

An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks*

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Kim, Sun-Young and Jiwon Paek. 2015. An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks. *Linguistic Research* 32 (Special Edition), 83-104. This study investigates the representation of culture-related contents in five English textbooks for second year middle school students in Korea from a multicultural perspective. A content analysis of these textbooks was conducted, using three broad aspects of culture, the 'cultural dimensions', 'cultural categories', and 'cultural themes', as the evaluation framework. An imbalance in the representing textbook materials consistent with students' intercultural communicative competences was found to exist. First, with regard to cultural dimensions, English textbooks seriously under-represented aspects of culture as 'communities' and as 'persons'. Second, in the analysis of cultural categories, all five of the English textbooks had relatively less intercultural interaction (ICI) elements, constraining the opportunities to reinforce students' multicultural perspectives. Third, an analysis of the cultural themes revealed that there was an obvious imbalance in representing 'products' (Big C) and 'practices' (little c) in the textbooks, indicating that the representation of Korean cultures generally tended to favour culture as 'little c'. This study argues that English teachers need to take an important role in selecting English textbooks applicable to the teaching practices under the multicultural perspectives, and that textbook publishers should redress the existing imbalances in the representation of cultural contents. (Mokpo National University · Daegu University)

Keywords intercultural communicative competences, culture teaching, representation of foreign cultures

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I. Introduction

The new status of English as the tool to communicate with others in international and intercultural situations requires language learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and cultural awareness to be fostered for the socially appropriate language use. For that reason, language educators have long recognized the necessity of multicultural education in language classes. Gray (2010) suggested that in order to develop ICC, language teachers need to design classroom activities including both the instruction on the mechanics of language and incorporating activities for the awareness of others' cultures.

In 2011, the Korean Ministry of Education stipulated that the aim of English education should be revised from helping learners be native speakers of English to cultivating intercultural speakers. To realize this purpose, the revised version of the English curriculum asks the contents in English textbooks to include multicultural components as well as Korean culture. In Korea, English textbooks play an important role in language teaching and learning since most English teachers use textbooks as the core material. These texts serve as a basis for the language input that learners need and for the language practice that occurs in the classroom (Tomlinson, 1998). In this respect, the sets of cultural values reflected in English textbooks are directly or indirectly carried to learners as the "hidden curriculum" when the knowledge of textbooks is transmitted to them (Chao, 2011; Cunningsworth, 1995; Hinkel, 1999). The hidden curriculum may influence learners' cultural perceptions and knowledge more strongly than the official curriculum if they are exposed to it for a longer period of time (Cunningsworth, 1995). Therefore, an examination of the types of cultural content and the appropriateness of the organization of the cultural content in English textbooks is needed.

Some researchers (Han & Bae, 2005; Lim & Gu, 2005; Yu, 2002) analyzing English textbooks published on the basis of the 7th curriculum in Korea (the Korean Ministry of Education, 2007) showed that cultural content focused mostly on the experiences of white westerners and were generally fragmented, indicating only the products and practices (i.e., food, festivals, clothes, etc.), which serves to reinforce the notion that knowing about white westerners' cultures and the ways in which a small portion of a population behaves is sufficient for appropriate use of English. Such a narrow view of culture reflected in English textbooks may result in Korean

students' poor intercultural knowledge, which possibly impedes learners' ICC.

However, the importance of cultural content in the textbooks has rarely been addressed in prior studies, though the representation of culture-related materials has a serious impact on shaping learners' views of other cultures. Recognizing the significant influence of English textbooks on learners' cultural awareness and intercultural knowledge, this study examines how textbooks represent foreign cultures from the multicultural perspective. Using a content analysis of five middle school English textbooks, the researchers investigate the representation of textbook materials from the three aspects of cultural elements: the perspectives on cultural dimensions (Moran, 2001), on cultural categories (Chao, 2011), and on cultural themes. More specifically, in this study, the 'cultural dimensions' are extended to five factors (i.e., culture as products, practices, perspective, communities, and persons) by including Moran's (2001) two factors (communities and persons) in the analysis. Additionally, the 'cultural categories', which are termed the identification of sources of cultural information, are analyzed using Chao's (2011) framework of five factors: source culture (SC), target culture (TC), international culture (IC), intercultural interaction (ICI), and universality across culture (UC). With regard to the 'cultural themes', the way the objective cultures ('products' and 'practices') are incorporated into textbooks are examined.

