

# American Culture presence in EFL Textbooks used in Baccalaureate in Spain

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JEANETTE VALENCIA ROBLES

*Universidad de Alcalá*

JESÚS GARCÍA LABORDA

*Universidad de Alcalá-Instituto Franklin*

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**ABSTRACT:** Learning a foreign language implies a lot more than learning grammar and vocabulary. Language learners should also acquire the necessary social and cultural skills that would allow them to interact within the context where the target language is expected to be used. As a result, EFL teachers face the challenge of selecting and explaining the cultural contents that their students could employ when communicating with other English speakers; especially the speakers from those countries where EFL learners would more likely travel to either for academic or working purposes. In the case of Spanish EFL learners, the United States of America is among the most popular destinations in this regard. Therefore, exploring to what extent the American Culture is being addressed in EFL textbooks might help educators to improve their own teaching approach. This paper addresses research into the presence of American culture in textbooks used in Spain. The results indicate the limited importance of American culture in the ELT books used in Spain. The paper concludes by including some suggestions to address American Culture in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Spanish EFL Classrooms.

**Key words:** culture teaching, English language teaching, textbooks, Spain, secondary school.

## **La cultura americana en los libros de enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera**

**RESUMEN:** Aprender un idioma extranjero implica mucho más que aprender la gramática y el vocabulario. Los estudiantes de idiomas también deben adquirir las habilidades sociales y culturales necesarias que les permitan interactuar dentro del contexto en el que se espera que se utilice la lengua meta. Como resultado, los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera se enfrentan al reto de seleccionar y explicar los contenidos culturales que sus alumnos podrían emplear al comunicarse con otros angloparlantes. Especialmente los ponentes de aquellos países a los que los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera viajarían con mayor probabilidad, ya sea por motivos académicos o laborales. En el caso de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, Estados Unidos de América se encuentra entre los destinos más populares en este sentido. Por lo tanto, explorar en qué medida se aborda la cultura estadounidense en los libros de texto de EFL podría ayudar a los educadores a mejorar su propio enfoque de enseñanza. Este artículo aborda una investigación sobre la presencia de la cultura americana en los libros de texto utilizados en España. Los resultados indican poca

importancia de la cultura americana en los libros de ELT utilizados en España. El artículo concluye incluyendo algunas sugerencias para abordar la cultura estadounidense en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en las aulas de EFL en España.

**Palabras clave:** enseñanza de la cultura, enseñanza del idioma inglés, libros de texto, España, escuela secundaria.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to the American Embassy in Spain, the number of Spanish citizens choosing to travel and / or study in The United States of America is rising every year. In the school year 2019-2020 almost 8000 Spanish were either finishing their studies or doing internships to get a degree (U.S Embassy and Consulate in Spain and Andorra, 2021). Given the number of Spanish students traveling to the USA for educational trips or to obtain a degree as well as the American influence in a globalized world, the learning of the American culture should be part of the EFL textbooks students use while learning the English (Labtíc & Teo, 2020; Mostafaei Alaei & Parsazadeh, 2021). However, the increasing presence of different varieties of World “Englishes” has led to the revision of proximity and influence of different cultures in ELT textbooks (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). That is the case of the presence of the United States in European textbooks .

The study of culture has been considered fundamental for over 70 years (De Valdes, 1977; García Laborda, Vescan & Sauciuc, 2020; Lado, 1957), but particularly in the last twenty years since it is included in the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2018). This was done to avoid communication misinterpretations, especially in critical issues such as traditions, religion, sex, socio-economic relations that can easily spoil communication even from close cultures and languages that usually have accessible cultural transfers. An example of the importance of cultural knowledge would be a simple courteous offer. Two people walk in a path of an unknown place and one offers to accompany the other by translating a very polite offer such as “¿Puedo ir contigo todo el camino?” into English (*Can I go all the way with you?*) Obviously, the person in question feels offended. This is just an anecdote that would embarrass any foreigner in the US who ignores the implications of the literal translation. Any reader may find similar examples in business where an inappropriate translation of a contract may mean its invalidation. Another example is brought forward by Virino (2022) who claims that one of the main issues in the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was, in fact, the mistranslation of a Japanese word due to cultural connotations.

