(Inter)cultural content in Spanish as a non-native language textbooks[1]

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ABSTRACT: Research on the role of culture in textbooks for teaching Spanish as a non-native language (L2) is almost non-existent. Cultural studies note that the treatment of culture in the L2 classroom lacks systematicity apart from not being principled at all. This article analyzes 9 Spanish as an L2 textbooks from three proficiency levels, that is, beginning, intermediate, and advanced, published between 2008-2018 by Spanish publishing houses, and aimed at young adults and adults. The results indicate that the (inter)cultural approach in these textbooks is hardly principled, informed, organized, and structured. The proficiency levels and the publication years do not exert a clear influence on the (inter)cultural approach. Instead, the publishing market partly determines the (inter)cultural content in the textbooks under study.
Keywords: (inter)cultural content, teaching, Spanish, non-native language, textbooks

Los contenidos (inter)culturales en los libros de texto de español como lengua no materna

RESUMEN: Apenas existe investigación acerca del papel de la cultura en los libros de texto para la enseñanza del español como lengua no materna (L2). Los estudios culturales señalan que el tratamiento que recibe la cultura en clase de L2 carece de sistematicidad y no sigue criterios fundamentados. Este artículo analiza nueve libros de texto para la enseñanza del español como L2 procedentes de tres niveles de lengua, esto es, inicial, intermedio y avanzado, publicados entre 2008-2018 por editoriales españolas y dirigidos a adultos y jóvenes adultos. Los resultados indican que el enfoque (inter)cultural en estos libros difícilmente está bien fundamentado e informado y apenas contiene una organización y estructura adecuadas. Asimismo, los niveles de lengua y los años de publicación no ejercen una clara influencia en el enfoque (inter)cultural. En cambio, el mercado editorial en parte determina el contenido (inter)cultural en los libros analizados.
Palabras clave: contenido (inter)cultural, enseñanza, español, lengua no materna, libros de texto

1. CULTURE IN AN L2

The role of culture in non-native language (L2) teaching has encouraged considerable debate in language education for over 50 years. The inextricable interconnection between language and culture is undeniable (Brown, 2000; Byram, 2008; Hinkel, 2001; House, 2007). Language has been seen as the conveyor of culture (Kramsch, 1993; Young et al., 2009) to the point that learning an L2 without its target culture(s) (C2/C2s) leads the learner to become a fluent fool (Bennett et al., 2003). In the field of L2 teaching the renewed goal addressing not only aspects of the target language but also of the C2 has brought different perspectives on the notion of 'culture'.

This study takes into account the concept of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) proposed by Byram and colleagues (e.g., Byram, 1997, 2000; Byram & Fleming, 1998, etc.) focusing on the interrelation among language, culture, and communication in an L2 together with the more traditional notion of sociocultural aspects. Byram's (1997) ICC accentuates the following:

a) the relationship between the mother culture (C1) and the C2;
b) the concept of the 'intercultural speaker', which contrasts with the traditional but unrealistic goal of aiming for an L2 learner that would eventually become a native speaker of the L2;
c) communication among people from different C1s in an L2, whereas *intercultural competence* consists of communicating with people from different C1s in the speaker's L1.

2. TEACHING CULTURE IN AN L2

Research suggests that culture teaching is an essential part of L2 learning. Explicit culture teaching in L2 classrooms increases motivation, heightens cultural sensitivity, and promotes positive attitude changes such as discouraging stereotyping among other benefits (e.g., Heusinkveld, 1985; Morgan, 1993; Webber, 1987).

Despite all these benefits, empirical evidence shows that culture is not approached in the L2 classroom in a principled, systematic, active, and engaged manner (Atkinson, 1999; Baker, 2012; Byram & Feng, 2004; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Chastain, 1988; Holliday, 1996; Morgan, 1993; Omaggio Hadley, 1993). Extensive testing on L2 knowledge and skills has relegated culture teaching, making culture a diversion and add-on activity rather than an indispensable component of the teaching/learning process. A critical, non-essentialist, and non-stereotypical view of the nature of culture, and cultural differences are imperative. Thus, culture is best approached in an engaged and critical manner.

It is difficult to identify a clear trend in culture teaching due to educational and influential socio- and geopolitical views together with its interdisciplinary character (Risager, 2011). Overall, three major periods may be singled out. In the first period (1950s- early 1990s) culture is seen as an object consisting of cultural artefacts, that is, Big C, about the C2, represented by a national culture. This notion of culture coincides with the traditional, and rather elitist, view where the "formal institutions (social, political, and economic), the great figures of history, and those products of literature, fine arts, and the sciences" (Brody,

2003, p. 39) are introduced. Culture teaching becomes part of an acculturation process by which the learner is immersed in the C2.