Any imbalances in the representation of cultural content in English textbooks should be corrected since those supporting multicultural perspectives can help students to develop their ICC. In line with this argument, this study explores which types of culture are presented in the English textbooks for second year middle school students. From a multicultural perspective, this study investigates the extent to which culture-related contents in English textbooks are represented in terms of the cultural dimensions, the cultural categories, and the cultural themes. Hence, the research questions are posed as follows:

1. To what extent do English textbooks for second year middle school students support the interplay among the five 'cultural dimensions', articulated by products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons?
2. Are sources of cultural information included in the English textbooks represented in such a way that the 'cultural categories' support a

multicultural perspective?

3. What are the patterns of using the ‘cultural themes’, defined as ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’, in five English textbooks for second year middle school students?

2. Literature review

2.1 Culture and intercultural communicative competence

The concept of ‘culture’ is too complex and multi-dimensional to define. Hinkel (1999) described culture as areas of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors and activities. According to Brown, it referred to ‘the ideas, customs, skills, and arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period time’ (2000, p. 177). Reviewing different definitions of culture from different scholars, Brody (2003) divided culture into two concepts ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’: culture as ‘Big C’ represents formal culture (i.e., a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society), while ‘little c’ culture refers to the routine aspects of life and encompasses everything as a total way of life (Lee, 2009, p. 78). Furthermore, Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003) and Peterson (2004) stated that ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ are related to ‘objective culture’ such as products and practices and that culture representing people’s beliefs and views needs to be classified into ‘subjective culture.’

However, Moran (2001) argued that a dichotomous concept of culture was not complete and added ‘communities’ and ‘persons’ as the other factors to be considered in the cultural dimensions. After establishing the five dimensions of culture, or products, practices, perspectives, persons and communities, he gave a definition of culture as “the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts” (Moran, 2001, p. 24). This study defined culture as the interplay of products, practices, perspectives, communities and persons (Moran, 2001). The five dimensions were adopted in this study to analyze how cultural elements were reflected and how

foreign cultures were represented in each chapter of English textbooks for second year middle school students in Korea. Table 1 is a brief summary of the five dimensions of culture proposed by Moran (2001, p. 25).

One of the goals in communicative language classrooms is to develop students' ICC, which can help learners raise their intercultural awareness in the use of a target language. ICC can be defined as the ability "to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (Byram, 1997, p. 71). In order to develop their ICC, learners need to learn about cultural knowledge and practices from different cultures, which will have impact on improving their intercultural communicative skills and adopting an intercultural identity (Sercu, 2010). Since textbooks, as a key teaching and learning material, represent other cultures and values, they are required to cover multicultural information in order to meet the growing need of the development of ICC.

Table 1. A brief summary of the five dimensions of culture (Moran, 2001)

Dimensions	Examples
Products	<i>Artifacts</i> : food, documents, language, money, tools
	<i>Places</i> : buildings, cities, houses
	<i>Institutions</i> : family, law, economy, religion, education, politics
	<i>Art forms</i> : music, clothes, dancing, painting, movie, architecture
Practices	<i>Operations</i> : manipulation of cultural products
	<i>Acts</i> : ritualized communicative practices
	<i>Scenarios</i> : extended communicative practices
Perspectives	<i>Lives</i> : stories of members of the future
	They represent the perceptions, beliefs, values and attitudes that underlie the products and guide people's behavior in the practice of culture. They can be explicit but often they are implicit, outside conscious awareness.
Communities	They include the specific social contexts (e.g. national cultures), circumstances (e.g. religious ceremonies), and groups (e.g. different social clubs) in which members carry out cultural practices.
Persons	They refer to individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways. Personal identity and life history play key roles in the development of a cultural person.