A further reason to include culture in the EFL classroom is pointed out by Amerian and Tajabadi (2020) who describe how “the mere study of the abstract system of language does not equip learners with the required knowledge, skill, and attitudes to interact effectively and meaningfully in real situations” (p. 623). Furthermore, Ali et al., (2015) stress the need of addressing other cultures because culture plays an important role in language learning, and its motivation towards the L2 people and language. Therefore, cultural awareness must be as inclusive as possible and not just the knowledge of some British or American cultural traditions, celebrations or must-see attractions (Naultlt, 2006). Students should also be aware of those things that can meet their own potential needs such as gender issues (Johnson, &

Chang, 2012) and other matters which, naturally, relate to intercultural communicative competence (Nugent, 2020). The inclusion of such contents is the key to increase the students' intercultural awareness.

Baltaci & Tanis (2018), among others, found that teachers rely on the use of textbooks to do most of their teaching of culture. However, in a changing world, there has also been an ideological, probably unintended, disregard of certain controversial nationalities which are not generally included in educational materials (Meadows, 2020). There is also a discrepancy on how culture must be presented and 'how much' culture is appropriate must be presented. For instance, Xiong & Peng (2021) sustain that the presence of cultural symbols in Chinese books serves to trigger and motivate the learning of FL as opposed to the current tendency to focus on intercultural competence (Gedik, 2020). What seems to be clear is that there is a tendency to reiterate some common issues in many Western international textbooks while Asian textbooks tend to focus on more distinctive features and images (Ali, & Kazemian, 2015; Çelik, 2020). Forman (2014) even considers that some aspects of certain cultural contents can be misleading. What seems to be commonly agreed is that if cultural contents are to be learned by the students, those cultural contents must be included in textbooks because the relevance of coursebooks is critical today (Ayu, 2020). Therefore, contents must be balanced both in terms of images, metaphors, connotations, on one side, and relevance for second language (L2) learners, on the other (Hoa & Viêt, 2018; Karkour, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is understandable that the study of culture is usually related to countries with which more contact is expected. Thus, although most textbooks today tend to include an open repertoire of intercultural activities and information, textbooks also tend to include specific contents on those cultures with which there is more contact (i.e., Great Britain, France, or the United States in case of Spain,). According to this, a simple look at many of the textbooks used in Spain may show a great influence of the British and American cultures, whether formal (food, monuments, facts, history, landmarks, information, etc.) or informal (how people behave, ways to interact, even social unspoken cultural matters).

In the case of Spain, a long-standing relation with the United States since the 16th Century throughout the era of the *Conquistadores* to today's interchange of scientists, students of all educational level as well as cultural matters such as literature and the cinema has led to a common and usually balanced relation. Thus, the knowledge of American culture, especially in traditionally international matters such as business, education, tourism, and others, is a valuable asset for any Spanish EFL student. Besides, Spain also plays a special role in American culture due to the large number of institutions with high visibility in the US (i.e., the Franklin Institute of American Studies, the Cervantes Institute, the Observatory of the Spanish Language and Hispanic Culture at Harvard University and more). Given these common interests, this research intends to find how the American culture is presented in ELT textbooks currently used in Spain.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Morain (1983) (also Saeedi et al., 2017) argues that most teachers approach culture in class with three degrees of intensity: occasional approaches, cultural activities, or deeper

studies. Occasional approaches usually respond to accidental approaches (i.e., “by the way, people in South Africa...”). Cultural designed activities or cultural capsules encourage students to use the language in cultural situations (i.e., “imagine you are going to travel to Bath, UK; what do you want to eat, visit and do there?”). A higher level of intensity are the deeper studies that involve cultural clusters or even larger portfolios which usually include a combination of formal and informal aspects.