The second period extends during the 1990s. The previous emphasis on cultural artefacts is replaced by the more anthropological concept of culture, that is, small c. Small c can be identified with the way of life or lifestyle of a particular group, especially with "housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all the patterns of behavior that members of the culture regard as necessary and appropriate" (Brody, 2003, p. 39). The inextricable interconnection between language and culture is accepted as an indispensable part for successful language acquisition (Kramsch, 1993, 1998). Also, Byram and colleagues (1997, 2000; Byram & Fleming, 1998, etc.) put forward the ICC model underpinned by the notion of critical *cultural awareness* (Byram, 1997), that is, a conscious understanding of the role of culture which leads to "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 101).

The last period is identified by the research literature since 2000. Culture moves away from the national conception to a "transnational or global/local approach" (Risager, 2011, p. 485). In a more globalized world with a growing use of certain languages such as Spanish as an L2 (second or foreign language) and as a lingua franca, it should not be restricted to the linguistic and sociocultural norms of countries where Spanish is spoken by native speakers. Instead, a non-essentialist, dynamic, heterogeneous, and hybrid approach to Spanish culture teaching is deemed essential. In this context cultural awareness is replaced by *intercultural awareness*, which incorporates a more wide-ranging understanding of culture for intercultural communication in the expanding contexts of a global language (Baker, 2012). The concept of *intercultural citizenship* (Byram, 2008, p. 157; 2011, pp. 11-12) also comes into play. Students should become not only intercultural speakers but also active intercultural citizens by means of acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to act within a community which is multicultural and international with more than one set of cultural behaviors, values, and beliefs.

Within this context of interculturality, Holliday (1999) denounces the limitations of a "large culture approach" based on "large ethnic, national and international cultural differences" (macro-culture) as part of "post-colonial and inter-ethnic discourses" (pp. 237-238). Instead, he proposes the notion of 'small culture' to refer to "any cohesive social grouping" (micro-culture)[2] (Holliday, 1999, p. 237). He explains that a small culture approach thus attempts to liberate culture from a "reductionist overgeneralization and otherization of 'foreign' educators, students and societies" (Holliday, 1999, pp. 237-238). Spanish L2 learners are expected to understand large entities such as the Spanish-speaking world, Spain or Latin America (macro-culture) and also become familiar with some of the social and/or sociolinguistic practices of a Spanish-speaking family, a school classroom or a post office in a town in South America (micro-culture). From a pedagogical point of view, the duality of large and small cultures is accepted. However, there is no agreement on when and how to address both types of culture. What seems evident is that small culture samples are likely to draw young adults' attention in a more effective manner than large entities which result in more distant aspects.

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[2] The notions of macro- and micro-cultures (Holliday, 1999) should not be confused with the already existent duality, that is, Big C and small c.

3. GOALS

Nowadays, the textbook (TB) continues being an essential tool in L2 teaching. It directly or indirectly conveys sociocultural values acting as a hidden curriculum (Cunningsworth, 1995; Shin et al., 2011). An exploration of the teaching of culture in Spanish as an L2 TBs is overdue given the particular importance attached to approaches for teaching culture and intercultural communication in an L2. Little research literature explores the actual teaching and learning of culture in Spanish as an L2 programs and classroom materials (cf. Arizpe & Benigno, 1987; Elissondo, 2001; Gil Bürmann & León Abío, 1998; Illescas García, 2016; Níkleva, 2012; Ramírez & Hall, 1990; Robles Ávila & Palmer, 2020; Williams, 1978).

This study analyzes the cultural dimension in Spanish as an L2 TBs from different proficiency levels and publication years. To be more specific, the main goals of this research are as follows:

a) analyze whether the sociocultural approach in the selected TBs is principled and informed;

b) analyze whether the sociocultural approach in the selected TBs is organized and structured;

c) based on the results from these two objectives (a, b), investigate whether the variables publication year and proficiency level influence the treatment provided to the sociocultural content in the selected TBs.

4. INSTRUMENTS

The 9 selected TBs (see Table 1 below) were designed for teaching Spanish for general purposes and aimed at young adults (17-19 years) and adults (20 years or over). They were produced by the main 6 Spanish as an L2 publishers within a range of 10 years (2008-2018) and covered three different proficiency levels, that is, beginning, intermediate, and advanced, three TBs per proficiency level. With respect to the publication years and for a balanced representation, the following distribution was established: (a) three TBs published in 2008, the beginning of the 10-year period; (b) three TBs published at an intermediate period, that is, between 2012-2014; and (c) three TBs published in 2018, the end of the 10-year period. For this study the student's book and the last edition of each TB was considered for the analysis.