2.2 Sources of cultural information

Recently, English has been used in various contexts and this caused many varieties of English to be produced. A paradigm shift from a Second/Foreign Language to English as an International Language led English language teaching professionals to reconsider what is expected of learners in order to develop effective communicative competence. Byram (1997) and Scollon and Scollon (1995) mentioned that effective communication can be achieved not only by the development of linguistic competence but by internalizing the cultural norms of other speakers from different countries. Yuen (2011) also argued that for learners' effective intercultural communication, language teaching materials should include information from a variety of cultures of English-speaking countries for learners' intercultural communication. In this respect, learners in EFL/EIL contexts need to be exposed to different cultural information in order to develop communicative and pragmatic tools to 'negotiate meaning,' and to be ambiguity-tolerant, which helps them to enhance their ICC.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) proposed three sources of cultural information to be included in language textbooks: 1) target culture materials, 2) source culture materials, and 3) international culture materials. First, target culture materials include the culture of a country where English is spoken in L1 such as the United States, Great Britain, and Australia. Most of the contents are about life in native-English speaking countries. The purpose of integrating target culture components into textbooks is to help learners enhance learner motivation and develop their attitude toward language learning (McKay, 2002). The second source culture materials refer to the learners' own culture as content. In the case of Korea, the materials mostly draw on Korean society and culture and thus learners will be familiar to the contents and have a great chance to get comprehensible input. Last, international culture materials are from various cultures in English- and non-English-speaking countries. For example, learners in Korea might have a topic of 'Tremendous natural disaster in South East Asia' for an English lesson. In spite of several difficulties in presenting international culture materials, teachers might not be familiar with the content and learners are possibly uninterested in them.

McKay (2004) revealed some benefits of using content from an international target culture in the teaching of English as an international language. According to

her research, learning cultural information from international cultures allows learners to develop cross-cultural sociolinguistic competence by helping them to acquire their own notions about the ways to communicate appropriately with native and non-native speakers of English in international settings. Second, learners can internalize the cultural norms of non-native speakers' cultures rather than those of native speakers of English when communicating their opinions and cultural understandings through the medium of English, which leads to the development of ICC. Therefore, English textbooks in a foreign language context should be well-designed to provide learners with various opportunities to effectively develop their own ICC. Following the main categories of culture from Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and McKay (2004), Chao (2011) added two other categories, such as Intercultural Interaction (ICI) and Universality across culture (UC), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The main categories of culture (Chao, 2011)

Cultural Categories	Explanations
Source Culture (SC)	It refers to Pan-Chinese culture (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong).
Target Culture (TC)	It includes English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK and the USA).
International Culture (IC)	It includes cultures of all countries in the world (European countries, countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) except for pan-Chinese and English-speaking cultures.
Intercultural Interaction (ICI)	It includes the comparison, reflection, or awareness of the differences and similarities between the local/source and the target /international culture through activities such as case studies, problem-solving, and role play to help students develop positive <i>attitude, knowledge, skills</i> and <i>awareness</i> in international communication.
Universality across Culture (UC)	It includes general knowledge/content that is not specific to any particular culture or country.

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

This study analyzed reading texts from five English textbooks for second year middle school students which were permitted by the Korean Ministry of Education and compiled by local publishers in 2013. The target textbooks were published in the spirit of the 2011 curriculum by the Korean Ministry of Education and have been used in schools since 2013. Commonly used as the core teaching materials in Korean schools, they were chosen for study in order to examine whether the cultural aspects of the textbooks satisfied the needs of Korean middle school students. The texts were examined using content analysis. The selected textbooks were referred to as A, B, C, D, and E, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Target textbooks

Name of Textbooks	Representative author	Number of Units
A	Kim	10
B	Bae	10
C	Lee	10
D	Lee	11
E	Shin	10

3.2 Analytic procedure

A content analysis of five middle school English textbooks was conducted, and the culture-related contents in these textbooks were used as a baseline data for the content analysis. As the researchers, both authors participated in the entire analytic procedures, such as developing coding schemes, coding cultural contents, and analyzing the results, to improve the reliability in data analysis. Specifically, after cultural contents in the textbooks were coded by each researcher, an agreement rate was computed to maintain the consistency in a content analysis.

