O'Dell, 1997:268)

## 4.10 How should the syllabus select what vocabulary is to be taught?

The vocabulary of English is so large that some degree of selection is essential. One of the major problems for a vocabulary syllabus is the volume of what needs to be taught. The main solution to this problem has been the development of various word lists which grade and select lexis so that it is useful to syllabus designers. West's *General Service List* (1953) has been the standard for many years. Hindmarsh (1980) produced a graded word list based on the Cambridge EFL examinations; Longman, Collins and other publishers produced graded word lists for preparing their simplified readers at different levels.

What kind of criteria did the compilers of such lists use? We shall look at some of these criteria. Namely, what did White (1988), West (1953) and Nation (1997) have in mind as they worked?

White (1988) lists seven key issues which, in his opinion, every syllabus designer should keep in mind when planning the lexical content of the syllabus. These are:

- 1 **Frequency of use**, i.e. the more frequently a word is used, the sooner it should appear in the syllabus.
- 2 **Coverage** i.e. words with a broader coverage should be introduced first (thus 'go' will be taught before 'travel' or 'walk').
- 3 **Range** i.e. words found in a variety of text types should be introduced before those which are common only in a restricted range of text types.
- 4 **Availability**, i.e. words which are easily available to native speakers should be taught early on in a syllabus even if they are not particularly high frequency words. White illustrates this concept by giving the example of the desirability of teaching the words 'salt' and 'pepper' together, making the point that the

word 'pepper' is just as available to a native speaker as 'salt', even though it has a much lower frequency.

- 5 **Learnability**, i.e words which are easy to learn should be presented earlier in the syllabus than those that are harder to learn. Factors affecting how easy words are to learn are: whether they are similar to words in the learners' L1, whether their meaning can be easily demonstrated, their brevity, their regularity, and whether they contain elements which are already familiar to the learners from the knowledge of English which they have already acquired .
- 6 **Opportunism**, i.e words which are relevant to the learners' immediate situation should be presented early on in the course; in many situations it will, for instance, be appropriate to teach beginners the word 'whiteboard' despite its low frequency, coverage, range etc.
- 7 **Centres of interest**, i.e lexical sets which are likely to interest students in any particular group should be included.

(quoted in O'Dell:1997:269)

Frequency is the first criterion and it might seem an obvious choice. As we have already seen, computer corpora have made it much easier to produce accurate word frequency lists.

However, this is not so simple because of the nature of the English language which has so much homonymy and polysemy. For example which meanings of the word *set* are the most frequently used ones cannot be found in the word frequency lists. Therefore, it seems that word frequency is not enough as there are many words which infrequently occur which all learners need even at elementary level. Examples of these are the days of the week and the names of the months.

The other criteria devised by White should also be taken into account when selecting vocabulary for the early stages of a syllabus, but at more advanced levels, O'Dell thinks that "the first six criteria gradually seem to lose their significance and the guiding criterion would seem increasingly to become personal centres of interest, partially because at the later stages, words required for technical or professional purposes are likely to be introduced" (1997:270).

The list devised by White does not take into account other important factors that would need to be considered in the development of a resource list of words. The list does not take into consideration what forms and uses of a word are counted as being of the same word family.

For instance, should *governor* be part of the word family represented by *govern*? When making this decision the purpose of the list and the needs of the learners it is intended for need to be considered (Nation,1997). Furthermore, Nation states that as well as basing the decisions on features such as regularity, productivity and frequency (Bauer & Nation,1993), the likelihood of learners seeing these relationships needs to be considered. Idioms and set expressions are not taken into account in the above quoted list. If the frequency of such multi-word items is high, then perhaps they should be included (Ibid.). We believe that multi-word items, although infrequent, should be learned at some stage since they are a sign of L2 speakers proficiency. Proof of this argument are studies by Kjellmer (1991), Low (1988), quoted in Moon (1997:58).

Also, the list devised by White made use of ease and difficulty of learning, but the factors that he states affecting how easy words are to learn are different from the ones given in West's list. (1953:IX).

In spite of its age, *The General Service List* (West,1953) still remains the best available list because of its information about the frequency of each word's various meanings, and West's careful application of criteria other than frequency and range (Nation, 1997). West found that frequency and range alone were not sufficient criteria for deciding what goes into a word list for teaching purposes. West made use of the *ease or difficulty of learning* criterion but in the sense that it is easier to learn another related meaning for a known word than to learn another word, *necessity* i.e words that express ideas cannot be expressed through other words, *cover* i.e it is not efficient to be able to express the same idea in different ways, it is more efficient to learn a word that covers quite a different idea and take into consideration the *stylistic level* and emotional words because West saw second language learners as needing neutral vocabulary.

On the other hand, in a process syllabus, the selection of vocabulary will be partly determined by the learners themselves. The learners' personal interests will be the main factor for selecting vocabulary in this kind of syllabus. These syllabuses should focus on the skills necessary for learners to select the vocabulary which they consider important for their needs. Process syllabuses do have certain vocabulary control in terms of the conceptual notions considered central to learning any foreign language e.g time, distance, colour, speed etc. Given that the teacher plays an important role in deciding i.e negotiating the syllabus content, s/he should bear in mind the seven key issues for selection and grading outlined above.

The development of huge computer corpora of language data over the past few years has had a profound effect on the theory of syllabus design in that it allows linguists to make more detailed analyses and extensive studies of how language is actually used than was ever the



case previously. It has become commonplace to study the frequency of words, their relationships, and their environments in a systematic and thorough way.

These large corpora have improved the compilation of better word frequency lists, which allow more confident decisions on which frequent vocabulary to include. They also provide much more data for concordancing purposes.

Concordances can give us an idea of how any word is used in practice. For example, it has now been verified that the verb *know* is more frequently used in speech as a shared-knowledge discourse marker than with the meaning of 'have knowledge of' (McCarthy and Carter in O'Dell, 1997:262). Even superficial observation of the way people in the United States and Britain speak testifies to the fact that the phrase 'you know' is void of any meaning and is being criticised by language experts in the media that it is impoverishing the English language. When feeling at a loss for words, language users resort to the phrase 'you know'.

Now let us look at another resource list which seems to be the most comprehensive and which covers the factors that we are most interested in this study, namely the sociocultural aspect of vocabulary. The list is devised by Nation (1997) and as we shall see, judgements on well-established criteria have been made according to the latest research on corpus based studies of vocabulary frequency.

Nation (1997) suggests several factors that would need to be considered in the development of a resource list of high frequency words. These are:

1. **Representativeness:** The corpora that the list is based on should adequately represent the wide range of uses of language. In the past, most word lists have been based on written

corpora. There needs to be a spoken corpora involved in the development of the service list.

2. Biber's corpus studies (1990) have shown how particular language features cluster in particular text types. The corpora used should contain a wide range of useful types so that the biases of a particular text type do not unduly influence the resulting list.
3. **Frequency and range:** Most word lists and frequency studies have given recognition to the importance of range of occurrence. A word should not become part of a general service list merely because it occurs frequently. It should occur frequently across a wide range of texts. This does not mean that its frequency has to be roughly the same across the different texts, but means that it should occur in some form or other in most of the different texts or groupings of texts.
4. **Word families:** The development of a general service list needs to make use of a sensible set of criteria regarding what forms and uses are counted as being members of the same family. When making this decision, the purposes of the list and the learners for which it is intended need to be considered. As mentioned earlier, as well as basing the decision on features such as regularity, productivity and frequency (Bauer & Nation, 1993), the likelihood of learners seeing these relationships needs to be considered (Nagy and Anderson, 1984)
5. **Idioms and set expressions:** Some items larger than a word behave like high frequency words. That is, they occur frequently as multi-word units (*good morning, never mind*), and their meaning is not clear from the meaning of the parts (*at once, set out*). If the frequency of such items is high enough to get them into a general service list in direct competition with single words, then perhaps they should be included. Certainly the arguments for idioms are strong, whereas set expressions could be included under one of their constituent words (Nagy, Moon, McCarthy and Carter, 1997).

6. **Range of information:** To be of full use in course design, a list of high frequency words would need to include the following information for each word - the forms and parts of speech included in a word family, frequency, the underlying meaning of the word, variations of meaning and collocations and the relative frequency of these meanings and uses, and restrictions on the use of the word with regard to politeness, geographical distribution, etc. Some dictionaries, notably the revised edition of the Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1995), include much of this information, but still do not go far enough. This variety of information needs to be set out in a way that is readily accessible to teachers and learners.
7. **Other criteria:** The criteria devised by West (1953:IX) already mentioned such as ease and difficulty of learning, necessity, cover, stylistic and emotional level of words. One of the many findings of the COBUILD project was that different forms of a word often behave in different ways, taking their own set of collocates and expressing different shades of meaning (Sinclair,1991). Careful consideration would need to be given to these and other criteria in the final stages of making a general service list.

(Nation, quoted in Schmitt and McCarthy,1997:18-19)

As can be seen, the criteria above give careful consideration to the range of information that should be included for each word which coincides with what learners need to know about a word, i.e its form, meaning, and use. The above criteria are a result of the findings of research on vocabulary size and frequency and they show that this information may result in enormous benefits for both teachers and learners. The ten most frequent words account for 25 percent of the words on any page and in any conversation and the 2000 most frequent words account for 80-90 percent of the words on any text or conversation. These high frequency words are useful no matter what use is made of the language and they are essential for normal language use.

They are the essential core of any language programme. Later on in this chapter we shall refer to these criteria in the process of considering our own set of criteria for the forthcoming analysis of vocabulary.

There are other reasons for the choice of vocabulary used and presented in language textbooks. In the 1950s and 1960s audiolingual textbooks used a set plan for selecting and limiting vocabulary. In addition to the frequency criterion, vocabulary was selected according to an expanding scope for the learners (Hatch and Brown,1995). The lessons began with vocabulary of the classroom, then school, home, community and work. Finally the scope became communicating around the world. This concentric circle approach to theme and vocabulary selection still appears in many ESL and EFL textbooks. (Ibid. 406)

In the early 1970s ESL teaching in the United States turned to more communicative materials and to more usable English with such approaches as Survival English and Contextual English. All of these materials were prepared by the school districts and were designed having in mind the immigrant families and students. Priority was given to contexts that were crucial for survival in the new country. Vocabulary was selected to match these basic English units, which included such texts as obtaining housing, doing banking, shopping, getting a driver's license and filling out job applications (Hatch and Brown,1995).

A second communicative approach, similar to Contextual English, are the theme-based approaches, which go further than the 'newcomer' themes and choose themes that the textbook writers believe are important. The vocabulary is selected to match global or social issues such as world peace, the environment, world communication and technology, space exploration, AIDS, world health and human rights.

The third communicative approach is the notional-functional syllabus. This approach provides teachers and program development specialists with a list of the basic functions of language and the vocabulary related to different notions within functions. The major functions identified in van Ek(1975) are listed here together with the related vocabulary domains:

1. Exchanging factual information

*Vocabulary domains:* identify, ask, report, say, think X, etc.

2. Exchanging intellectual information

*Vocabulary domains:* agree, disagree, know, remember, etc.

3. Exchanging emotional attitudes

*Vocabulary domains:* surprise, hope, disappointment, fear, worry, preference, gratitude, sympathy, want, desire, etc.

4. Exchanging moral attitudes

*Vocabulary domains:* apology, forgiveness, approval, disapproval, appreciation, regret, indifference, etc.

5. Suasion

*Vocabulary domains:* suggest, request, invite, instruct, advise, warn, offer or request assistance, etc.

6. Socializing

*Vocabulary domains:* greetings, leave-takings, holiday sayings, toasts, etc.

(Hatch and Brown,1995:406-7)

The major notions identified in the threshold level as described by van Ek (1976) should be included in the basic curriculum. These are: personal identification; house and home; trade, profession, occupation; free time, entertainment; travel; relations with other people; health and

welfare; education; shopping; food and drink; services; places; foreign languages; and weather. The possible texts that will be utilised will give us a good idea of the vocabulary that will be needed for each text. The list of functions and notions gives material developers a framework for planning materials with appropriate vocabulary.

The importance of topics as an organising principle for vocabulary learning in the lexical syllabuses of coursebooks has been noted by O'Dell (1997) who advises that lexical syllabus designers in the future should combine the threads of grammar, notions, functions, the importance of topics and the criteria for the development of word lists. It is clear that vocabulary learning involves far more than "just learning lexical sets associated with particular topic areas". (O'Dell,1997:270)

This is because there are many verbs, and general purpose words, which do not fall neatly in topic-based vocabulary lessons. For instance, *concentrate, reflect, way, present*, are all useful words and need to be covered by learners, so O'Dell suggests that one way of teaching them is on an *ad hoc* basis as they come up in reading or listening texts, another more systematic approach is to group them in semantic domains that relate to notional concepts like *thinking, obligation, speed* and so on. (O'Dell,1997:271)

According to O'Dell, the lexical syllabus should be given a grammatical aspect. This can be achieved by looking at some grammatical concepts like *time, condition* and *modality* from a lexical angle. Thus a lesson on modality would include nouns like *probability, likelihood* and lexical chunks like *there's a fair chance that* and *the odds are against* (him doing it) (see Halliday, 1985:334, in O'Dell, 1997). When dealing with conditional sentences, nouns like *prerequisite, requirements, circumstances*, could be looked at since all of them convey a conditional idea.