Quite often teachers’ involvement in teaching culture depends on the available resources. Despite the enormous quantity of materials accessible on internet (Chapelle, 2016), most teachers organize their culture lessons around the textbook because they require additional effort and time. As Chapelle (2016, p. 2) states:

Regardless of all efforts toward formulating culture theory and curriculum frameworks, the course textbook remains the cornerstone of the language course at the beginning level. It provides the basis for the syllabus, the springboard for other activities and discussion, guidance for new teachers, and socialization into the practice of language teaching and learning for students. Authors and editors of language textbooks select cultural content that provides an important starting point for students to construct images of the places where the language is spoken and to forecast key aspects of culture that they may study in greater depth.

It is therefore necessary for many teachers to rely on the textbook contents to deliver cultural information to their students despite the potential lack of presence of certain countries (Meadows, 2020). Teachers must be aware of these omissions even during their college training (Estaji & Savarabadi, 2020; Majjala, 2020).

A number of studies have addressed the challenges that can be found when including cultural topics in a textbook. Amerian & Tajabadi, (2020), for instance, interviewed 80 EFL teachers and found that most of them considered that the textbook series had “inadequacies and biases when it comes to the presentation and development of intercultural knowledge, attitude, and awareness” (p. 623). Dechert & Kastner (1989) addressed this topic in a textbook commonly used to teach German to an international audience to find that students wish to have information about the target culture, but textbooks brought little at that time/ The following year Ramirez and Hall (1990) looked at high school textbooks of Spanish used in the US and observed the presence of Hispanic cultures. Their research found that Spanish-speaking groups within the USA were not represented.

Nowadays, EFL textbooks tend to include diverse images and examples of not only English-speaking countries, but also of non-English-speaking countries. On the one hand, the introduction of a variety of cultural contents from different origins can be considered positively since it limits the bias introduced by a majoritarian culture. On the other hand, it limits the acquisition of content-culture, which is obviously part of the student’s personal and academic growth (Alshenqeeti, 2019). Therefore, it is important to find the right balance between the many English-speaking countries to avoid what authors like Pennycook (2007) consider an overrepresentation of the “anglosphere” in ELT textbooks, a legacy of the former British Empire colonization. Likewise, the introduction of culture in textbooks also helps to shape the learner’s ideology (Haav, 2018; Lee & McMullen, 2006) An additional problem is

presented by Liu (2016) who thinks that there is not one single and common way to teach culture in the EFL classroom, nor is there a standardized way to understand language culture (Delaney, 2017; Kachru, 1992). As a result, there is a need of carefully choosing balanced cultural contents to favour the students' foreign language learning process.

This learning process not only implies the linguistic competence development, but also the development of the sociocultural competence (Castro, Sercu, & Mendez García, 2004) or the skills to use the language according to the social and cultural norms of the target language (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Hyme, 1972, Khouni and Boudjelal, 2019). There are different studies that support the relationship between culture and learning. For instance, Yuen (2011) refers to a certainly curious word, "McJob", which means a low-paid job. This example might prove that while learning a language, one also acquires some knowledge about the culture of where the language is used, in this case the American fast-food industry" (p. 459).

Paige et al. (1999) state that culture learning should emphasize "the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures." (p. 50). According to Lee's culture-based pedagogy theories review (2009), successful communication in a foreign language depends on the understanding of how culture works in different communities (culture-general) and in a target community (culture-specific). Hence, culture-general knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes can be transferred across cultures while language learners will need culture-specific knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes when interacting within a particular community.