First, when it comes to the ‘cultural dimensions’ of the textbooks (the first research question), the textbook materials were coded according to Moran’s (2001) coding scheme. Under this scheme, cultural dimensions were divided into the five

sub-dimensions: products, practices, perspectives, communities, and persons. As addressed in Yuen (2011, p. 459), cultural dimensions can be conceptualized as “a system of code (products) used, to signify thoughts (perspectives), for communication (practices), by different people (persons).” Specifically, textbook materials can be considered as referring to cultures when there is a mention or description of these five sub-dimensions, which are defined as follows.

1. ‘Products’ are defined as a system of code that measures a cultural dimension in four broad aspects: Artifact, Place, Institutions, and Art forms. Artifact includes cultural issues such as foods, language, and money, while Place refers to building or cities associated with particular cultures. Institutions measures cultural topics coupled with law, family, and politics, and Art forms include cultural topics dealing with music, dancing, or painting. For instance, a reading passage that describes the Liberty Bell in the United States, can be counted as an incidence of the Product dimension.
2. ‘Practices’ characterizes another cultural dimension that measures various aspects of cultural practices in terms of ‘Operations’, ‘Acts’, ‘Scenarios’ and ‘Lives’. Specifically, Operations refer the practice of manipulating cultural products, Acts are ritualized communicative practices, Scenarios refers to extended communicative practices, and Lives are descriptions or stories of cultural members.
3. ‘Perspectives’ include cultural materials that convey the particular perceptions, values, and beliefs and that guide people’s behaviors in cultural practices. For example, the ‘culture of learning together’ described in an English textbook can be classified as a ‘Perspectives’ category in that it recognizes a cooperative learning in Western cultures as a superior learning approach.
4. ‘Communities’ describes the specific social contexts, circumstances and groups through which members engage in cultural practices. Religious ceremonies and social and cultural clubs are examples of content that would be included in the ‘Communities’ category.
5. ‘Persons’ refers to the individual members who represent the particular cultures and communities. A story about Martin Luther King, Jr.

described in a English textbook can be a good example of the cultural aspect of ‘Persons’.

Second, to analyze cultural categories (cultural types and intercultural issues) of the target textbooks, sources of cultural information were coded according to the framework of Chao (2011), which classifies cultural contents into the five origins: ‘Source Culture’ (SC), ‘Target Culture’ (TC), ‘International Culture’ (IC), ‘Intercultural Interaction’ (ICI), and ‘Universality across Culture’ (UC). ‘SC’ refers to Korean culture, ‘TC’ includes English-speaking cultures (England, America, Australia, New Zealand, etc.), and ‘IC’ represents cultures of all countries other than ‘SC’ and ‘TC’. On the other hand, ‘ICI’ emphasizes cross-cultural perspectives in that it includes content that reflects the similarities and differences in cultures among the ‘SC’, ‘TC’, and ‘IC’. Furthermore, ‘UC’ describes the knowledge and content that are not specific to any particular culture or country. For example, textbook materials associated with linguistic knowledge and literacy practices belong in the ‘UC’ category. Third, to examine the extent to which cultural materials in English textbooks satisfied the diversity of cultural themes, the culture was divided into ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ (Brody, 2003). Specifically, ‘Big C’ culture represents the formal aspects of culture, such as a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society. Conversely, ‘little c’ culture characterizes the routine aspects of life, comprised of everything as a total way of life (Lee, 2009).

The research analyzed the three aspects of textbook materials (cultural dimensions, cultural categories, and cultural themes) using pre-specified coding schemes as a means to evaluate each unit in five English texts. A coding procedure for English texts was reported in Table 4, illustrating how each topic was analyzed. The researchers coded all five English textbooks, producing an agreement rate of 93%. For the items that were coded differently, both researchers engaged in a review process to negotiate the differences.