Another successful ‘marriage’ of grammar and lexis, is the approach to delexical verbs i.e verbs that are used frequently in English but have very little meaning themselves since the meaning is carried by their object e.g. *to take a shower, to take a walk, to take account of* and so on. Delexical verbs are used mainly in phrasal or multi-word verbs. It is important that the coursebook focuses on the delexicalised uses and meanings. Students are usually presented with examples like *give Tom a book* and *he gave her a pen*, but more attention should be paid to the delexicalised uses of certain verbs since since students come across these phrases during the course of the lesson, for example: *give more answers like this, giving advice*, more complex phrases could be covered later on a different level of learning, such as ; *give and take, give in gracefully, give out signals*, etc.

Therefore, we can conclude that topics, notions, functions and grammar all form a part in the vocabulary syllabus and all four strands should be focused upon equally.

#### **4.11 How should the place of vocabulary in the syllabus vary from level to level**

The traditional view (Yalden, 1987, quoted in O'Dell, 1997) is that beginners should be burdened with as little vocabulary as possible at the expense of grammar. Extending the range of vocabulary has been seen as more appropriate to the intermediate and advanced learner. This is a legacy left over from the past when the grammar of Latin and Greek was thought to be more important than learning particular words, because a good dictionary could help students translate.

Meara (quoted in O'Dell, 1997:272) says that the problem with this grammar-based approach is that students perform 'reasonably well within a classroom context, where the lexical environment is very limited and very predictable. Outside this protected environment, however, they are often unable to cope.' He says that if beginners focus on vocabulary learning and learn the basic 2,000 words, they have some degree of success outside the classroom despite their lack of fundamental grammar. He supports his argument by saying that most learners when starting to learn a new language expect to memorise a lot of words, so this kind of learner expectation should be made use of; also children learn their mother tongue by learning words first; and finally, when learners acquire a reasonable range of vocabulary then they will begin to differentiate between certain grammatical structures and it will be easier to memorise and understand these patterns.

Meara feels that the best way to learn the recommended 2,000 words is through the Keyword Method, asking learners to underline the words they recognise in texts in order to practice recognizing word forms accurately, and using word games.

The crucial point in Meara's argument is one for syllabus designers to remember. EFL students today differ from schoolchildren studying classics in the past, since the former are learning for communicative purposes and not as an intellectual exercise. Therefore, the early introduction and focus on vocabulary would seem to be appropriate. Nevertheless some attention to grammar may help the student to operate in the world outside the classroom, for instance, an awareness of how plurals are formed and pronouns could be quite useful in real-life situations.

Later stages of vocabulary learning - intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced levels could begin to sensitise the learner to register markings for words. One example of this are the different varieties of English spoken all over the world or by different groups in a society. The grammatical differences are relatively small compared to the differences in vocabulary and pronunciation which are noticeable. Some awareness of the generally known vocabulary items from other varieties of English might be interesting and useful to the intermediate to advanced student.

A more important kind of register information is connotations, whether a word is colloquial or pejorative, for example. At lower levels of learning, learners are given predominantly words that have neutral register. At higher levels, the syllabus can pay at least some attention to the positive/negative sides of the same coin (*obese/skinny*; versus *plump/thin*;) The approach to register could be quite varied, for instance taboo words, officialese, language of the tabloid press, being diplomatic, the language of business meetings, gender aspects of language and so on. The trend in the work of recent syllabus planners is to acknowledge much greater importance to this aspect of language than it has had in the past, evidence of this can be seen in the testing of aspects of register in Papers 2 and 3 of the 1991 UCLES, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate EFL examination, the Certificate in Advanced English (O'Dell, 1997:274).

Sociocultural knowledge is closely connected to the issue of register. Various words have particular associations for the British person, just as the *White House*, *Bloomingdales*, *O.J.*, have for someone from the USA. The foreign learner who has not spent some time in these countries will find it extremely hard to understand contemporary news, journalism, television,

like CNN for example. The study of the sociocultural dimension of lexis can be interesting and useful to learners above intermediate level.

Idioms are another important aspect of vocabulary which ought to be covered, but the main problem is the fact that idioms date. One can often come across colourful idioms in EFL coursebooks (especially local ones), but not on visits to Britain. Most foreign learners of English know that when it pours with rain, they are supposed to say *it's raining cats and dogs* but native speakers hardly talk like this. Teachers have lost enthusiasm to teach idioms because students rarely grasp the context when they are supposed to use a certain idiom, especially if they have not spent some time living in the target country. So, they tend to sound ridiculous and they avoid using idiomatic phrases.

Despite these problems, idioms are an important feature of the English language and should be included in a lexical syllabus, of course after the intermediate stage. Teachers should sensitise learners to the potential problems of usage outlined above and help them focus on their receptive rather than productive use. Students usually enjoy learning them and they will come across a lot of idiomatic English when dealing with authentic reading and listening texts. Idioms can be present into groups which have a common base word - *a red letter day*, *to be in the red*, *to be caught red-handed* could be taught together. Another approach is to teach idioms together that are linked, for instance, with horse-riding - so that *to keep a tight rein on something*, *to be blinkered*, *to get the bit between one's teeth*, *to spur someone on*, *to be in the saddle*, and *to give someone free rein* (McCarthy and O'Dell:1994).

#### **4.12 How can the syllabus help students to learn vocabulary items more effectively?**

In any kind of syllabus, learner training is one of the most useful things which a teacher can do during the vocabulary component of a language course. The skills and strategies that the learner will acquire will help him/her in their further individual vocabulary learning. This may include using dictionaries and other reference materials to their full potential especially the new material which has benefited from insights drawn from large computer corpora, as well as techniques for remembering and revising vocabulary (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995, quoted in O'Dell, 1997:276). Skills for extending the receptive vocabulary of learners should be included, that is, inferring meaning from context. Learner strategies should ideally continue throughout the course and be a part of the lesson which may be also dealing with topics, notions or idioms.

Memory plays a crucial role in vocabulary learning. In many studies of vocabulary learning, the benefits of revision and repetition have been clearly demonstrated. Kachroo (1962, cited in Nation, 1990) found that if words were repeated several times in a coursebook students learnt them, whereas words that featured only once or twice in the coursebook were not memorised by learners. Therefore, textbooks should recycle words in a thorough way i.e the teaching programme itself should build in repetition at increasing intervals.

In considering vocabulary instruction with L1 teenagers, Beck *et al.* emphasise the importance of what they termed rich instruction and their comments would seem to have relevance for L2 teaching as well.

Although the instruction would need to include associating words with definitions, it would need to go well beyond that. Instructional conditions should be arranged to provide opportunities for a maximum amount of processing of the words. Students should be required to manipulate words in varied and rich ways, for example by describing how they relate to other words and to their own familiar experiences. To promote and reinforce deep processing, activities should include much discussion of the words and require students to create justifications for the relationships and associations that they discover. This feature we labelled rich instruction. (1987:149, cited in O'Dell,1997:277)

Encouraging L2 learners to make active and repeated use of the words being learnt and to relate them wherever possible to personal associations will be of enormous benefit to their vocabulary development, as has been shown with school-children developing their vocabulary in their first language (Beck et al. quoted in Nagy,1997).

So far we have discussed: what vocabulary should be learned i.e the selection of vocabulary according to the principles and guidelines of the word lists, what needs to be learned about particular words i.e their form, meaning and use including the importance of the sociocultural dimension which is manifested through connotations and associations that words have, and their collocations.

Now we shall proceed to formulate our criteria, more precisely several key points which will guide our analysis of the sociocultural content of vocabulary in two sets of learning materials.

#### **4.13 Principles and Guidelines for the Analysis of Sociocultural Content of Vocabulary**

In our forthcoming analysis we shall be specifically concentrating on the sociocultural aspect of vocabulary, that is, whether the textbook(s) chosen for inspection address this issue and do the textbook writers employ various methods to teach the sociocultural content of vocabulary.

Perhaps it would be more realistic to expect at least some awareness of this aspect of vocabulary on the part of the textbook authors.

As already mentioned in this chapter, according to Nation (1990) intentional learning is faster and more sure, and it includes using four strands of learning techniques that complement each other. Learning through input, learning through output, direct teaching and learning and fluency development. This means that from a methodological point of view, the textbook should employ several methods for teaching vocabulary that will enable learning of vocabulary items. This also includes the teaching of the sociocultural aspect of vocabulary.

Hatch and Brown (1990) have found several principles that will guide and inform in making decisions on the choice of method. At the same time, these principles can be used to evaluate and analyse methods for teaching vocabulary already employed in textbooks.

The first principle is the principle of *time-effectiveness*.

- How much preparation time does the method require of the teacher?
- How much time does it require of the learner?
- Does the benefit received match the time spent?

We can also analyse the selection made by material writers by looking at the following questions:

- will the textbook help learners acquire the words they want or need?
- what aspects of words will be known or enhanced as a result of using the method in the textbook?
- will learners gain knowledge about the features, fields, core meanings of certain words?

- will the learners be sensitive to the words' potential as figurative language?
- will learners be aware of their differences across cultures?
- will the learners understand any register restrictions the words may have, and thus be able to use them in appropriate ways and contexts?

Another way to look at the vocabulary syllabus in a textbook is to judge what steps in the vocabulary acquisition process (i.e. encountering new words, which is the first step that triggers the subsequent steps, getting the word forms, getting the word meanings, consolidating word form and meaning in memory and using the words), the method might contribute to. Furthermore, the textbook can be evaluated according to what extent it provides additional value and learning to the learners, that is:

- will the learners just know a limited number of words or will they also know how to learn words better?
- will they have transferable strategies and techniques for learning that can be used with other vocabulary?
- will learners want to continue to learn words?

Since every textbook employs some kind of approach, method or technique for the teaching of vocabulary, we shall keep in mind the above principles as guidelines for our analysis of the sociocultural content of vocabulary.

Keeping in mind the above principles, in order to proceed with the more specific analysis of the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary, we shall need to consider the following key points:

1. Does the textbook contain sociocultural knowledge and to what extent? For instance: *green wellies, number ten, anorak, Marks and Sparks* etc. all have particular associations

for the British person, just as *The White House*, *O.J.*, *Bloomingdales* have for someone coming from the USA. Such expressions may be hard for the learner of English to understand, but without words like these it would be difficult to follow contemporary media, film, television like CNN. The Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (1992) shows an increasing awareness of the importance of such aspects of lexis and their study can add a useful dimension to the intermediate and upper-intermediate to advanced classes.

2. Are the following aspects of lexical work covered?
  - a. collocations
  - b. multi-word items

Despite their differences, we have included these two aspects of lexical work together because of the fact that both collocations and multi-word items are ‘chunks of speech’ which can be preceded or followed by certain words or phrases, their usage depends and is limited by the context in which they appear.

3. Does the textbook contain an important part of lexical work i.e connotations? Whether the attention of the learners is turned to the positive/negative connotations that some words have e.g *obese/plump*; *skinny/thin*, *slim*; Does it refer to style and register? For example, whether a word is more colloquial or pejorative. This could include the study of :taboo words, officialese, language of the tabloid press, being diplomatic, gender aspects of language (O'Dell:1997,274).
4. English in the USA differs considerably from British English. This is only one example of the infinite variety of ‘Englishes’ spoken all over the world. Does the textbook sensitise learners to these varieties of usage? US or American English is not the only special variety of English. Each area of the English-speaking world has developed its own special

characteristics. Does the textbook provide opportunities for encountering vocabulary from various English-speaking regions such as: Australian English, Indian English, Scottish English, Black English? For example words like: *brae, loch, bonny* (Scottish), *beat, dig, chick* (Black English). These are all words that native speakers understand but foreign language learners need to acquire at least a taste of some of the different varieties of English since they will come across most of the words in reading, films, TV viewing.

5. No language stands still. New words and expressions are always being created. There is no authority that decides whether a new word is acceptable or not; if it is used frequently, and in a variety of contexts, it will find its way into the dictionary. Since the 1980s a lot of words from various fields have come into the English language. For example:

Science and technology: *faxable, junk fax, tummytuck* etc.

Sports and Fashion: *monoboarding, snowsurfing, vogueing*.

Political and Social Trends: *eco-friendly, cardboard city, teleworking, couch potato*.

Borrowings from other languages: *fatwa* (Arabic), *karaoke* (Japanese), *glasnost* (Russian).

New forms or meanings for old words: *ageism, dark-green, singlehood, clergyperson*.

(McCarthy and O'Dell, 1994:198)

It is important for the learners to be aware of the changes in the language and the textbook should give examples of such words to increase learners' awareness.

I realize that some of the points outlined above, that I would be searching for in the textbooks for analysis, would be more suited for an advanced learner of English. Nevertheless, some awareness of the generally known vocabulary items from the infinite variety of 'Englishes' and the knowledge that there are many other dimensions to vocabulary learning, may be interesting and motivating to the intermediate learner as well.

## 4.14 Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at some important aspects of vocabulary learning and teaching. In the first several sections, we have attempted to define several concepts in vocabulary learning, more importantly what the sociocultural component of vocabulary learning involves since this component is the focal point of our analysis. We have seen that this involves knowledge of the concept that lies behind the various uses of the word, the particular collocations it has in various contexts and its various associations. We have also observed that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of the lexical syllabus which has been encouraged by the knowledge we are gaining about vocabulary from computer corpora. New insights have been gained drawn from large computer corpora, as described in the research findings by Snow (1997) and Stubbs (1996).