Regarding the understanding of the culture-specific aspects of a target community, several authors like Kramsch (1993) and Paige et al. (1999) propose the concepts of Big "C" culture and Small "c" culture. The former refers to the easily observable facts and the latter to subjective assumptions, beliefs, and norms that a community might share. Paige et al.'s (1999) culture learning model presents 17 categories for culture-general learning and 8 categories for culture-specific learning. These categories are distributed in the three aspects of culture learning: knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes.

Kaewsakul (2016) also adds three aspects of culture: Source, Target, and International Culture. These three aspects apply to textbooks in a critical way. Source is related to what was stated at the beginning of the importance of relying in the textbooks to facilitate the teacher's work. The target refers to the way in which culture influences the students' construction of the self-image as a L2 learner. Thus, the relation between the teacher and the contents of the Big "C" culture and Small "c" culture can have distortions, selections, disregards, moral consideration which will certainly have an effect on the students (Patterson, 2009; Torres et al., 2018).

In reference to Big "C" and Small "c", Lee (2009) included several more themes to analyse these three aspects in the curricular material. Raigón-Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar (2015) modified the models of Paige et al.'s (1999) and Lee's (2009) to a more specific model that could facilitate the identification of culture learning promotion examples. Their model, as shown in Table 1, has 11 categories for general aspects of culture learning, 14 categories for the Big "C" culture, and 16 categories for the Small "c" culture.

*Table 1. Ten categories for general aspects of culture learning, based on Raigón-Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar (2015)*

CULTURE IN GENERAL	
Knowledge	Culture learning
	Cultural adjustment stages: shock
	Intercultural development
	Cultural identity
Behaviours	Culture learning strategies
	Coping and stress management strategies
	Intercultural Communicative Competence
	Cultural Adaptability
Attitudes	Positive attitude toward different cultures
	Positive attitude toward culture learning

Nowadays, EFL textbooks tend to include different examples and exercises that promote the awareness of both different groups that traditionally were neglected such as local groups of English-speaking communities (i.e., British living in Alicante) or English-speaking countries that traditionally were not included in textbooks (like Nigeria). Publishers do this because “presenting a single target culture no longer meets the needs of students learning and international language” (Shin et al., 2011, p. 266). As a result, there should be a balanced presence of at least two popular English-speaking countries to help students get familiarised with both; for instance, the American and British culture. It is also important to include countries of all the continents, like Nigeria or India, and communities where English may imply a larger number of speakers although it may not be the majoritarian language like India or Hong Kong.

This approach might vary depending on the language learners’ needs. Today, as we mentioned in the introduction, there has been a reductionist move or a neutralization of cultural contents. American culture is more important than ever due to the development of English in technology and all aspects of modern life (Cismas, 2009; Dargent-Wallace, 2013). Therefore, the knowledge of English culture is crucial for many students (Goldoust, 2018). Raigón-Rodríguez’ and Larrea-Espinar’s (2015) categories are more relevant in this scenario as Spanish need to face situations in the USA in a different way from their own country.

The two following research questions might help us identify the significant relevance and presence of the American culture in Spanish textbooks. It is believed that the findings may be of interest for teachers to improve students’ cultural awareness in the classroom.

1. *To what extent is American culture presented in Spanish EFL textbooks?*
2. *Which are the most popular topics used to address American culture in EFL textbooks in Spain?*

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a self-developed descriptive quantitative approach based on the observation of cultural occurrences in 34 teaching units of 12<sup>th</sup> grade (second year of Baccalaurate) EFL textbooks currently in use in Spain. The analysis was carried out by following Raigón-Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar's model (2015) of culture learning. Their model, as shown in Table 1, has ten categories for general aspects of culture learning, 14 categories for the Big "C" culture, and 16 categories for the Small "c" culture (see previous page).

Four publishers of EFL textbooks in Spain were chosen (Table 2, p. 9): Oxford University Press, MacMillan Publishers, Pearson, and Burlington Series. The approach consisted of reviewing the textbooks' sample units available on the publishers'

sample units available on the publishers' websites and four more English textbooks

sample units available on the publishers' websites and in four more English textbooks.