Table 4. Data analysis

Unit	Five Dimensions	Categories of Culture	Frequency of Cultural Themes
1	Perspectives	UC	Values / little C
2	Perspectives	SC, TC(Canada)	Values / little C
3	Practices	TC(USA)	Science / Big C
4	Practices	UC	Literature / Big C
5	Products	SC	Geography / Big C
6	Products	UC	Economy / Big C
7	Perspectives	UC	Literature / Big C
8	Products	IC(Mongolia, Tunisia, Malaysia)	Lifestyles / little C
9	Perspectives	SC, TC(USA), IC(Greece, Philippines, Russia)	Custom / little C
10	Products/ Communities	SC, IC(China)	Values / little C

4. Results

In this section, the results from a content analysis of five English textbooks for second grade middle school students were presented. Specifically, using the three aspects of culture (cultural dimensions, cultural categories, and cultural themes) as a unit of analysis, the patterns of representing culture-related contents were examined.

4.1 Cultural dimensions

Through an analysis of the ‘cultural dimensions’, which include five sub-dimensions (i.e., Products, Practices, Perspectives, Communities, and Persons), the researchers examined whether the English textbooks represented various aspects of cultural dimensions. A total of 51 topics included in five English textbooks were analyzed. The results showed that imbalances in the representation of textbook materials among the five dimensions of cultures existed. Table 5 reported the representation of the five dimensions of cultures in terms of percentage and the frequency across the five textbooks.

Table 5. The percentages of cultural dimensions

Textbook	Cultural Dimensions				
	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Communities	Persons
A	70% (7/10)	10% (1/10)	20% (2/10)	0	10% (1/10)
B	40% (4/10)	20% (2/10)	40% (4/10)	10% (1/10)	0
C	60% (6/10)	20% (2/10)	20% (2/10)	0	10% (1/10)
D	36% (4/11)	36% (4/11)	45% (5/11)	0	0
E	50% (5/10)	10% (1/10)	40% (4/10)	10% (1/10)	0
	51% (26/51)	20% (10/51)	33% (17/51)	4% (2/51)	4% (2/51)

Note: the number denotes the representation of each of five cultural dimensions in terms of percentage, and the parenthesis represents the corresponding frequency.

‘Products’ were the most frequently used dimensions in all five textbooks, which accounted for 51 percent of the cultural dimensions. When taking a close look at the representation of ‘products’ across all of the textbooks, the representation of culture-related contents was skewed toward the ‘products’ dimension, with 70% for Textbook A, 60% for Textbook C, and 50% for Textbook E. Specifically, products associated with entertainment and foods appeared to be most frequently used topics, such as ‘a day at the TV station’ or ‘different foods around the world’.

‘Perspectives’ of cultures, often termed subjective culture (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003), can be understood as the world views maintained by the members of a particular society, such as values, beliefs, and myths (horoscope and superstitions). These perspectives can help students understand various views held by people around the world. For example, the article ‘Did I Do Something Wrong?’ in Textbook B provided a description of superstitions which exist around the world. In a frequency analysis, ‘perspectives’ was also found to be one of the cultural dimensions frequently described in English textbooks, comprising of about 33% of the entire cultural content. However, the use of ‘Perspectives’ showed the widest range of variances across the English textbooks. In particular, Textbook D assigned the

highest proportion of the 'perspectives' dimension, or 45% of the cultural dimensions. The corresponding numbers for Textbooks B and E were 40%, respectively. On the other hand, Textbook C included only 20% of the cultural dimensions, showing a wide difference in representing the 'Perspectives' dimension in the textbooks.

Culture as 'Practices' includes cultural topics related to customs (e.g., Full Moon, Thanksgiving), daily life, and types of communicative practices in society. Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003) refers to these aspects of practices as 'little c', which is compared with the concept of 'Big C' (Products). With regard to the representation of the 'Practices' dimension, the role of 'Practices' in English textbooks was quite limited in terms of the percentage of cultural dimensions. 'Practices' as a percentage of cultural dimensions were 20% as a whole, which was contrasted to 51% for the 'Products' dimension. As an aside, each textbook differed in the way it dealt with content of 'Practices' in that the percentages of 'Practices' ranged from 10% (Textbooks A and E) to 36% (Textbook D) across the textbooks.