In the final section, we have looked at the place of vocabulary in a language course by considering what vocabulary should be selected, what needs to be learned about the lexical aspect of the English language and at what level of learning, and how the syllabus should help learners with their vocabulary learning. The teaching and learning of lexis should occupy a more significant position in EFL syllabuses than has previously been the case. We have also seen that the lexical syllabus should provide learners with a variety of approaches to lexis in order to achieve wide coverage. Some approaches have greater significance in the elementary levels and some at more advanced levels, however the treatment of collocation and learner strategies and skills for acquiring vocabulary should be incorporated at all levels of the syllabus.

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We will now proceed to show how the two chosen classroom textbooks have actually incorporated vocabulary, with a special focus on the sociocultural content. First of all, we will give an overview of the general sociocultural content of both textbooks according to the chosen criteria. Then we will proceed to analyse the sociocultural dimension of the vocabulary input in each textbook bearing in mind and constantly referring to the principles and guidelines and the key points outlined above.

## CHAPTER 5

### Analysis of Two Textbooks for Learning English as a Foreign Language

#### 5.1 An Overview of Content of the Macedonian Textbook *English 2*

As in any analysis of a text, the most important thing to remember is the specific function it was designed to perform and the audience for which it was intended. The *English 2* textbook is intended for teaching sixteen-year olds studying English in secondary schools throughout Macedonia. In High School or Gymnazia, the pupils have four years of English classes, altogether four textbooks, one textbook for each year of study. The present analysis will consider only the second book. This might be taken as a disservice to the textbook, but the four textbooks are written by different authors for each year and only the grammar and structure of the language have been taken into account to progress from the beginner's level and reaching the upper-intermediate level in the fourth year of study. The textbooks have no general image that needs to be followed. In light of the above reasons, it will not disrupt the objectivity of the analysis if only the second-year textbook is chosen for analysis.

We will first of all proceed with the analysis of the general cultural content of the textbook according to the investigative questions devised in Chapter 3.

The knowledge presented consists of factual information and language exercises. There is no clearly defined aim as to what the pupils are supposed to achieve. There is no introduction to the book and there is no teacher's book. In other words, the general objectives are not outlined. It is mostly left to the individual styles of the teachers to influence the content of the lessons, teaching methods and so on.

The textbook authors have not made an effort to include real-life situations. The textbook does not prepare pupils for instance, for a visit to England, meeting British people, socializing, and so on.

The texts are all in English (no Macedonian translations) and the information presented is in a factual, impersonal way. Some of the texts are excerpts adapted from British novels, the rest are taken from British and American magazines. This could be regarded as being semi-authentic, but the adjustments that have been made and the fact that the texts are used solely for the purpose of grammar, significantly lessen the effect of 'authentic', real-life situations.

The presentation of information is mostly through drawings, cartoons, simple sketches for language exercises and there are photographs of famous people - scientists and actors, film stars, as well as a few places in Britain and Macedonia. All the drawings and photographs are black and white.

The textbook should be made interesting to the pupils and to bring to life the foreign country. The best way to do this is to include many photographs and pictures which will depict various aspects of the foreign culture. Using audiovisual materials such as posters on the walls, recorded material, slides, video will help towards greater authenticity.

## **5.2 Contents of the textbook according to the list**

The textbook is divided into six units each covering a certain topic or theme. Inevitably, the inclusion of a certain subject matter by the author shows his/her subjectivity i.e how the author organizes the textbook into chapters and the content of each chapter illustrates his/her

priorities that is, what he or she sees as important subject areas to cover. In *English 2* the authors' approach is a thematic one. The themes are usually factual, general information followed by a list of words used in the text. This is followed by grammar exercises.

The themes can be divided according to the way in which they appear in the book.

Unit 1: We all need food; Unit 2: Take care of your body; Unit 3: People and work; Unit 4: Let's explore; Unit 5: Some facts about Macedonia; Unit 6: About the English-Speaking world.

Now let us consider the contents according to the list discussed in Chapter 3 (3.1.2).

### 1. *Social identity and Social groups*

Professional identity: only mentioned in the example of Richard Smith an engineer

We do not know if he works in a factory in Macedonia or an English-speaking country (Unit 1).

- Mrs. Clark, who has lost her job (u.3. sect. B)

Other social identity:

- a farmer in the small town of Kochani, Macedonia (U.1)

- immigrants to Western Europe: Natalie's Life (U.3)

Description of a Portuguese girl's life in Western Europe, the nostalgia she feels for her friends at home and how she faces prejudice and xenophobia in the foreign country.

### 2. *Belief and Behaviour*

- "In a Big city" - an excerpt from "English for Today" Book One: The way we live  
Description of London - underground, the rush-hour, commuters, night-life.

### 3. *Social-political Institutions*

- Some facts about Macedonia(U.5)- Macedonian radio-TV is briefly mentioned  
- UNESCO (U.6) its mission, its priorities, fields of action.

- American system of education (U.6)- an excerpt from D.K. Stevenson, “American Life and Institutions”
- TV and radio programmes in Britain - only brief facts in five sentences.

#### 4. *National History*

- Skopje’s old bazaar (U.5) - description of the city as found in travelogues from the 17th century and the earthquake in 1963 until present day developments.
- World War II in the excerpt “Socks for the partisans” a short story by the Macedonian writer V. Maleski.
- Photographs of four eminent scientists are given with brief facts about their achievements: Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Roentgen, Charles Darwin;

#### 5. *National Geography*

- Lake Ohrid - The pearl of Macedonia and Europe
- The USA - geographical facts about land and climate
- Brief geographical facts about Scotland and Wales
- Australia - a short paragraph for translation

#### 6. *National Cultural Heritage*

- English proverbs and rhymes
- a classic poem about Skopje by the Macedonian poet B. Koneski translated into English
- a poem entitled “The World” by the Macedonian poet M. Matevski translated into English.

The following topics were included in the textbook but were not found on the list:

- *Science in the world today*

Fields of scientific knowledge are listed: anthropology, biology, botany etc. and scientists, for e.g a botanist, physicist, anthropologist etc.

- *World Issues*

- Our modern world : terrorism, crime, pollution, drug addiction

Of course there is a problem in not looking at the whole course but only a part of it. I have explained this in the introduction to this chapter, it would be unjust and unrealistic to expect just one book to cover all the categories included in the list. For this reason we have emphasised which cultural representations are present in the textbook, and now we shall proceed to see if the general approach meets the requirements we put forward in our analytical criteria.

As is evident from the list of cultural contents, the striking thing about the textbook is that there is no functional knowledge at all. No people and interactions or language needed for communication, socializing etc. There is a lack of any expression of emotion, in fact, there is no image of people or country, neither of a Macedonian or English-speaking one. There are no characters or stereotypes of nationalities at all in the book.

### 5.3 Contemporaneity of genuine texts and their degree of originality

As mentioned in chapter 3 on the discussion of the criteria for the analysis of the cultural dimensions in textbooks, one of the important roles foreign language textbooks play is to expose the learner to the contemporary culture(s) of the target language.

An examination of the references given in *English 2* textbooks suggests that the writers made very little effort in representing the contemporary social dimensions of the societies in question.

Judged according to Risager's criteria or requirement that a textbook should have 'realism', it is to a certain extent present in the textbook but only in the excerpts from magazines, the 'weather forecast' and the TV programme taken from a newspaper. The authentic texts also require that they be exploited in the classroom in an authentic way just as they would be in real-life situations. Since there is no teacher's book there is no guidance given and the teacher is left on her or his resourcefulness and knowledge. There is a lack of representations of real life people and themes of contemporary life.

There is also another contributing factor to the choice of texts. The texts in the book, apart from those that have been artificially designed for the grammar practice, are taken from literary sources, namely, C. Dickens, C. McCulloch (Australian writer) and a contemporary Macedonian writer. It might be, that the reason why written literature is emphasized as opposed to the everyday life of ordinary people, is the deep rooted concept that only the written language, i.e the written literature recording achievements of the culture and other knowledge, is regarded as worthy of study and important to learners. This kind of learning

does not treat a text in terms of communication and disregards the interactive and personal aspects of language. The teacher-centred approach with emphasis on the learning and use of grammar and vocabulary is still dominant in Macedonian classrooms.

#### **5.4 Cultural representations**

The writer's treatment of texts at the micro-social level does not seem to be satisfactory. That is, the social identity, social environment and personality of individuals are poorly handled or not dealt with at all, for instance the categories of *social interaction* and *belief and behaviour*.

The portrayal of people and social interactions does not exist anywhere in the book. For example, in the category *socialization and the life cycle* there are no social institutions and beliefs and behaviours connected with them. No examples of the different roles that a person takes on in his/her life time. The opportunity for understanding and developing pupils' social experience does not exist.

Byram and Morgan and colleagues (Byram, M., Morgan, C., et al., 1994) in the list discussed in Chapter 3, have shown some examples of the complexity of an individual's social identities. Apart from national identity, a person takes on different social identities, such as in the family, work place, as a member of an age group, ethnic group or other social groups. Each group has its own special values, beliefs and practices. The knowledge of these from the point of view of social interaction could be necessary for learners to understand the target group and to be able to communicate effectively in given social situations in the target culture. The coursebook does not provide the learners with insight into behavioural norms, social situations the native is required to follow.

The writers of the *English 2* textbook show efforts in representing the cultures at the macro-social level. But, at the same time, because there are no explicit guidelines as to how these texts were selected, that is, which criteria guided the selection, the diversity of topics has not been satisfactorily achieved. Some topics have been dealt with in a limited way and others have not been touched upon. As an illustration, in our analysis, we did not encounter texts on value concepts and lifestyles, and texts revealing social problems. Therefore, the criterion for heterogeneity of cultural representations, as stated in our guidelines, has not been fully achieved. The textbook does not provide learners with rich and varied language features and cultural information.

For instance, with regard to historical issues, it has been suggested (Byram and Morgan, 1994) that attention should be focused on those issues which have affected the way people perceive their social identities and the way they perceive the world, but not what the author would think interesting or important in purely historical terms. Also, the representatives of social structures i.e socio-political institutions, organisations and the values they represent have to be those which have obvious wider-spread influence on people's way of thinking and behaving. It seems that this integral vision of the target culture suggested in the criteria chosen for this present analysis has not been achieved in the coursebook.

The third dimension in our investigative questions regarding analysis of cultural content are the intercultural representations. This final dimension requires textbook writers to compare the target culture(s) and learner's native culture by reciprocally representing them, through, let us say stereotypes. Mutual representation is necessary because foreign language learners may have formed their own stereotypes of the target culture and their understanding of the target culture(s) needs an expansion of their existing culture-specific frame of references. To

develop learners' intercultural competence, stereotypes can be used but learners should be made fully aware of the complexity of people and society and textbook materials should be able to help learners modify the stereotypes through meaningful treatment of them. There is no stereotypical representation in the textbook.

It should be regarded as an advantage that the textbook was designed having in mind Macedonian learners and this led to the inclusion of literary texts and poems by Macedonian authors translated into English. The representation of our culture in the target language should help pupils compare and contrast the two cultures. Yet, the aims have not been clearly stated. The choice of texts should be closer to real life in order to be stimulating to the learners. The mechanism of mutual representation begins with stereotypes, comparison of the images of self and other which would lead to a better understanding of the target culture as well as one's own, and this would in turn lead to a more sympathetic view of different feelings, values and emotions.

## **5.5 Textbook image and general evaluation**

The emphasis of the textbook is clearly on language learning in its basic, structural form. The information given about the English-speaking world is purely factual. There is an informative text on the education system in the USA, but there is no description of a school timetables, the school week, the system of discipline, assessment, lessons studies and free time. The number of years spent in school is not compared to other countries or to the Macedonian school system. This is an important intercultural criterion which has not been dealt with at all. As has been already said, only through comparison of the target culture with the learner's own

can true intercultural understanding be reached. Themes such as “Using services” which would include means of transport, travel, making a phone-call, asking for information in Britain , and “Housing” which would explain living in Britain or USA, descriptions of interiors of houses and housing needs, are not included at all.

Another theme not touched upon in the book is “Leisure”, i.e how young people spend their free time. For example:camping, youth hostels, watching TV, various sports, home-based leisure activities, reading listening to pop-music, going to the cinema.

Because there has not been enough theoretical guidance in the pedagogical domain, there is a lack of understanding of the exact meaning of communicative competence and how to help learners achieve such a competence. The functional aspect of language use, which is only one aspect of communicative competence, has not been dealt with at all. Although the important role of cultural understanding has been recognized to a certain extent (the texts on the English speaking world), what exactly should be done, and how it could be done effectively are questions waiting to be answered more satisfactorily.

Apart from the functional aspect of language use, there are other aspects concerning communicative competence which have not been dealt with sufficiently or fully understood. For instance, ‘communicative competence’ to represent the use of language in social context and the observance of social norms of appropriacy. Our concern in this research project is the culture contents of the textbook in question. The Pedagogical Institute of Macedonia has clearly stated in the programme structure of secondary education, that cultural learning should accompany foreign language classes. The authority does not mention how this could be done effectively and in a systematic way. The authors of the *English 2* textbook seem to think that

a few texts with factual information are sufficient to provide the students with cultural knowledge of the target country whose language they are studying. In our opinion, the first step would be to establish a list of graded culture contents to guide the learning at each different stage as has been done in grammar learning.