The selection of the units was done through *grab sampling*. These books are currently in use in the Spanish context. The main purpose of the study was to identify to what extent the American culture was addressed in the chosen materials. Of the afore mentioned textbooks, 34 EFL teaching units were analysed during the study: 14 units were from MacMillan textbooks, 10 from Oxford, 9 from Burlington Series and 1 from Pearson.

A rubric was developed to identify examples of the suggested categories in the curricular material. The rubric allowed the register of the occurrences which only promoted or showed the American culture. Content Analysis was used to determine which type of category the occurrence should belong to. Following C.A, data was analysed by using descriptive analysis and counting the total number of occurrences per category.

### 4. RESULTS

The first research question intended to explore how American culture was addressed in EFL textbooks in Spain. Regarding culture in general, the analysis showed that the 34 units barely paid attention to the behaviour and attitudes aspects of the culture construct. Even though some teaching units have a speaking section where conversational tips are given, there was not any explicit activity that would give EFL learners the strategies to interact in the American culture. There was only one activity that clearly encouraged positive attitudes towards the target culture. This was a reading exercise about the importance of learning English. Most of the text described the benefits of using English in the United States, which could be used to foster *positive attitudes towards the culture*.

Despite these findings, the study noticed that the teaching units did focus on the knowledge aspect of culture. During the analysis, it was found that books would devote more sections to promote two types of knowledge: culture learning and intercultural development. Figure 1 shows the number of times a teaching unit included examples of solely culture learning and examples of the combination of culture learning and intercultural development.

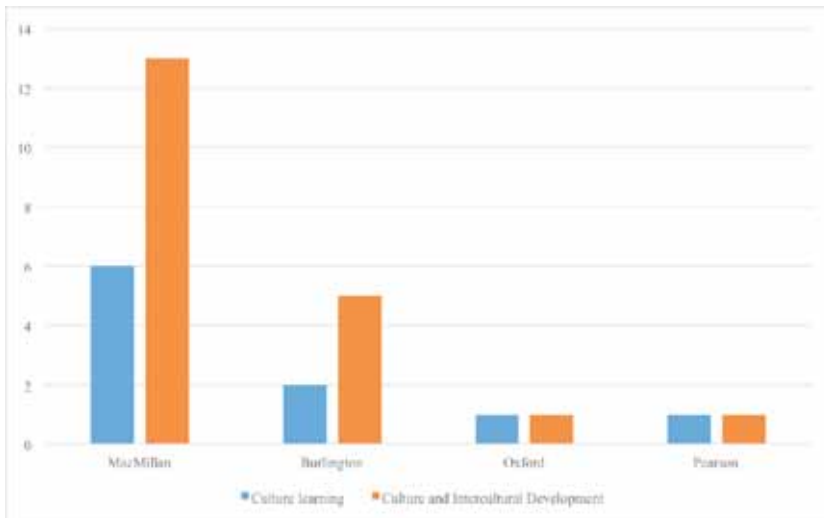


Figure 1. Elements of culture in general according to the reviewed teaching units

#### 4.1. Textbook analysis

There were six examples that only promoted culture learning and 13 examples that combined Culture Learning and Intercultural Development in MacMillan books. There was one exercise, in Prospects 1 book, about the story of the “*Happy Birthday song*” and another reading task, in Prospects 2 book, about the story of “*To Kill a Mockingbird*”. On page 93, in the Gateway B2 book, there was a reading activity about the American writer Marie Lu and on page 95 there was a text about the American Academy Awards, the Oscars. In the same book, on page 105, there was a photo of the American singer Taylor Swift and page 123 included a reading from *New York students who found cash in a sofa* where aspect of the life in New York were presented.