On the other hand, the cultural factors of 'Persons' and 'Communities' are considered to be important in that these represent the different cultures of particular countries. For example, well known icons or persons, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Michael Jordan, represent the culture of particular social groups or countries. In this respect, Moran (2001) adds 'Persons' to the existing cultural dimensions. However, the results showed that all five of the English textbooks had few famous people and topics associated with 'Communities'. More specifically, the percentages of 'Persons' and 'Communities' were only 4% of the total content represented. Even worse, in case of Textbook D, there was no content associated with these cultural dimensions at all. It indicates that culture as 'Persons' and 'Communities' in the five English textbooks were seriously under-represented.

In short, an analysis of the 'cultural dimensions' indicates that imbalances exist in the current cultural content of textbooks. The representation of cultural aspects was significantly skewed to 'Products', 'Perspectives', and 'Practices', which accounted for 92% of cultural dimensions. It indicates that current English textbooks paid less attention to the other two aspects, 'Persons' and 'Communities', failing to show a broad spectrum of cultural dimensions.

4.2 Cultural categories

Since culture and language cannot be taught separately, sources of cultural information play an important role in developing a learner's ICC (Yuen, 2011). People within the same culture can not only use the same language to communicate among themselves, but use another language to communicate with people from different cultures as well. In this respect, understanding the different aspects of culture (i.e., depicting the culture of its own and other cultures) would help learners broaden their multicultural perspectives on language learning, gradually acquiring intercultural communicative competencies. In this study, 'cultural categories', a system of sorting sources of cultural information, were classified into five sub-categories: Source Culture (SC), Target Culture (TC), International Culture (IC), Intercultural Interaction (ICI), and Universality across Culture (UC).

An analysis of the 'cultural categories' indicates that the source culture materials were quite well distributed over the four cultural categories (i.e., SC, TC, IC, and UC), but source materials associated with ICI was under-represented in all five of the English textbooks. The percentages of cultural categories were reported in Table 6. Specifically, English textbooks contained 35% of SC, referring to Korean culture, representing a relatively higher proportion of SC materials than those of the other four cultural categories. The corresponding numbers for TC (English-speaking countries) and IC (all of countries excepts for SC and TC) were 29% and 22%, respectively. When taking a closer look at the SC category, the extent to which SC materials differed widely across the individual textbooks. While Textbook A did not include SC materials at all, the percentage of SC for Textbook D was 73% of entire source culture materials.

Table 6. A brief list of percentages of cultural categories

Textbook	Cultural Categories				
	SC	TC	IC	ICI	UC
A	0	30% (3/10)	10% (1/10)	10% (1/10)	50% (5/10)
B	40% (4/10)	30% (3/10)	30% (3/10)	0	40% (4/10)
C	20% (2/10)	40% (4/10)	20% 2/10	0	30% 3/10
D	73% (8/11)	18% (2/11)	9% (1/11)	9% (1/11)	18% (2/11)
E	40% (4/10)	30% (3/10)	40% (4/10)	0	20% (2/10)
Total	35% (18/51)	29% (15/51)	22% (11/51)	4% (2/51)	31% (16/51)

The similar problem was also found in the ICI category in that ICI materials were seriously under-represented in all of the English textbooks. The average percentage of the ICI category was just 4%, and there was no ICI material in Textbooks B, C, and E. These results showed that English textbooks tended to pay less attention to intercultural issues, though they were considered an essential part of developing learners' intercultural communicative competences. Thus, according to Choa's (2011) framework that includes ICI as the fourth cultural category, these five textbooks are not well-designed to provide learners with the opportunities to develop their own ICC. On the other hand, the percentage of UC materials accounted for 31% of textbook materials. An UC category refers to source materials that are not related to any particular culture or country, such as linguistic knowledge and learning practices.