## **5.6 Vocabulary sociocultural content**

### General overview

This textbook clearly proves that vocabulary is a poor relation to grammar. The ratio of grammar exercises to vocabulary exercises is in most units 6:1 in favour of grammar. Therefore, we can safely say that vocabulary/lexis knowledge is marginalised. What I mean is, that there are many exercises for practising the use of tenses and some texts were purposely designed for the practice of 'the passive voice'. It is interesting to note that, amidst the variety of grammar exercises, there is one exercise on the comparison of a Macedonian word and its English equivalents, which shows an awareness of the importance of this kind of learning through contrasting and comparing vocabulary items in the mother tongue and the target language.

There is no clear vocabulary syllabus, since the vocabulary items are simply listed after each text. Clearly, encountering a word in a text or in a list after the text, is not enough, as we saw earlier in our discussion on vocabulary acquisition methods. Vocabulary learner strategies are not even mentioned. Presumably, the teacher should explain the words, and s/he decides how much time is to be spent on a word, because there is no indication whether the word is a high frequency word and has a wide range of use, or it does not deserve class time.

It becomes clear, following the above, that our analysis should focus on three main issues which we have found to be relevant to our analysis of the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary, and which we can also analyse using the criteria formulated in the previous chapter. These issues are the following:

1. The lack of vocabulary acquisition methods, techniques, approaches.

Which also implies a lack of methods for acquiring sociocultural content of vocabulary.

2. The comparison of lexical items in English and Macedonian.

Learner's prior knowledge could be exploited.

3. The issue of teaching collocations and the potential link with cultural knowledge.

Our analysis will be guided by the above issues and we will consider each one separately.

### ***5.6.1 Vocabulary learning methods***

As pointed out above, there is no indication how the pupils are supposed to learn the listed words, and what the intention of the authors is. Most probably the vocabulary items are intended for receptive vocabulary learning and the teacher should point out the meaning in the given context. In such a way, no effort is needed on the part of the student and this does not give positive results in the process of learning new words and retaining them in memory.

We have already seen that when teachers deal directly with words they should decide whether to provide 'rich' instruction, or deal with the word quickly. Rich instruction involves spending time on the word, focusing on its form, meaning and use and, most importantly, involving learners in thoughtfully processing the word. Since there is no teacher's book to *English 2*, it

is left to the teacher according to his or her experience and training in teaching vocabulary to explain new words as best s/he knows .

There is no mention of vocabulary learning strategies such as, inferring meaning from context, which is the most important of all learner strategies. There is no mention of training learners to use dictionaries, either.

The authors of the textbook, it seems, do not believe that space should be allotted in the textbook for vocabulary practice, techniques and approaches for learners and teachers to benefit from. It is important that they see that there are various ways of learning vocabulary and that each of these complement each other. As we saw in chapter 4, these include learning through input, learning through output, direct teaching and learning and fluency development. Each of these strands provides knowledge that is not easily found in the others, therefore all of these strands overlap and should all form a part of the process of teaching and learning vocabulary.

As an illustration of ignorance of vocabulary methodology on the part of the textbook authors, the general theme of Unit 1 is ‘We all need food’ and in the next section an excerpt from the novel “The Good Earth” by P. Buck is given. The vocabulary items are listed according to their appearance in the text. Some of the vocabulary items are: *great, silently, footsteps, staff, soft, field, divide, tremble, anger, idle, choke, weep, stain, handful, mutter, be assured* etc.

The word ‘staff’ for example is difficult for the students to grasp and memorize because of its multiple meanings in different contexts. In the context :”...the sound of his staff on the soft earth”, it is probably translated by the teacher meaning ‘stick’ and its other meanings are not

even touched upon. Yet one of the meanings of 'staff' - people working together in a collective (airline staff, teaching staff etc) is more frequent in usage and would be more useful for the pupils to learn for their communicative competence.

As pointed out earlier, there is no indication how the pupils are supposed to learn the listed words, and what is the intention of the authors.

### ***5.6.2 The comparison of lexical items in English and Macedonian***

Pertaining to the text "The land is not to be sold", there is a short vocabulary exercise which is interesting because it aims to show the differences between the Macedonian and English lexicon. The activity requires the students to find all the words in the text that mean the Macedonian *zemja* which stands for the English *land, country, soil, earth*

This tiny part of contrasting the lexicons is meaningful to promote awareness in the pupil's minds of the stylistic differences in the English language of when to use the above words. Furthermore, a deeper analysis, or 'rich' instruction on the part of the teacher can reveal the various connotations and associations that the word conjures up in the minds of the people in Macedonia.

The last two units, 5 and 6 contain factual information about Macedonia and the English-speaking world. Since the topics of the texts are geographical, historical and cultural, let us look at some of the vocabulary used.

After the text “Facts about Macedonia”, the vocabulary is simply listed as is the usual procedure in the book. The words are grouped according to the word class they belong:

1. Verbs: *declare, commit, guarantee, establish, circulate, own, transmit.*
2. Nouns: *issue, constitution, agriculture, mining, government, market economy, access, broadcaster, faith, diocese, protection.*
3. Adjectives: *former, fundamental, Orthodox, Muslim.*

Again, the intention of the author how these key words should be studied is not stated.

No skills are required of the students nor any guidelines to help students in their vocabulary acquisition. The dominance of grammar over meaning is evident here.

The following section contains a short excerpt from a contemporary Macedonian writer who was a participant in World War II. It is entitled “Socks for the partisans” and is translated into English. The words that the author regards as difficult are listed under the heading “vocabulary”. These include:

1. Verbs: *knit, caress, ring out, disgrace, rush*
2. Nouns: *slope, ray, laughter, comrade, youngster, uprising*
3. Adjectives: *slim, gentle, barefoot, downcast*

Giving the translation or synonyms will probably clarify the meaning on a short-term basis, but since the words are not repeated in other texts, and the context is not situational-functional but literary, there is no opportunity for practice. The vocabulary exercise that follows the text requires the students to choose words from the text that are connected with the People’s

Liberation War. The pupils should pick out the following words: *comrade, old veterans, five-pointed stars on their caps*. (Communist partisans led by Tito).

The final unit in the textbook is entitled "The English speaking world". It contains extracts from several authors, namely an extract from "David Copperfield" by C. Dickens, "The Thorn Birds" by Colleen McCulloch, a text with geographical information on the USA, a text entitled "In the Big City" (taken from English for Today), "Education in the USA", brief information in the form of dialogue on TV and radio programmes in Britain. Also in the form of a dialogue between Jana and Eric, the typical features of Scotland are mentioned: "Scotland is mountains and moors, mists and malt whiskey. Scotland is shortbread and salmon, castles and crags. Scotland is heather and haggis and honey and happiness."

The words : *haggis, heather, crags, shortbread, malt* clearly introduce the students to socio-cultural knowledge. The students depend on their teacher for explanation. The teacher has potential material here to discuss stereotypes, but since there is no guidance as to how s/he is supposed to proceed with it and no teacher's book, precious classroom time is allotted to structure rather than meaning. After the text "Education in the USA", the task given to the pupils is that they should write about education in Macedonia using the following vocabulary:

*primary schools, secondary education, obligatory, obtain, depend on, activities, profession, professional training, higher education, faculties, graduate students, specialists, doctor of sciences, enter a university.*

The word 'faculties' has more than one meaning and is ambiguous, it could mean: 'the power or ability to learn something; natural ability; and also 'a branch or division of a university'.

Care should be taken in the selection of vocabulary to decrease the number of these words having in mind the level of the students.

The fact that there are texts in the book that depict the pupil's native land and even translations into English about the Second World War in Macedonia is commendable and has been pointed out as one of the ways to gain insight into cultural knowledge. The text and vocabulary give opportunity for the students to compare and contrast their own culture with the target culture. Inevitably the question arises, are the above texts illustrative of present day cultural practices of the Macedonian or British people? Clearly the whole concept of teaching and learning vocabulary should be changed. Time would be better spent on learning the vocabulary of social interactions in order to enable learners to be successful in cross-cultural communication

### ***5.6.3 Teaching collocations and their potential link with cultural knowledge***

In Unit 2 the theme is "Take care of your body" and in section A the vocabulary items are listed after the text in three columns: verbs, nouns, adjectives. In light of recent research into vocabulary methodology, it would have been more productive to group the items in 'lexical chunks', for instance: *put on weight/overweight* and introduce *watch your weight/weightwatcher*.

The theme could be culturally exploited by discussing the importance that people in the USA and elsewhere give to slimming and fitness programmes, the importance of outward appearance in today's world, the issue of obesity as well as anorexia, and the prejudices people have against people like these.

Unit 4 section D contains the text “Our Modern World” a global theme. It contains the following vocabulary items:

*suffer, demand, look for, protect; wonder, war, peace, pollution, crime, terrorism dominance, minority, majority, hunger, separation, background, environment racial discrimination, labour migration; essential, urgent;*

Most of the words are key words, meaning that they have potential for discussion of a lot of crucial topics that are contemporary and of interest to the learners and can be highly motivating to them as well as increase their world knowledge. However, the words are given in isolation and probably translation equivalents are provided by the teacher. As we have stated earlier, learning words from context is the most important skill to be learnt for successful vocabulary growth. In order to infer meaning from context, or to be more precise, to understand the meaning of a particular word, the surrounding words must also be known. The above lexical items are ‘key’ in the sense that they are important for incidental learning from context and for discussion purposes, where a lot of meanings can be generated just from one key word.

There is good material here for discussions on global issues as well as issues in Eastern Europe more specifically Macedonia. Even so the only exercise after the comprehension questions is a matching exercise consisting of two columns of words where the students are required to match the two columns and make sentences like the ones in the text. This is the only example of collocation in the textbook. Some of the given collocates are frequently used and are at intermediate level and match the student’s linguistic knowledge as for instance - *racial discrimination*, but most of the words were confusing and difficult according to our view.

Section C contains the text “Natalie’s life” about a girl from Portugal living somewhere in Western Europe. The text is a rare occasion in the book that dwells upon sociocultural issues of a global nature. It contains vocabulary like: *immigrant, racist, violence, shanty treat, insult, miss, get lost, get angry, less developed, lonely, badly* etc. The words are simply listed and there is one exercise with the prefix *un-*, and the suffix *-less* . This is another example of inappropriate utilisation of the vocabulary items. Such an interesting theme for discussion with a lot of key words with multiple meanings, could be exploited in a myriad of ways, which will make it motivating to the learners since they will feel that they are learning a lot of sociocultural meanings which underlie most of the above words, and at the same time improve their linguistic capability, because they will need to use whole ‘lexical chunks’ or collocates which involves knowledge of grammar rules in order to use the word in a given context.

Within the general theme of “Our Modern World” in the same unit, there are two short texts entitled: ”Combating drug addiction through education” and “Prevention and control of AIDS” taken from UNESCO and WHO publications. They are intended for discussion although the vocabulary is not listed and there are many difficult upper-intermediate even advanced level words. The students are immersed in a lot of new words, and to hope that the students would be able to use them in a discussion on the above mentioned topics would be too much to ask of them. We have picked out some of the words that would need explanation beforehand. For example:

*to commit oneself, adopt an interdisciplinary approach, field of competence, combat licit/illicit drugs, pilot educational activities, set up, international resource centres, encouraging targeted information campaigns.*

There is no doubt that the authors have made an effort to introduce the students to the recent global issues, and to keep them abreast with problems that are current in our country as well.

The vocabulary items listed above are probably not intended for learning only for the purpose of making the students aware of the vocabulary in such publications.

In this section of chapter 5 we have attempted to give, first of all a general overview of the sociocultural representations in the Macedonian textbook for learning English, *English 2*, and then we performed a more detailed analysis of the general cultural content and the vocabulary sociocultural content.

First of all, we presented the general impressions of the textbook and the textbook image.

We arrived at the conclusion that it is primarily a textbook designed in the grammar-translation method since it focuses on structural language. It has a theme-based approach, but a closer analysis of the themes according to the criteria formulated previously for the analysis of cultural representations showed that there is a lack of presentation of important cultural phenomena and that mostly cultural representations at the macro-social level are depicted, probably to give it a longer lasting value. Since translations of texts by Macedonian authors have been included, there seems to be an awareness that learners in Macedonia should also be acquainted with their own culture in the target language. However, there is no introduction to the course and no teacher's book and the aims of the course as to how the texts should be exploited has not been stated. By the end of the course, what the learners will receive in the domain of sociocultural knowledge has not been specified.

It seems that there is lack of awareness on the part of the textbook designers as to text selection, authenticity, heterogeneity of cultural representations and the ultimate goal of foreign language learning - intercultural communicative competence.

With regard to vocabulary, there is no explicit vocabulary syllabus in the textbook. Many of the words listed are too specific and have limited usage and the selection of vocabulary cannot be said to comply with the first criterion - frequency of usage.

No effort has been made to introduce pupils to words that would facilitate communication and social interaction. Phrasal verbs, lexical phrases, nouns, adjectives, verbs are all given together with no explanation of their different meanings in context. The pupils are supposed to memorize lists of words possibly with their Macedonian translations given by the teacher. Bearing in mind the vocabulary acquisition methods, there is little chance that these words will be retained in the pupil's memory. The vocabulary items are strictly connected with the topics in the respective units. Each unit is followed by a list of words that the pupils should memorize because they would be questioned by the teacher. Since the learning of vocabulary is performed in such an isolated fashion, the pupils do not know how to use the words in sentences or varying contexts. The pupils are not given any indication on how to learn vocabulary i.e there is no practice in vocabulary skills.