Regarding the examples of American culture as part of the Intercultural Development, MacMillan had a variety of occurrences. In the Initiative book for 2BACH, there was one reading on page 2 about crimes and one American crime TV series was mentioned. Page 28 had the reading “*Top Prison Facts*” about different prisons around the world and it mentioned one from the USA. Famous people were also mentioned in other readings about “Heroes”, “Leaders”, “Films reviews”, and “Trending topics”. In these types of exercises, it was possible to identify the names of the American personalities: Bill Gates, Angelina Jolie, Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Emma Stone, as well as the American productions: Hunger Games, Gravity, and others.

There were two examples of Culture Learning and five examples of Culture Learning and Intercultural Development in Burlington books. There was one reading and speaking exercise about Steve Jobs which was used to work on the life skill of conducting an interview. Another reading exercise was about young American people participating in cooking reality shows. The other two examples were also readings that included American people among others

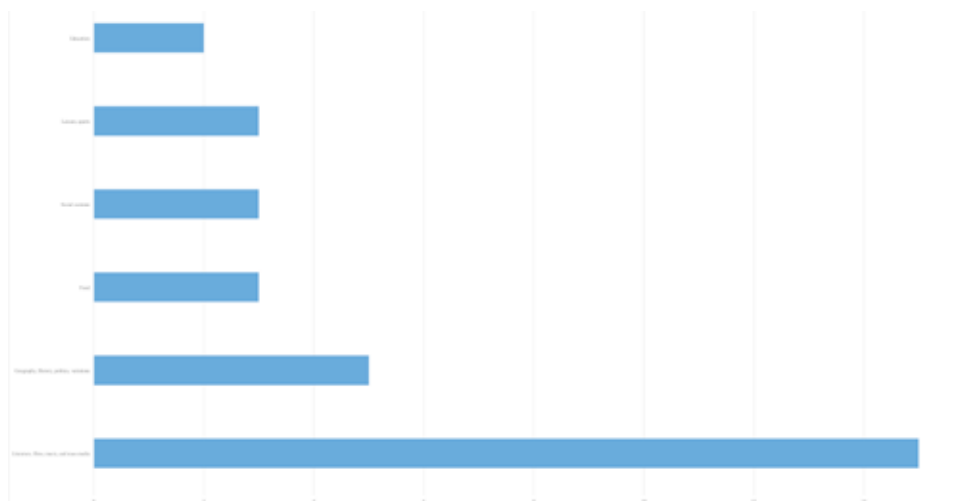


as part of the unit. For example, three American female athletes were in the reading about “celebrities of the month” and the reading about food TV programmes mentioned one from the USA. None of these two readings stated the nationalities of the athletes nor the show.

Oxford and Pearson books showed one example in each category. Oxford had one speaking exercise about describing photos and the given examples were from the USA while Pearson devoted a whole reading to the American painter, Marla Olmstead. In a different unit, Oxford included the photo and name of the American entrepreneur Mark Zuckerberg as part of the speaking and grammar exercise about nationalities. Pearson mentions “American Idol” in the reading about TV shows.

#### 4.2. Popular topics

Regarding the most popular topics used to address American culture in EFL textbooks, the content analysis of the Big “C” culture occurrences in the reviewed teaching units showed that EFL textbooks used in Spain seem to promote six out of the 14 suggested criteria. *Figure 2* shows the number of times in which an example of each category was identified during the analysis.



*Figure 2. Examples of Big “C” culture found in the teaching units*

It was also possible to identify examples of American Education in two reading exercises in the Burlington Book “Advanced English 4”. One reading described the importance of learning English in American society and the other addressed the burn-out effect of attending school in the United States of America.

Furthermore, there were six examples of the American Geography and History (See Table 2). One unit of the “Get Set 1” book from Oxford Publishers has a speaking exercise about describing photos. The activity included an example where two people were talking about Washington D.C and Lincoln Memorial. The reading “*Top Prison Facts*” in the

“Initiative 2BACH” was already mentioned in 4.1. MacMillan books have three examples of geographical destinations. A unit in the “Gateway B2” book included a picture and some grammar exercises of the 2005 Flooding in New Orleans while another showed a photo of an American astronaut in the speaking exercise. The book “Advanced English 4” from Burlington Series had the text of “*Some of History worst fires*” that mentioned the Great Chicago Fire and the San Francisco Fire.