4.3 Cultural themes

Two different aspects of cultural themes can be described as 'products' (Big C) and 'practices' (little c), which has been often referred to as 'objective culture' in the literature (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 2003; Moran 2001). The main purpose of analysing cultural themes was to examine the differences among four cultural

categories (i.e., SC, TC, IC, and UC) in representing objective culture in English textbooks. In this section, we reviewed whether each topic in textbooks was related to the concept of ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ and then examined how these were dealt with in the four cultural categories. For an analytic purpose, a topic representing formal culture (i.e., cultures associated with arts, history, geography, business, or customs of a target society) was classified as ‘Big C’. On the other hand, a topic dealing with individual aspects of lives or personal beliefs/views was sorted as ‘little c.’ The findings showed that the patterns of the representation of ‘Big C’ and little c’ differed across the four cultural categories, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Frequency and percentage and culture-related content

Book	Target Culture		International Culture		Source Culture		Unidentified Sources of Culture	
	Big “C”	little “c”	Big “C”	little “c”	Big “C”	little “c”	Big “C”	little “c”
A	2	2	1	1	0	0	2	3
B	1	2	0	3	1	3	3	1
C	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
D	1	1	0	2	1	7	0	2
E	1	2	3	2	0	4	1	1
Total	8	9	5	9	3	15	7	9
	17		14		18		16	
Total Percentage	12.3%	13.8%	7.7%	13.8%	4.6%	23.1%	10.8%	13.8%
	26.2%		21.5%		27.7%		24.6%	

An analysis of cultural themes revealed that culture-related contents in textbooks appeared to be relevant in that these materials were well distributed across cultural themes. On average, the content related to the SC (Korean culture) was most frequently presented in the English textbooks, as compared to the other three categories. Specifically, the SC materials accounted for 27.7%, and the corresponding numbers for the TC (English-speaking countries) and the IC (all other countries other than the SC and TC) were 26.2% and 21.5%, respectively. On the other hand, English textbooks included 24.6% of the content related to UC, indicating that a significant amount of content in the textbooks was not associated with any particular culture and country. With regard to the cultural themes, no imbalances existed in

selecting culture-related content, since English textbooks represented various cultural content collected from all around the world (i.e., SC, TC, and IC).

However, when it comes to the pattern of presenting ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ across cultural themes, all five of the textbooks had more materials on ‘little c’ than on ‘Big C’. In particular, for the SC categories the percentage of ‘little c’ was 23.1% of the entire culture-related material, while the corresponding number for the ‘Big C’ was just 4.6%. This finding indicates that the content on Korean culture tended to put more value on the cultural topics related to the individual domain, such as daily life and practices. The representation of Korean culture showed an obvious imbalance in that textbooks had relatively less content on ‘Big C’, which was connected to ‘artifacts’ (foods or language), ‘places’ (building, cities), and ‘institutions’ (family, religion, or economy), and ‘art forms’ (music, dancing, or painting).

On the other hand, the other three cultural themes, or TC, IC, and UC, appeared to relatively maintain the balance between the ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’. Specifically, the TC category consisted of 12.3% of the ‘products’ materials with 13.8% of ‘practices’ materials, indicating that both aspects of culture were well integrated in the English textbooks. With regard to the IC category, the textbooks tended to have more content on ‘practices’ (7.7%) and to have less content on ‘products’ (13.8%), experiencing a similar problem to the SC category. Finally, for the UC category, the percentages of ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ were 10.8% and 13.8%, respectively, showing that both aspects of culture were properly combined in the textbooks.

5. Discussion and implication

In the context of a multicultural perspective, the representation of culture-related contents in English textbooks plays an important role in developing learners’ intercultural communicative competences, since part of language learning is understanding the different aspects of the culture in which language is used (Brody, 2003; Yuen, 2011). In this section, the results of the present study were briefly discussed to provide some implications applicable to the development of English textbooks.

The first research question was to examine whether culture-related contents in

five English textbooks for second year middle students represented the broad spectrum of cultural dimensions, described as ‘products’, ‘practices’, ‘perspectives’, ‘communities’, and ‘persons’. As evidenced by the findings, the current English textbooks seriously under-represented aspects of ‘communities’ and ‘persons’. As Moran (2001) argued, ‘persons’ and ‘communities’ should be considered the key factors to develop learners’ ICC, since well known icons or individuals, for example, could serve as a channel to represent the different cultures of other countries. In this respect, the representation of cultural content in the current textbooks could constrain the opportunities for learners to communicate with people from different countries.