The vocabulary sociocultural content is clearly linked to the choice of texts. Since, there are quite a few texts on global issues, there are many key words that can be exploited to teach cultural phenomena at the macro-social level. But the words are just listed after each lesson and there are no vocabulary learning strategies, skills and other vocabulary acquisition methods. Merely encountering the word is not sufficient, it is only the first step that will

initiate other strands of learning which are not provided in the textbook. Through the teaching of vocabulary items that are carriers of cultural meanings, considerable cultural knowledge can be acquired. The comparison of the lexical items in English and Macedonian is a valuable exercise and is potentially rewarding for cultural learning since it raises awareness of the differences and similarities between languages and enhances intercultural communicative competence. The teaching of collocation and other lexical items frequently found together, also may enhance cultural learning because they are taught as lexical chunks and not isolated items.

## **5.7 An Overview of Content of *Headway Intermediate***

The *Headway* series, (Soars, 1986) is one of the most highly praised course-books which is used around the globe. It is a favourite among teachers and students all over the world. Ever since it was published, it has had a major impact on EFL teaching. The books in the *Headway* series have been widely used in private language centres in Macedonia since 1989-90. In the past year or so, *Headway* has been used in some state High Schools (Gymnazia). As we saw earlier, the *English 2* all four volumes of it, a volume each academic year, was used in High Schools in Macedonia. It took several years for the Ministry of Education to gather strength and financial means to introduce *Headway*, a foreign made textbook in some of the state schools. The reason for this might seem obvious.

The only thing that the two coursebooks have in common are the grammar points they cover at intermediate level. The functional language, the vocabulary aspects, the methodology of the

course, all the way through to the general outward appearance and form of the glossy covers of the English textbook, bear no resemblance to the locally produced Macedonian textbook. What I mean is that if it is a world-wide success as an EFL teaching and learning coursebook, it does not automatically follow that it is a great success in EFL in Macedonia. ELT research and teaching have been criticised by Phillipson (1993) and even though *Headway* has a communicative approach rather than a grammar-translation approach as we have seen was the case with the Macedonian textbook, it may still be unsatisfactory in cultural terms having the Macedonian context in mind.

It is a truly multi-syllabus textbook and incorporates:

1. A structural syllabus - introduces grammatical items under a structural heading
2. A functional syllabus - grammatical items and phrases under a functional heading
3. A situational syllabus - which introduces grammar items and lexis according to frequency and usefulness.
4. A task-based syllabus which concentrates on 'real' activities, which require real language use.

It is claimed in the overview of the course that effort has been given to demonstrate how language is used in social contexts, or other contexts but always in context. For instance, how the native would use the language in given situations. The language samples are always contextualized to bring out the relationship of social contexts and language behaviours. Although there are no mechanical drills, *Headway Intermediate* has divided its attention more or less evenly to both the structural aspect and the functional aspect of language.

The book also has several other elements of language learning which are selected and graded to form parallel syllabuses. One of these is the vocabulary syllabus, which we shall look at in a separate section .

*Headway Intermediate* also makes use of translation as an additional tool in relating the new language system to the student's existing knowledge of his or her own system. In the Teacher's Book, it is stated that: '...with a very few exceptions all the concepts will translate into the student's language with a different or very different form'. (*Headway*: Intro. pg.5)

Students are invited (in the language review section) to translate 'pertinent' examples of the target language into their own language. It is stressed that the important thing is to translate the concept, not the form. For example, "Would you mind helping me?", will not translate directly into other languages, and Macedonian is no exception, what must be translated is a similar polite request. Where there are potentially confusing areas in English these are juxtaposed, thus forcing the students to face the problem. The authors state that: "By re-examining the target language in the light of translation students develop a cognitive awareness of its form and function and of its place within the language system". (Intro. pg.5)

As students realize that forms do not transfer, their awareness of language systems in general develops.

These are just some of the key points that have made *Headway* so appealing to teachers and learners as well as pedagogues and EFL experts.

## **5.8 *Headway* in the specific teaching milieu of Macedonia**

We mentioned above that although *Headway* may seem the perfect choice of coursebook it still does not mean that it would be perfect for teaching and learning English in Macedonia. So far, there have been some issues raised into the pronunciation section in *Headway* that is, it has been found that the *Headway* series concentrates too much on pronunciation of some vowels and consonants in the English language which present no problems for Macedonian learners because of phonological similarities between the two languages.

Macedonian learners have problems with certain diphthongs which are specific for the English language and these diphthongs are not sufficiently represented in *Headway*.

This is only a tiny part of learning the form of a word which for the EFL situation in Macedonia is under-represented in *Headway Intermediate*. But, further on, we intend to show that the analysis of the cultural contents will also bring to light the fact that most of the topics and discussion points, are not suitable and are not motivating enough for the age group that *Headway Intermediate* is intended for in Macedonia. This is not to say that the book lacks sufficient cultural information. It is clearly stated by the authors that *Headway Intermediate* was designed having in mind adult learners not maturing adolescents or sixteen-year-old teenagers. Clearly, the coursebook was approved by EFL experts in the Ministry of Education in Macedonia because its positive aspects outweighed the selection of topics which appeal to the mature learner of English. This issue will be discussed further after the cultural contents of the textbook have been presented.

## **5.9 Analysis of the Cultural Content**

In this analysis attention shall be focused on, first of all, the general sociocultural content of one of the books in the *Headway* series, that is *Headway Intermediate* and then the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary will be looked at. The analysis will be expected to show which areas of socio-cultural knowledge are covered and whether this information is relevant and sufficient to achieve the aim of promoting the communicative competence of the learners. The analysis of the vocabulary will be expected to show which aspects of

vocabulary learning are incorporated in the book and also, whether sufficient attention has been given to what constitutes the 'meaning' of a word. The results of the analysis will give us a clear picture of what has to be done (supplementary materials, Teacher's Book, listening materials etc.) to improve EFL teaching and learning in Macedonia.

After this brief introduction to the coursebook, we can now come to the details of the culture contents provided in *Headway Intermediate* to see how well they can facilitate learners in their language and culture learning. We shall proceed on the same lines as with the previous analysis of the Macedonian book. We shall first consider the cultural contents according to Byram and Morgan's list, and then according to the investigative questions formulated in Chapter 3, that is analysis at the macro-,micro-, level of cultural representations, intercultural representations and degree of realism.

### ***5.9.1 Analysis of Contents according to the list***

#### *1. Social Identity and Social Groups*

- Professional Identity - Willi Hoffman - member of the European Parliament (Unit 2;7)

A profile of a politician (pairwork)

- Les Mickleby talks about his job (Unit 2;9)

- A divorce lawyer (Unit 14:84)

- Other social identity: - How groups are formed? How is social class attached...(Unit 6;35)

The class system.

- The needs we feel to conform to our peer groups (Unit 6;35)

- (trade union, football crowd, Hollywood Oscar ceremony,  
freemasons, scouts and guides, prisoners, members of anti-nuclear  
nuns, armed forces, royalty)
- Conforming to society: advantages and disadvantages of  
growing old (Unit 6 :34) a poem by Jenny Joseph “Warning”

## 2. *Social Interaction*

Expressing requests and offers: Please/Thank you (Unit 4:18)

- Could you help me, please? / Shall I help you? / Would you...?

Expressing Obligation : (Unit 8:42)

- Hotel rules: ‘All guests must sign the register’ / Guests should not leave valuables...  
(should/shouldn’t; must/mustn’t ; have to)

Ability and permission : asking and refusing permission. (Unit 10:55)

- Would you mind if... (more formal)
- Would you mind helping me? (formal)
- I want you to do something
- I’m asking you to do it for me.

## 3. *Belief and Behaviour*

Social behaviour and social life style:

- wife who could not stop spending (Unit 3:16)
- English Food (Unit 5:26)
- Houses and flats: describing housing in Britain (Unit 6:31)

The attitude of British people to housing, according to the well-known saying: an Englishman's home is his castle. The various associations the word 'home' has for British people.

- Controversial statements on medical care : interest points/discussion (Unit 8:47)
- Nurse Nicky raises money by climbing to Kilimanjaro (Unit 11:62)

Has potential for discussions on charity, a belief held strong among British people, and the respect and admiration people have for British nurses, which perhaps goes further back in history with the Crimean War and Florence Nightingale.

#### *4. Social - political Institutions*

Social Institutions

Education Otherwise : an organization (Unit 10:58 Listening sect.)

reasons for and against educating children at home;

Charities: 'Help the Aged', National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children,

Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Cancer Research

Action Aid, Mencap, Amnesty International (Unit 11:61)

Voluntary organisations : Low Pay Unit - monitors the effects of government policy and

union action on the worst paid members of the work-force.

(Unit 13:76)

News Media: How three different newspapers in Britain treat a current news story

("Kennedy son dies") (Unit 14: 81)

*The Guardian*, a quality newspaper , reports factually;

*The Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* popular newspapers, report stories dramatically, sensationally with colourful language.

#### 5. *Socialisation and the Life-cycle*

- Setting up a small business, Bank loan (Unit 7:40) jumbled texts about various businesses; (Unit 7:39)
- Interview with Mr. Thomas, a retired person (Unit 7:40-41) Does work give direction and discipline to one's life? Do people look forward to retirement?

#### 6. *Stereotypes and National Identity*

- The average British family (Unit 1:1)
- Aunt Emily (Unit 2:13)
- Portrait of Mrs. Gibbs (Unit 4:22) In what ways is she unusual? Typical? A stereotype? (Listening section)
- A child prodigy : "How Ruth made history at Oxford" (Unit 10:56)
- Nationalities and regional groups; stereotypes; (Unit 4:22) (Speaking section)
- Scots and Scotland : an example of racial prejudice and stereotype (Unit 4:20)

There is also a unit entitled "Life in Space" (Unit 12) where world issues are treated:

- an interview with David Attenborough, on "The Dying Planet" (U.12:70)  
(are you a pessimist or an optimist?)
- what will your life be like in the future? (Speaking section, U.12:71)
- as we learn more are we becoming more tolerant of people of different nationalities, religions, colours? (This could be seen as part of coping with stereotypes).

As with the previous analysis, we have only listed the cultural representations that were to be found in *Headway Intermediate* since we are only looking at one book from a series of four textbooks.

We will use our criteria i.e the investigative questions based on the requirement for the degree of realism in cultural representations, the representation of cultural knowledge on the macro-, micro-, and intercultural level .

The texts and listening material in *Headway Intermediate* were selected from authentic sources. It is stated at the end of the textbook, that the authors have used: ‘articles, extracts or adaptations from copyright material’, with kind permission from: newspapers, magazines, (The Guardian, Sunday Times, Good Housekeeping) various publications, (The Lawn Tennis Association, Human Resources Institute). The listening materials were used by arrangement with BBC Enterprises Limited. In the Teacher’s Book it is stated that the receptive skills work consists of authentic and semi-authentic material and the tasks are graded. As we have already seen in our previous discussion on “authenticity”, to use authentic texts authentically in a classroom is extremely difficult to achieve. The writers of *Headway* have been aware of this requirement and have included skills such as : prediction, exploiting prior knowledge, summarizing, skimming and scanning, guessing unknown vocabulary, exploiting topic sentences and inferencing. In this way the text is dealt with in a real user’s manner, the artificiality is lessened and the learner’s reading inclination and language level are taken into account as well.

*Headway Intermediate* does not show strong evidence of the writer’s efforts in representing the culture(s) at the macro-social level. The social institutions presented are Aid organisations

and other voluntary, humanitarian organisations. There is one text on “Education otherwise” i.e alternative forms of education and one on “The future of the world”. It is interesting that apart from a short poem, there are no other instances of cultural heritage representations. As we have already noted in our guidelines, texts at the macro-social level of cultural representations should cover various areas revealing social problems, essays on biographies and historical events, texts on education, as well as fiction and adventure stories. The main objective is to provide learners with rich and varied language features and cultural background information. This can only be achieved if various texts of different topics and genre from different sources is selected. Laying emphasis on the cultural tradition is also necessary for understanding the cultural perspectives of the target group in general.

At the microsocial level, many areas that constitute conducting everyday social interactions, expressing opinions, requests, offers, obligation, permission have been dealt with. Behavioural patterns manifesting some social values of the culture have also been introduced and discussed. For instance, the fact that people in Britain like to help others less fortunate than themselves. This is brought up in the section on charities, voluntary organisations and the fact that ordinary people, in this case a nurse, climb Kilimanjaro to raise money for a new children’s ward.

We can also see from the contents an example of a British family, but only brief facts (backed up by statistics) about the workplace of the parents and the fact that the children attend a state school. The beliefs and value standards held by British people can be seen and inferred from all the topics in all the sections of the book. For instance, their views on medicare, senior citizens, working life, housing, prejudice. This last issue is discussed concerning the Scots and their reputation in the world of being ‘mean’ or too thrifty with their money. It concerns

an advertisement in a Swedish airline company where the poster shows a Scotsman hiding in the luggage department in order to avoid paying the ticket. This is an example of intercultural representations using stereotypes. The reactions of the Scots are given in a newspaper article for discussion and also comparison is made with the student's own experiences and knowledge of stereotypes in their own country.