Besides previously mentioned examples in the section (4.1), the Big “C” culture of how Americans experience leisure and sports was found in a listening exercise about an Australian band of senior musicians who would travel to the American city Las Vegas as part of their tour around the world. MacMillan also offered an example of leisure and sports when showing a photo of American baseball players with a caption “*many US teens play baseball*”.

Finally, the theme of American food also appeared in MacMillan “Gateway B2” book, which presented the reading “Food miles” about the journey food takes to get to British tables. Among the different places mentioned in the text, there were examples of food coming from the USA.

Table 2. Summary of the findings in the textbook  
analysis Source: Authors

PUBLISHER AND BOOK	LANGUAGE SKILL	TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND EXAMPLE
Oxford Get Set	Speaking	Places to visit: Washington D.C and Lincoln Memorial
MacMillan  Initiative 2BACH	Reading	“Top Prison Facts” reading: The Montana, USA, prison.
MacMillan  Gateway B2	Grammar	The 2005 Flooding in New Orleans (picture and exercise)
MacMillan  Gateway B2	Speaking	Describing photos: American Astronaut photo
MacMillan  Gateway B2	Listening	A band of Australian senior musicians will travel to Las Vegas.
Burlington  Advanced En- glish in Use	Reading	“Some of History worst fires” text: The Great Chicago Fire and the San Francisco Fire.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The current study described the examples of American culture in some 34 EFL teaching units in light of the two research questions: the first about the presence of American culture in Spanish EFL textbooks, and the second in relation to the most common topics found in the analysed textbooks. In relation to the first, the analyses of the didactic units evidence a relative absence of cultural contents in textbooks, especially in reference to American culture. The contents found in this large number of didactic units can be considered very limited, especially due to the lack of examples of the American culture regarding shopping, currency, and business. The first consideration that arises from this study is whether the lack of country-specific information, in fact, leads to a lack of information for the language students. Since neither the American nor the British Culture are directly addressed as such, it is hard to consider what countries or communities can be addressed as well as what aspects to include. However, business, study and leisure travel today are just one of the goals of learning a language, especially English; of course, along with the use of English for professional purposes managerial. Travellers and workers alike need to be aware of the cultural differences between their own culture and the target culture. This cultural knowledge can only be accessed through the school lessons, first-hand experience (usually from language teachers) and media or libraries information. Since the USA receives a large number of visitors from Spain, its culture whether big “C” or small “c” should be directly mentioned in the language classes. This does not limit the inclusion of other cultures. On the contrary, it could allow EFL teachers to name the diversity of English cultures with their own peculiarities. The little presence of American culture in the Spanish Baccalaureate textbooks revealed by this research may be due to the prevalence of aspects of British culture. Hence, this support the idea that the closer cultures and countries have more representation in the EFL textbooks, or maybe in line with Pennycook (2007), that there is an overrepresentation of other cultures. That would certainly be of interest for further research. In fact, this paper is limited by the available teaching materials and the fact that the objective was to address only American culture. In that sense, this paper represents a call for more traditional cultural contents that can enrich both the students’ experience and knowledge. This paper also outlines the importance of including English-speaking countries and communities from all over the world, not to idealize them, but to provide the students with the intercultural awareness and maturity that is missing in today’s textbooks.