If cultural dimensions refer to ‘products’, ‘practices’, and ‘perspectives’, as defined by Brody (2003) and Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003), the representation of contents in English textbooks can be considered relevant. That is, these three elements were well incorporated into the textbooks. However, when the concept of cultural dimensions is extended to the five elements with additional ‘persons’ and ‘communities’ (Moran, 2001), there is a serious imbalance in the presentation of culture-related content. It suggests that the current English textbooks need to reinforce the ‘persons’ and ‘communities’ aspects to correct the imbalance in the representation of the cultural dimensions. With regard to ‘communities’, the current textbooks need to include more content on specific social contexts (i.e., religious ceremonies) and communities of various cultures (i.e., different social clubs) in which persons carry out cultural practices. The second research question was to examine whether sources of cultural information included in the textbooks were sufficient to support multicultural perspectives on teaching and learning. Following Yuen’s (2011) definition, the sources of culture origins are classified into the five categories, or SC, TC, IC, ICI, and UC. With regard to the cultural categories, there was almost no content on ICI in the current textbooks. The English textbooks paid special attention to the other four categories (i.e., SC, IC, TC, and UC), comprising more than 90% of entire textbook materials. In other words, an aspect of intercultural interaction (ICI) was significantly ignored in the textbooks.

As Byram (1997) and Scollon and Scollon (1995) mentioned, intercultural communicative competences can be enhanced when students are exposed to a culturally rich environment in which they internalize the norms of different cultures. This means that the representation of ICI in current English textbooks should be modified or improved in a way that helps students to develop their ICC. Specifically,

content on ICI can help students to compare the differences and similarities among different cultures and countries through an engagement in various types of activities, such as case studies, problems-solving, and role-play. This point is consistent with Chao's (2011) argument that intercultural issues function as an essential part of the representation of culture-related content in English textbooks. In this respect, current English textbooks should be redesigned to improve intercultural dynamics by incorporating more topics on ICI into culture-related content.

When it comes to the representation of cultural themes that examined the distribution between 'Big C' and 'little c', the content on Korean culture (SC) represented in the textbooks were skewed toward 'little c'. This indicates that the majority of the textbook materials consisted of the routine aspects of life and daily practices mostly performed on an individual level. On the other hand, culture as 'Big C' represents formal culture, referring to the set of facts and statistics associated with history, business, or customs of different societies. In the textbooks, such formal culture should be combined with 'little c' in a way that a comprehensive aspect of culture is described.

This study showed that, since an imbalanced representation of cultural materials across the English textbooks exists, the roles of authors and teachers are critical in redressing incomplete culture-related content. Of course, authors and publishers need to keep correcting the imbalance in the representation of cultural materials in terms of cultural categories, cultural dimensions, and cultural themes. Also, English teachers as evaluators and users should take an active role in choosing an appropriate English textbook by reviewing and analyzing the multicultural perspectives underlying the textbooks and by providing feedback for publishers.

6. Conclusion

The present study evaluated whether current English textbooks for second year middle school students supported multicultural perspectives on language learning. As evidenced by the findings, imbalances in the representation of culture-related contents in terms of cultural dimensions, cultural categories, and cultural themes exists. First, with regard to cultural dimensions, current English textbooks appeared to have less content on 'communities' and 'persons', though these two dimensions were

considered as important factors in gaining an understanding of different cultures.

Second, the sources of cultural information can be used as a means to evaluate cross-cultural perspectives embodied in the textbooks. The finding indicates that the contents on intercultural interaction (ICI) were seriously under-represented in the current English textbooks. To improve the imbalance, English textbooks should include more cultural materials that provide opportunities to compare the differences and similarities among various cultures and countries. Third, when it comes to the cultural themes, the current textbooks tended to have relatively more content on ‘little c’ at the expense of ‘Big C’. As Brody (2001) points out, ‘Big C’ and ‘little c’ should be synergically incorporated to provide learners with a broad spectrum of cultural themes.

For English teachers, the representation of culture-related content in the textbooks should be considered an essential part of teaching practices since language and culture cannot be separated in multicultural classrooms. In this respect, English teachers need to take an active role in selecting appropriate textbooks and in redressing the imbalances in the representation of cultural materials by providing corrective feedback for authors.

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