As we have seen in our theoretical discussion on the significance of mutual representations, foreign language learners may have formed their own stereotypes of the target culture, so the textbook should help learners modify the stereotypes and make them more aware of the complexity of people and society. In *Headway Intermediate*, after the reading section in Unit 4 on racial prejudice, the guidelines in the Teacher's book suggest a short discussion on the lines of : "Have there been any examples of racial prejudice of a light-hearted or serious nature, in the news recently?" Teachers are also warned that this is a topic that can get quite heated and that extreme expressions of prejudice and nationalism should be discouraged. The discussion is led according to several questions in the textbook. For instance: 'Which nationalities or regional groups do people make jokes about in your country?' 'To what extent do you think there are nationality stereotypes? Are they fair?' 'What is the stereotype of an English man or woman? Think of their clothes, behaviour, attitudes and interests. Now do the same for your nationality. How much do you think you conform to this stereotype of your own nationality? How do you differ from it?' After this speaking section, the same theme of stereotypes continues in the listening section where students listen to a radio programme and look at a picture of Mrs. Gibbs.

She is an old lady, who is unusual in many ways but also typically English. Students are required to find out in what ways she is typical (e.g she likes a cup of tea, toast and

marmalade), and in what ways she is unusual (travels on her own, plans her own route, drives herself). The fact that the unusual Mrs Gibbs was chosen to represent a 'typical' English lady is meaningful, and the authors have tried to show foreign language learners that the images they might have about English people and their way of life may need reassessment. People and societies are not so clear-cut, as perhaps, learners would like to believe. This discussion on stereotypes also provides opportunity for comparison with the student's own stereotypes, so it should enable a greater understanding between cultures. It is interesting that most nationalities find it hard to describe the stereotype for their own country. Nobody likes to conform to his/her nationality stereotype. This is due to the nature of stereotypes not because of a specific characteristic.

Definitely effort has been put into demonstrating the target culture but also there is room for comparing and contrasting with the student's own cultural practices, which is as we know beneficial to the learners in their overall language and culture learning.

So far, we have seen that the cultural contents presented in *Headway Intermediate* are varied to acquaint people around the world with aspects of contemporary life in Britain. What I would like to point out is that, in the specific case of EFL in Macedonia the areas of sociocultural knowledge covered are not motivating enough and are not compatible with the age group (16 year olds) for which the book is meant to be used. An analysis of how the learners could have been influenced by the information provided is out of the scope of this thesis, but this kind of analysis could give us a better idea of the effect of the cultural information on the learners. But, since this present study is an analysis of the cultural contents, I will concentrate on presenting my views in accordance with my knowledge and experience in teaching EFL in Macedonia. I will try to attract the attention of the Education

authorities in my country to show them that, although *Headway Intermediate* is considered one of the best coursebooks for studying English it does not mean that it is the perfect choice for teenagers in High schools in Macedonia.

*Headway Intermediate* was designed having in mind adult learners. This is clearly stated in the introduction to the course i.e that the topics have been selected to appeal to the mature adult not adolescent. This means that the learners in high schools in Macedonia, where *Headway Intermediate* is prescribed by the authorities for use, cannot benefit fully from the book because they are not introduced to topics, situations and vocabulary common to the experience of teenagers and pupils, and things which are of immediate concern to them such as, classroom environment, shops, leisure time etc.

The syllabus planners had this knowledge in mind but still it did not stop them from widely initiating the use of the *Headway* series in several High schools in Skopje. It was thought that the methodology and overall approach of the *Headway* series far exceeds the importance of the relevance of the topics. In order to be relevant to the learner's immediate situations, youth culture and teenage life should be made the centre of social interactions. Since students, teenagers in different countries have different social environments and behave differently, it would be meaningful for the learners to compare and contrast the differences; for even behaviours in the classroom are different between cultures. For example, in Macedonia when the teacher enters the classroom all the pupils are supposed to stand up in sign of respect. In this respect, *Headway Intermediate* does not provide more insights into the social situations and sociocultural identities of the above mentioned social group, that is high-school goers.

On the other hand, it could be argued that textbooks should not be only about learners' own interests. Their interests and knowledge can be extended by material about other stages of life, other people's interests. In this domain, *Headway Intermediate* has included topics on the activities of a nurse in Britain, and in the poem by Jenny Joseph the subject of ageing is considered which could be a stimulating topic for discussion with teenagers to see what their views are on 'senior citizens' in our country and Britain. At this point learners could be instructed in the meaning of the term 'politically correct' and the meaning of 'generation gap' often used in the sixties and seventies. On the theme of nursing, comparisons could be made with our country. Why young people in Macedonia are not interested in nursing as a profession? There is a completely different outlook on nurses and nursing in Macedonia.

Discussions on topics such as these will help to broaden the teenager's views on some issues and help them understand more clearly their own society and that of the target culture(s).

Because of the reasons discussed above, it appears that this highly praised coursebook, a favourite among teachers, does not actually provide sufficient cultural information for the age group it is intended for in our country. More precisely, the cultural information provided is not the right kind to help the learners improve their cultural awareness and cultural understanding. In terms of communicative competence development this is not very helpful as learners would know little of the life styles and way of thinking of young people in Britain (or USA ). As a consequence they will not know what social behaviours and linguistic behaviours would be appropriate in given social situations.

To sum up, if one of the aims of learning a foreign language is being able to communicate effectively with people of the target language, it is necessary for the learning to provide more

examples of the concerns, spare time, coping with their studies of these people. In this specific case where *Headway* is prescribed it is the high school group of teenagers, knowledge of this kind could lead to a comparison of the two cultures in terms of school life, life style and social values of youth culture. As we saw earlier in our discussion on language and culture, if the learner's own culture is brought into focus, through comparing and contrasting it to the target culture, a greater degree of cultural awareness will be achieved and a higher sensitivity to cultural phenomena will be created and this will result in cultural understanding. Comparing the learner's own culture and the target culture can reduce misinterpretations, minimize culture shock, prejudice and ethnocentrism.

We realize that as the learning proceeds more culture information is brought to the attention of the learners, but it is very important that the learners are sensitized constantly during their process of learning a foreign language. They should be shown both the positive and negative aspects of the target culture.

*Headway Intermediate* has been designed for use in many countries and it tries to appeal to a global audience. To make *Headway Intermediate* even more effective in the sociocultural knowledge sector, supplementary teacher's guides should be provided for all the teachers working with *Headway* in high schools in Macedonia. This is just one way of making some adjustments to the coursebook to make it more suitable for Macedonian learners. Also, the awareness of the teachers will be raised by drawing their attention to cultural issues and providing them with interesting topics for discussion and comparison. The teacher is expected to play once again the vital role of 'mediator' between cultures, comparing the learner's own cultural knowledge to the cultural beliefs, values and behaviours of the target culture.

## 5.10 How *Headway Intermediate* has incorporated vocabulary

In the *Headway Intermediate* course, the Teacher's Book makes a direct reference to a 'vocabulary syllabus' and explains that the course has three strands, or a 'three-pronged' approach to vocabulary learning. The three prongs are: teach new words, encourage effective vocabulary learning habits and introduce students to the systems of vocabulary. "Vocabulary" is highlighted for students as one of the seven columns in their map of the course. The vocabulary component of each unit has one or more points of focus and these focal points cover a variety of lexical work.

The significance of the *Headway* approach is that vocabulary is explicitly assigned an importance in the syllabus and that this importance is brought to the attention of learners as well as to the teachers. As opposed to previous coursebooks, vocabulary is dealt with in more subtle ways and some aspects of it, in greater depth, as we shall see later. Since there is a clear, organised vocabulary syllabus in *Headway* as opposed to the Macedonian textbook, our approach to the analysis will be somewhat different.

The variety of lexical work covered could be categorized as follows:

1. Topics, e.g racial prejudice, housing;
2. Learner training: learner strategies e.g dictionary work, keeping vocabulary records, guessing meaning from context.
3. Collocation and Idiom: e.g *make* or *do*, phrasal verbs.
4. Vocabulary and grammar: e.g Irregular verbs, -ed, -ing, adjectives.
5. Words and meanings: e.g words with more than one meaning.
6. Pronunciation aspects of lexical items.

We shall be specifically concentrating on the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary in *Headway Intermediate*, analysing the vocabulary content according to the key points already established in the previous chapter of this work. I shall be looking into which aspects of vocabulary work have been dealt with, whether what constitutes the “socio-cultural dimension” of vocabulary has been incorporated in the coursebook.

In the description of the vocabulary syllabus, it is said that teachers can adopt one of the two approaches:

1. Teach students a lot of new words as often as possible, providing for adequate practice and revision.
2. Show students ways of approaching their own vocabulary learning.

(Introduction, pg.5)

The first approach is what all teachers would like to be able to do, but the issue here is ‘how’ to achieve this. The textbook does not give any indication of what is meant by ‘adequate practice’ or ‘how to teach words as often as possible’. Furthermore, teaching words often might overburden learners with unnecessary vocabulary load. As we have seen in our discussion on vocabulary in Chapter 4, it is of utmost importance to know which words to teach and how to teach them. The latter is dependent on the former, since if it an important word, of high frequency then it deserves classroom time and deep processing. In this respect *Headway* is not abreast with the current research on vocabulary learning and teaching.

The second approach is more important and more powerful and *Headway* really insists that students take responsibility for their own learning and provides a lot of skills work to introduce students to the systems of vocabulary and vocabulary learning strategies.

Examples of these are:

- dictionary work;
- word formation: prefixes, suffixes.
- -ed, -ing adjectives.
- compound nouns.
- phrasal verbs.
- synonyms, antonyms;
- base and extreme adjectives and their intensifiers.
- guessing unknown vocabulary.
- keeping vocabulary records.

There are also many activities that introduce lexical areas. Examples of these areas are sports, weather, adjectives of description, television programmes, accidents and illnesses.

Before we look at the contents of the vocabulary syllabus in *Headway Intermediate*, I would just like to explain how I have divided the vocabulary aspects in order to get a better idea of what has been encompassed in the sociocultural domain. I have grouped the contents into the following three headings:

1. Sociocultural themes and topics i.e sociocultural knowledge
2. Collocations and phrasal verbs.
3. The lexical field of connotations.

As we have already mentioned in the previous chapter on vocabulary, students should be given a variety of lexical approaches in order to achieve a greater coverage. In order to see the

extent of coverage of lexical work in *Headway Intermediate* I shall concentrate on the key points outlined above and look into to what extent they have been incorporated in this specific coursebook.

Now let us look at the contents of the vocabulary syllabus in *Headway Intermediate*

### 1. The sociocultural aspects of vocabulary/lexis

What we are presenting here are texts or listening comprehension material which could be exploited in class to demonstrate beliefs, practices and behaviour of the natives through the use of certain phrases.

- Television programmes: the four channels in Britain, regular programmes such as “The Old Grey Whistle Test”. Phrases such as :*What’s on tonight? I’d like to watch... It’s on BBC 2. What channel is it on? Let’s watch... That’s on at the same time as...*

(Unit 2)

- The theme of housing and accommodation: a most productive area of vocabulary since architecture and the exterior and interior of houses differ widely between countries. The students discuss several houses and their choice of features reveals a lot about individual tastes and the vocabulary gives a lot of sociocultural information on houses in Britain. For instance: *open fire-places, double-glazing, patio, fitted carpets, loft space utility room etc.* (Unit 9)

### 2. Collocations and phrasal verbs.

- adverbs of intensity (Unit 10) e.g. *clever, very clever, brilliant, absolutely brilliant;* Other adverbs of intensity, such as: *utterly, completely, quite* are governed by collocation. For instance: we can say *utterly disgusting, completely exhausted* but not: *utterly vast\*, utterly boiling\*, completely furious\**.

- phrasal verbs: the three main types.
  - recognizing which type from a dictionary;
  - identifying the correct concept from multiple entry phrasal verbs.

The importance of context is stressed. (Unit 12)

Style and register - “Ways of speaking” (Unit 14)

- e.g. scream, mumble, yell, grumble, moan, stammer, gasp, sigh, swear.

Students are supposed to look up the words in a dictionary and write sentences in direct speech and say them out loud. Their partner is supposed to guess the right verb (for e.g. scream).

### 3. The lexical field of connotations

Positive/negative connotations in describing character: e.g. *sociable/unsociable, fussy, witty/humourless*. It is stated in the Teacher’s Book (pg.20) : “Some will look similar to words in the student’s own language, but have different concepts or different connotations.”

For example, the multiple meanings of *inquisitive* are explained as follows:

- a. eager to learn (positive connotations); opposite - *uninquisitive, unquestioning*;
- b. excessively curious about other people’s affairs (negative connotation); the opposite could be two different qualities: someone who is discreet ‘minds his own business’, or someone who is indifferent to other people, not caring about them or what happens to them. (Unit 6)

- Synonyms with connotations and antonyms with prefixes ; (Unit 13)

It has been said that there are no true synonyms in a language for e.g. *unsafe - dangerous*;

Others although similar have different connotations or are used in different contexts:

e.g. *unkind - impolite/cruel*;

*unhappy - miserable/depressed*;

Teachers are encouraged to explore these areas with students comparing also the mother tongue.