### *Implications for teaching Culture in EFL Classrooms*

The results of the analysis show that even though it is possible to identify a few examples of elements of the American culture in the chosen Spanish EFL textbooks, there is still need for addressing this issue more explicitly. Bearing in mind that the study only reviewed students’ textbooks, it would be advisable to include cultural knowledge, behavioural, and attitude tasks in both students’ and teachers’ books

In any case, after conducting the literature review and the content analysis for this paper, some implications for teaching American culture in EFL classrooms could be made. First, English teachers should become knowledgeable of the categories and themes in Raigón-

Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar's model (2015). This model offers teachers a guidance of the general and specific, the more visible and the less visible aspects from the American culture that students need to be aware of.

A second implication for EFL teachers could be their role in raising students' awareness of the small "c" examples of American culture displayed in students' textbooks, on the internet, or in the news. Learners can be encouraged to share their knowledge on the topics covered during classes since they are more likely to be exposed to this information through the media. For example, questions like "who knows who this person is?" or "who knows where this person/movie is from?" can motivate students to either answer the question, think about it, make deductions, and ultimately make the necessary connections.

Learning specific information about the American culture would allow students to acquire knowledge of that culture, but students also need to develop pragmatic and social skills that they should use to behave as expected in the culture setting. So, a third implication for teachers could be to use Raigón-Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar's model (2015) to design activities that could allow students to learn how the American people behave in certain situations. More importantly, these types of tasks should not only facilitate the opportunity to discuss and reflect on those behaviours, but also on the similarities and differences that those behaviours could have in other English-speaking countries and their own country.

Including this critical thinking element during the learning process is part of the fourth implication of this study since critical thinking might help students understand and value Americans attitudes towards certain topics or in certain situations. This approach can also facilitate students' development of their personal attitudes towards the target culture without diminishing or overemphasizing their own culture. By doing so, EFL teachers can support learners in developing not only their American culture awareness but their intercultural competence since being able to recognise and understand the value of a culture prepares students for interacting with any culture.

Furthermore, the study revealed the absence of exercises devoted to the knowledge and handling of culture shocks that can arise from differences between American and Spanish culture. From here a fifth implication arises for teachers to keep on learning and improving their own knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes towards the American culture to guide and accompany their students in this process. This could imply learning about strategies and appropriate behaviours to manage those cultural shocks. Teachers can use their own perspective in this regard if they have experienced any cultural shocks or if they have any acquaintance who have gone through that experience. In addition, nowadays, teachers can find much information available on the internet from a wide range of reliable sources. For example, there are a couple of YouTube videos and blogs from Spanish students who are currently living in the USA or who have recently come back to Spain and who are willing to share their experiences. It is possible to find resources from American people describing cultural shocks when interacting with Spanish citizens. These resources can offer EFL teachers an opportunity to bring real life examples to their classrooms. Besides, teachers can design tasks that encourage open dialogue and critical reflection which are needed values for interacting among cultures, healing shocks and blockers, and building stronger and resilient learners.

A sixth and final implication can be deduced from the study, and it is related to the importance of networking in the development of students' cultural awareness and competence. If EFL teachers are expected to address as many cultural topics as possible to develop the

categories of culture in general and the American culture-specific themes, then they should not do this task alone. Facing this task by themselves not only would not be advisable for the work overload but would not reflect the fraternity value so encouraged by American educators. It is very common in American education settings to share contents, resources, and strategies among teachers so that they can choose which one could be used in their classrooms, what needs to be adapted, and even what could be also shared with others.

The six implications described in this paper aim at working with a set of values and skills that are not only so needed in Spanish EFL textbooks as found in the study, but also needed in today's world. Thus, these recommendations may serve to teachers to consider supplementing the cultural contents of the revised books. Setting the example as educators can motivate both teachers and students to reduce any misconception or prejudice to the American culture in the first place. Nevertheless, and more importantly, this should also be transferred to any other English-speaking cultures or non-English-speaking cultures and the Spanish culture. This way, EFL classrooms can become a source of learning, not only of a language but of values of understanding, comprehension, and acceptance, which are pivotal for communicating and interacting as international citizens of a globalized world.

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