The coursebook suggests in the introduction that it aims to teach students skills in vocabulary learning, and in this respect there are five instances of skills work involving learner strategies e.g dictionary work, vocabulary records. On the other hand, there are two examples of sociocultural knowledge, TV programmes, theme of housing. Collocation is incorporated only once in Unit 10 (adverbs of intensity), phrasal verbs also only once in Unit 12; style and register once in Unit 14; connotations are accounted for in two examples in Unit 6 and 13; word formation is in three examples in Unit 4, Unit 5 and Unit 6. There are altogether fifteen vocabulary activities. If we also take into consideration the fact that usually the vocabulary exercise is linked with the listening section and the students can revise the new words in the listening exercise, this is to a certain extent sufficient vocabulary practice for intermediate learners.

However, we still need to address our research questions, which are based on our criteria formulated in Chapter 4 and see whether the sociocultural aspect of vocabulary has been represented and to what extent. The guiding question here is : What does knowing a word actually entail? That is, the particular meanings a word has in different contexts, its various associations, the 'company it keeps' i.e collocations, constraints on UK vs. US usage, style, register, colloquial vs. formal use and so on. In *Headway Intermediate*, out of fifteen exercises on vocabulary, only five exercises deal with the above aspects of 'knowing' a word.

Namely, one aspect of 'knowing' a word has not been incorporated in the vocabulary syllabus of *Headway Intermediate*, and this is the constraints on use of certain words such as UK vs. US usage and other regional varieties as well as other English-speaking countries. The comparison between varieties of English, for instance, use of certain words, phrases has not been included. A section on this part of vocabulary learning would have been interesting and motivating for learners in Macedonia, since most students are exposed to an increasing wave of US popular culture, mostly through TV series, films as well as visits to the US (whether as part of a study programme or visiting relatives). So, to sum up, when studying the English language, particularly vocabulary/lexis, UK vs. US usage should also be considered and the lexical variants should be pointed out to the learners.

One question remains to be clarified and that is : How do the vocabulary items help the learners acquire sociocultural knowledge, more specifically, does the vocabulary syllabus address the question of how learners acquire knowledge of the sociocultural connotations of words?

In *Headway Intermediate* in the article entitled "Scots in Sweden upset by cheap jokes", (unit 4:p.20) the cultural theme is stereotypes. The vocabulary is dealt with previously, i.e before the reading and it is entitled 'nationality words'. For instance, the country -France, and the individual -Frenchman and nationality - the French, and so on. It is interesting to note that the only word required for teaching before the reading task is the word 'mean'.

This word has negative connotations and can be offensive, as can be seen from the article.

But this information is not given in the Teacher's Book so that teachers know that they should sensitise learners to this kind of cultural connotation that the word has. Also, the play on words in the title, "Cheap jokes" could also be exploited to teach the sociocultural

connotations that 'cheap' has in the context of the above article. Instances like these should not be left at the disposal of the teacher, but ought to be clearly stated in the Teacher's Book.

## 5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter we have analyzed the cultural contents and the sociocultural content of vocabulary of two textbooks for learning English, the Macedonian *English 2*, and the British produced *Headway Intermediate*.

The analysis of the cultural contents was performed according the principles and guidelines as well as the investigative questions formulated in Chapter 3 of this work. The cultural contents were examined to show cultural representations at the macrosocial level, the micro-social level and at the intercultural level of mutual representations. Byram and Morgan's list was used to give a clearer picture of the cultural contents included in both textbooks. Also, one of the crucial criteria was the degree of realism, according to Risager, that is, to what extent the texts in the learning materials were found to be authentic in their approach to teaching and text selection, or whether the texts were artificially designed solely for grammar practice.

The Macedonian textbook, *English 2*, because of its theme-based approach and the traditional grammar-translation method employed, seems to have included more cultural representations at the macrosocial level. Being a locally produced textbook, it has also incorporated translations of prose and poetry by Macedonian authors.

Learners should have better opportunities to observe how natives meet each other on a daily basis, in other words, the textbook leaves much to be desired in the domain of incorporating the cultural dimension as an integral and systematic part of the course in order to enable

learners to achieve intercultural communicative competence as the ultimate goal of language learning.

*Headway Intermediate*, was found to be rich in cultural representations at the microsocial level, whereas cultural beliefs and values at the macrosocial level, including historical and geographical issues have not been sufficiently included. However, in the specific case of TEFL in High schools in Macedonia, the textbook does not provide the learners with cultural knowledge on the life styles of teenagers and youth culture in Britain or USA.

With regard to the sociocultural content of vocabulary, the analysis suggests that there is room for improvement in both textbooks, to a greater or lesser extent.

There is no explicit vocabulary syllabus in the *English 2* textbook, since the words are just listed after the text. There are no vocabulary learning strategies or guidelines for the teacher to adopt in teaching vocabulary. There are one or two exercises on the comparison of the Macedonian and English lexicon, which could be potentially used for teaching the 'deeper' meaning of words, as well as their cultural connotations, but this is not clearly stated in the textbook. Our main focus in this thesis is to see whether the vocabulary syllabus addresses the issue of the sociocultural content of vocabulary, and does the vocabulary included in the textbook help learners acquire cultural knowledge. In *Headway Intermediate*, there are potential links whereby learners can acquire considerable cultural understanding through the study of collocation and learn the deeper meaning of words, but the Teacher's Book does not give any indication to teachers regarding this aspect of vocabulary learning.

Also, neither of the textbooks deal with the constraints on use of UK vs. US usage as well as other varieties of English.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Textbook Authors**

#### **6.1 Overall conclusion**

In this thesis we aimed to show that much more is required in the process of learning a foreign language than mastering the linguistic structures. The thesis could be seen as consisting of two parts. The first part constitutes the theoretical background on the basis of which, in the second half of the thesis, analyses of two textbooks for learning English were performed. Special focus was given to the separate analyses of the sociocultural content of vocabulary in both textbooks.

The first chapter begins with a discussion of the specific teaching milieu and the problems facing ELT in the Republic of Macedonia. In this chapter the research questions that guided the course of this study were put forward, namely how can we make designers of EFL textbooks, whether they are British or Macedonian, more aware of the cultural aspect of language learning and most importantly to enable them to take into consideration the local needs of the learners as well.

Chapter 2 deals with the interdependent relationship between language and culture and how this relationship influences the goals of TEFL. This chapter provided the theoretical background to the subsequent choice of criteria and analyses of the two sets of learning materials. The theoretical basis also included a discussion on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on linguistic relativity and its relevance to foreign language teaching. The components of foreign

language learning according to van Ek were also discussed in order to show that linguistic competence is not sufficient for overall proficiency in a foreign language, although it is crucial.

The importance of English as an international language was also looked at, since choice of criteria, text selection should take into consideration this important issue. Finally, I have shown what can be achieved with an intercultural approach, at the basis of which is the fact that learners need to see and feel what is seen and felt by the native, in other words, to view the culture from the 'inside' so as to be more able in cross-cultural communication.

In Chapter 3, the basic principles on which we based our analytical criteria were put forward. These consisted of some issues we considered important and which would affect our choice of criteria for the analysis of the sociocultural content of the two chosen textbooks. The issue of authenticity and cultural authenticity were shown to be important in the design of textbooks for EFL. After looking at some models for analysis of the cultural content of textbooks, our criteria were formulated taking into account the above guidelines and the specificity of the Macedonian teaching and learning context.

Chapter 4 looks into the current research regarding the teaching and learning of vocabulary, especially the research into corpus based data and its effects on vocabulary teaching and learning. What is meant by the sociocultural dimension of vocabulary was explained and various vocabulary acquisition methods were discussed, as well as how vocabulary can be incorporated into a syllabus. Having all of the above knowledge in mind, the criteria for the analysis of the sociocultural content were presented.

Using the guidelines and criteria put forward in Chapter 3 and 4, the analyses on the two sets of learning materials were performed in Chapter 5. Each textbook was analysed twice. First of all from the point of view of general cultural content, and more specifically from the point of view of the sociocultural content of vocabulary.

The results of the analyses showed that both books have included cultural representations but in completely different approaches. There is room for improvement in both textbooks.

The Macedonian textbook, which has a thematic approach, has incorporated cultural representations at the macro-social level as well as texts which try to give the learner an opportunity to compare his/her own culture to that of the target language. In the domain of vocabulary sociocultural content, there is no explicit vocabulary syllabus and the aims of the authors are not stated. Some of the vocabulary items have a potential for cultural learning i.e the lexical items are 'rich' with associations and connotations carrying specific cultural meanings. Unfortunately since there is no teacher's book to guide the teachers and explain the aims, the vocabulary items are not exploited to their full potential.

*Headway Intermediate* was found to have incorporated more cultural information at the microsocial level, whereas cultural beliefs and values at the macrosocial level, including historical and geographical issues, have not been included. In the specific case of EFL in high schools in Macedonia, the textbook does not provide the learners with cultural knowledge on the life styles of teenagers and youth culture in Britain, USA and other English speaking countries.

Regarding the vocabulary syllabus, our main focus was to see whether it addresses the issue of the sociocultural content of vocabulary, and whether the vocabulary selected in the textbook helps learners acquire cultural knowledge. Although collocation and idiom are a part of vocabulary syllabus, the Teacher's book does not give any guidelines as to how the teacher is supposed to teach the items.

The results of the analyses also showed that another important issue concerning vocabulary had not been dealt with in either of the textbooks. This is the constraints on use between the various regional varieties of English and UK vs. US usage.

Regarding the general sociocultural content of both textbooks, more information should be provided in relation to categories on the microsocial level, for instance, social identities, social encounters, so that learners can get a better understanding of the various meanings attached to these domains and the values and beliefs that form the basis of people's everyday lives and behaviours. It would be also meaningful to provide learners with information on how the target language speakers see themselves and how they interpret their reality, and then how 'other people' view them, that is how these perceptions are different in comparison with the learners' own perspectives.

In relation to the sociocultural content of vocabulary, both textbooks need to upgrade their Teacher's books in light of recent research into vocabulary teaching and learning. The Macedonian textbook would also need a supplementary guide. The textbook together with the Teacher's book and/or supplementary guide can instruct, up to a certain extent, teachers into the latest vocabulary acquisition methods, 'rich' instruction, dictionary and key-word methods and select beforehand the most frequent and useful vocabulary that will deserve classroom

teaching time. The teachers should be given guidelines to teach learners skills or learner strategies to carry out their own vocabulary learning, since acquisition of vocabulary is a long-term cumulative process.

## **6.2 Some suggestions for future textbook authors**

It is now a truism to say that textbooks play a significant role in foreign language education.

This is particularly true of textbooks for learning English as a foreign language, due to the importance of the English language as the *eminence grise* in the world, these textbooks are used around the globe by millions of learners and for quite long periods of time. So far, we have seen that failure in cross-cultural communication occurs due to cultural rather than linguistic reasons. The analyses of the two textbooks in the previous chapter has shown that the current understanding about language, culture and language education needs to be revised if ‘discourse across cultures’ is to be achieved (Buttjes and Byram,1990). Regarding the specificities of the Macedonian teaching milieu, the current understanding of how the cultural dimension should be included in syllabuses for TEFL in High Schools in Macedonia, needs to be re-examined in terms of theoretical and pedagogical implications.

In order to give the arguments discussed in this research a more constructive approach we shall consider what practical measures can be taken by textbooks writers to enable learners to achieve, first of all, a wider world-view through providing them with the right kind of cultural representations. This is one of the general aims of foreign language education. The other goal to be achieved is to enable learners to communicate successfully, which is the more practical

or pragmatic motive. These two strands or objectives should be united in order that intercultural communicative competence be achieved (Buttjes and Byram, 1990).

Let us now consider what practical measures can be taken by prospective textbook authors in Macedonia and also elsewhere. The following propositions, suggestions are a combination of various models already proposed by Risager (1990), an 'ideal' model laid out by Byram and Essarte-Sarries and Taylor (1990), as well as Chinese foreign language experts.

The proposed measures having the Macedonian context in mind, may include the following:

1. The textbooks for learning English as a foreign language should be created by a team of interdisciplinary experts made up of experienced teachers of EFL who have taught and still teach in High schools, an anthropologist, a sociologist, a historian, a scientist and an artist (for culturally appropriate presentations). Ideally, the team should also include native speakers of English, who have experience teaching in Macedonia. The collaboration between the team members will be best seen at the text selection stage of the writing process. It should be expected that such a team would be more likely to gather genuine, culturally 'rich' texts which will be appropriate at the macrosocial level as well credible at the microsocial level. Although there have been criticisms on the role of the native speaker in EFL especially in Eastern Europe, as somewhat hampering learners, by acting in a 'superior' or 'dominant' way (Medgyes,1998), nevertheless, the advantage of including a native speaker on the team is that s/he has a closer contact with his native culture, the native speaker can more easily decode cultural information in authentic texts and also explain the underlying meanings of various vocabulary items. In other words s/he can guide teachers how to make learners aware of 'rich' points in the text for example, contentious issues, associations that various words conjure in the native's culture.

2. In order to achieve authenticity, one of the crucial criteria, adjustments of genuine texts should be minimised or altogether avoided where possible. An effective way to do this is to grade texts in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure and textual organisation, according to the level of the syllabus. Some scholars, for example, Zhou (1996) suggest that adaptations be done by native speakers of English. Not enough empirical studies have been carried out to prove this. Using the joint efforts of both native and non-native speakers in the interdisciplinary team, it might be possible to make alterations with the minimum loss of originality.
3. The tasks and exercises included in the textbook should be graded not the texts (Morrison,1989). This means that even if a text is difficult in the domain of vocabulary, it could still be made useful to the students if the listening and reading sections are brought to the level of proficiency of the learners. Here, it is of utmost importance that the chosen texts are 'rich' in cultural information and that the teachers are aware of this dimension during the course of their teaching, so that they can draw the attention of the learners.
4. As pointed out earlier in this research, exercise items should be chosen and performed in class so that students are trained at discourse level. The notion of discourse unites language and culture and "...the sentence has lost its privileged status as the primary focus. Discourse is the data." (Agar, 1991). This means that learners should be taught skills such as: inferencing, implying, identifying discourse markers, writing paragraph sentences and most importantly making an effort to discuss or disagree over 'rich' points in a piece of discourse and consider the various 'interpretive frames' (Agar,1991) that it may convey to native speakers, and then contrast and compare with their own perceptions. Having the Macedonian context in mind, the traditional method of teaching should not be discarded

altogether. The traditional teacher-centred approach is part of the Macedonian culture of learning, that is to say, learners feel that they are learning only with this kind of structured intensive reading model of teaching. Therefore, reading aloud, translation, sentence-by-sentence explanation could be done after or before the discourse activities.

5. The fact that texts selected for textbooks for learning English, even though they may be authentic or with adjustments, are seldom of ever-lasting value, requires that textbooks for learning English as a foreign language be frequently revised. As languages and cultures are in constant change learners should be exposed to the most up-to-date materials which reflect changes in the contemporary culture(s) of the target language.

If we look at the revised curriculum for foreign language education in High Schools in Macedonia, we can see that there are signs in our country of a renewed interest in teaching culture. As our analyses have shown, an awareness for cultural studies teaching and learning exists. Therefore, new practices and aims should be a continuation of the old ones and with reference to previous methodologies. Success is more likely to come “..from recognition and modification of current practices and the intuitions on which they are based through co-operation between researchers and teachers” (Byram, Essarte-Sarries, Taylor, 1990).

\* \* \*

In this final chapter of the research work we have discussed the relationship between our findings and research and the implications that these might have in future textbooks. It is our hope that somehow we might instigate change in the domain of textbook development.

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## **APPENDICES**

ДАНИЦА ДИМОВСКА  
ВЛАДИМИР МОСТРОВ  
ВЕРИЦА ИВАНОВА

за II година

**XVI. Make dialogues using the missing parts in Column A, Column B, Column C and Column D.**

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
leave	left	open	opened
find	found	unwrap	unwrapped
set	set	move	moved
lay	laid	examine	examined
put	put	return	returned
hide	hid	inspect	inspected
see	saw	deliver	delivered
keep	kept	address	addressed

- A. Where did you... (A)..... the package?  
 B. I... (B)..... it in the kitchen.  
 A. Would you please... (C)..... it?  
 B. I've... (D)..... it already.

Section C

**NATALIE'S LIFE**

Today there are 10 million immigrants in Western Europe – 5% of the total population. In one industrialized country alone, there are over half a million immigrant children, many of them living in shanty towns, four or five people to a room. Here, Natalie, a 12-year-old girl from a less developed country, talks about what it's like to be an immigrant child in a strange land and why she would like to go home.

"My father came here first. I didn't see him for a few years. My mother got lonely. She had the feeling that he was forgetting us a little bit. Then one day a letter came from my father. He said come. We were all happy. We were tired of our village.

On the train coming here I tried to imagine my new home in the city with modern things to do, jobs for us and exciting places to go with shows and lights and all the new friends I was going to make. (It didn't go that way at all. I didn't make any friends because I didn't speak the language here. I was always left out of the playing groups.)

I was happy to see my father. He hadn't changed except he smelt of cigarettes more than he did before. But I missed my grandmother a lot.

At the beginning Mum used to cry a lot. She had to get a job in an office as well as working at home. So it was a big change for her. And she used to get lost on the way to the office and then she couldn't find her way home. And she misses all our family. She wants to go back very badly. I don't know what my father thinks. I'm afraid to speak about Portugal at home – he gets angry if I do. He used to be a carpenter at home. He was a very good carpenter. Now he works in a car factory. I'm sure he stays for the money.

Things have got a bit better. My teacher has taken special care of me. Now I can sometimes go with Dad if he has problems with his papers so I can translate for him. I like doing that.

I've been back home once. Everybody was happy. We all cried. But it sort of hurt as well. They are poor compared with me. They are not dressed well. They have torn clothes.

But I want to go back even if it means being poor. I don't like it here. I feel all the crowds and the buildings. I miss the countryside and the animals free to run around. The people are much simpler at home. We were always together having a good time. At home, every Sunday people would have a big football game or a dance or a talk and everybody would come out and have a good time. Everyone mixed in. And I miss the games. Over here we do sport in schools but in stadiums and swimming pools. At home we have the fields to run in and rivers for swimming. I was freer at home. Here I only have a small play area because there are lots of cars and violence. In the village you have got problems with the land and the animals but you don't have problems that you can't understand and that worry you.

The other thing is that people are always fighting. I nearly got into a fight the day before last. A girl said to me "Go back to your own country; you only come to eat our bread". It happens to me quite often. If they are racist to me, I say "Listen. We work for you. We do all the dirty work. We keep your houses and make your food and work in your factories. We make your cars and build your buildings. So, if you don't like it, we will just go home and see how badly off you will be without us". If she came to my country and was a foreigner to me, I wouldn't treat her the way she treats me. She insults me."

Vocabulary

forget	immigrant	shanty
imagine	smelt	less developed
miss	carpenter	strange
get lost	violence	exciting
get angry	fight	torn
hurt	racist	lonely
treat		badly
insult		

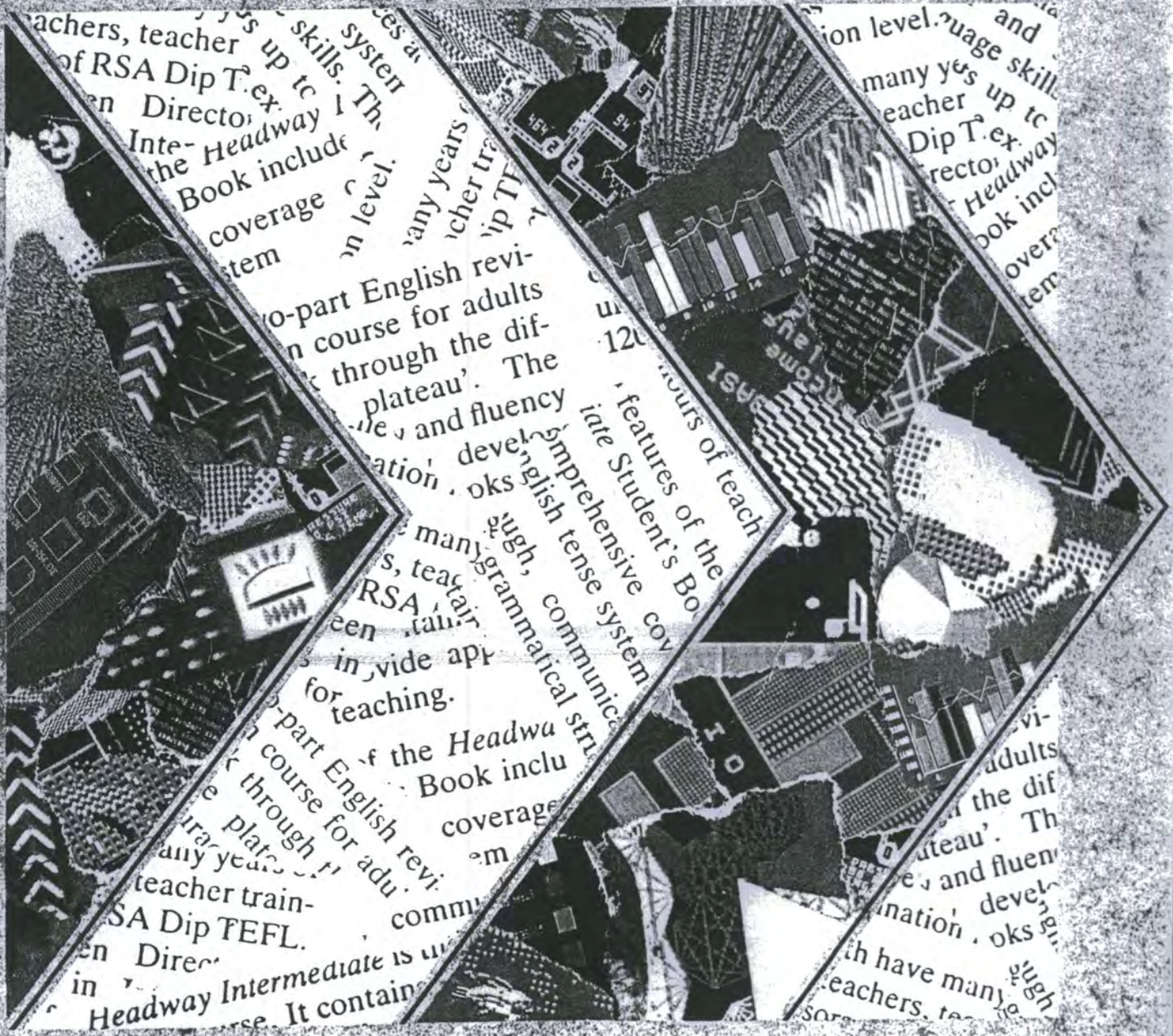
**1. Comprehension questions:**

- Natalie is an immigrant child. What does she talk about?
- Her father went abroad first. How long didn't she see him?
- One day a letter came from her father. What did he say in it?
- Natalie was happy to join her father. What did she try to imagine on her way to the strange city?
- It didn't go that way. Why not?
- She was happy to see her father. But what did she miss a lot?
- Her mother used to cry a lot. What did she have to do in the strange city?
- Her father was a carpenter. Where does he work now?
- Her father doesn't want to go back to Portugal. Why does he stay in the foreign country?
- Things have got better. Better in what ways?
- Natalie has been back home once. Everybody was happy. But why was there a sort of hurt as well?

# HEADWAY

STUDENT'S BOOK

INTERMEDIATE



John & Liz Soars

## Reading

### Pre-reading task

Work in groups.  
Write as many facts and opinions about Scotland and the Scots as you can.

Compare what other members of your group have written.

### Reading for gist

Read the article.  
What does a mean person *not* like doing?

### Comprehension check

- 1 What is the advertisement that the Scots don't like?
- 2 Who have they complained to?
- 3 What is the name of their organization?
- 4 What is the point that Mr David Webster is trying to make?
- 5 What is amusing in the last paragraph?

### What do you think?

Do you think the Scots were right to go to the European Commission for Human Rights, or do you think they took it too seriously?

# Scots in Sweden upset by cheap jokes

By Dennis Barker

1 SCOTS working in Sweden have complained to the European Commission for Human Rights that jokes about mean Scotsmen in advertising are an insult to the image of their race.

Facts	Opinions
<i>The capital is Edinburgh.</i>	<i>I think the weather is often bad.</i>

2 A case was put to Strasbourg by the Scottish Group for Civil Rights in Sweden, an organisation formed recently of Scots people working there, to protest against Swedish Railways using such a traditional joke in an advertising campaign.

3 It showed two Scotsmen accepting the offer of travel for two for the *price* of one first-class ticket, while a third hides in the luggage rack.

4 'We are not against Scots jokes in everyday life,' said Mr David Webster, a 38-year-old marketing manager working near Stockholm, who helped to form the group. 'There are nationalistic jokes like this in every country. What we don't like is the frequency of such jokes in commercial advertising.'

5 But the commission did not feel that the group had fully explained its case, and has asked for more information on some points before it decides whether the case can continue.

6 'There is even one group of cut-price shops in the Stockholm area that has changed its name to The Scot,' said Mr Webster. 'Their motto is, "You can't get it cheaper anywhere else". These things are offensive only because they happen so often, we believe.'

7 Apart from the further information demanded by the European Commission for Human Rights, the Scots in Sweden are up against another difficulty. They have so far spent several hundred pounds on their campaign, but voluntary contributions from group members have totalled only £50.

### Summarizing

Match the summary with the correct paragraph.

- a. A description of the advertisement they are complaining about.
- b. The commission's reaction.
- c. The exact reason why they are complaining.
- d. A financial problem for the Scots in Sweden.
- e. Some Scottish people have complained to the European Courts about an advertisement.
- f. Another example of their reason for complaining.
- g. They formed an organization and explained why they were complaining to the court.

# Bara två kan resa så.



Är ni för gamla för tågets ungdomsrabatt (upp till 26 år)? Är ni för få för tågets familjerabatt (minst tre betalande familjemedlemmar)?

Då ska ni passa på att åka 1 klass, hela långa sommaren! Är ni två som reser tillsammans, kan ni nämligen åka 1 klass tåg verkligen billigt hela sommaren, i mån av plats. Den ene betalar fullt pris, medan den andra får hela 75% rabatt! Ni kan åka när ni vill och vart ni vill, bara ni åker

minst tio mil bort och dessutom tur och retur. Bara ni är två som reser tillsammans, kan ni resa så, från och med 1 juni till och med 31 augusti. Bara två kan resa så.

Far i Par-rabatt för er två som vill resa första klass billigare.



**Tåget för människor tillsammans.**