Table 1. *Textbook identification*

TITLE AND AUTHORS	LEVEL	PUBLICA-TION YEAR	PUBLISHER	IDENTIFI-CATION
Nuevo Curso de Español para Extranjeros Virgilio Borobio	Beginning	2008	SM	Beggining TB 2008
Nuevo Avance Concha Moreno, Victoria Moreno, Piedad Zurita	Beginning	2013	SGEL	Beggining TB 2013
Nuevo Español en Marcha Francisca Castro, Ignacio Rodero, Carmen Sardinero	Beginning	2018	SGEL	Beggining TB 2018
Prisma Avanza B2 Gloria Mª Caballero *et al.*	Intermediate	2008	Edinumen	Intermediate TB 2008
Abanico Mª Dolores Chamorro *et al.*	Intermediate	2014	Difusión	Intermediate TB 2014

Método B2 Salvador Peláez Santamaría *et al.*	Intermediate	2018	Anaya	Intermediate TB 2018
A Fondo 2 Mª Luisa Coronado, Javier García, Alejando Zarzalejos	Advanced	2008	SGEL	Advanced TB 2008
Dominio Dolores Gálvez, Natividad Gálvez, Leonor Quintana	Advanced	2012	Edelsa	Advanced TB 2012
¡A Debate! Javier Muñoz-Basols, Elisa Gironzatti, Yolanda Pérez	Advanced	2018	Edelsa	Advanced TB 2018

The two categories for the analysis and evaluation, that is, a principled and informed approach (see Table 2, Category 1) and an organized and structured approach (see Table 3, Category 2), were developed taking into consideration limitations and weaknesses in TBs for teaching a foreign language that stem from different studies (e.g., Abello-Contesse & López-Jiménez, 2010; Clavel-Arroitia & Fuster-Márquez, 2014; Lam, 2009; Liu, 2013; Masuhara et al., 2008; Pinnix, 1990; Rajabi & Ketabi, 2012; Ramirez & Hall, 1990; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017; Sercu, 2000; Tomlinson et al., 2001; Yuen, 2011). For each category a group of criteria was analyzed and assessed.

As for the sociocultural content in the analyzed TBs, the following clarifications should be taken into consideration:

a) the sociocultural content that was not related to the Spanish-speaking world was not considered for the study except for Category 2, criterion (e) (see Table 3);

b) the content identified as sociocultural content in the table of contents, and it was not culture-specific, but it could be related to any culture (for example, urban tribes [unit 7] and well-known diets [unit 8], Advanced TB, 2018) was not assessed;

c) the introductory and review units that were present in some of the TBs that conform this study were not taken into consideration;

d) the supplemented material in the appendices of the TBs was analyzed.

According to Masuhara et al. (2008), the most reliable conclusions are provided by comprehensive assessments of TBs during and after their use. Nevertheless, the whilst-use and post-use evaluations are compatible with a pre-use evaluation approach. This latter approach is the one being used in this study. One of its major advantages with respect to the other types of assessment (whilst-use and post-use) is that it allows a considerable number of TBs to be analyzed in the same empirical study.

5. Results from the analysis and evaluation

5.1. Results from Category 1: Is the approach to (inter)cultural content principled and informed?

Category 1 consisted of 10 criteria (see Table 2 below) that were analyzed taking into account their presence in the TB units except for criterion (b), which was assessed counting the TB pages in which it appears. In the case of criteria (e) and (f), the percentages were calculated considering their presence only in those units with cross-cultural activities, that is, a dual focus based on comparisons of the C1 and the C2.

Table 2. *Category 1*

	BEGINNING			INTERMEDIATE			ADVANCED			
Is the approach to (inter) cultural content principled and informed?	Beg. TB 2008	Beg. TB 2013	Beg. TB 2018	Int. TB 2008	Int. TB 2014	Int. TB 2018	Adv. TB 2008	Adv. TB 2012	Adv. TB 2018	% of TB units
(a) Integration of both 'small c' and 'Big C' aspects of culture	40% (6/15)	66.6% (6/9)	40% (4/10)	75% (9/12)	33.3% (4/12)	50% (5/10)	55.5% (5/9)	20% (2/10)	40% (4/10)	46.3% (45/97)
(b) Presence of 'Big C' and 'small c' aspects	Big C 8.06% (12.9/160)	Big C 4.62% (8.6/186)	Big C 4.2% (6.4/150)	Big C 11.06% (20.7/187)	Big C 11.21% (24.9/222)	Big C 2.3% (5.5/239)	Big C 11.65% (29.6/254)	Big C 18.75% (34.5/184)	Big C 8.59% (14.7/171)	Big C 8.9% TB pages (157.8/1753)
	Small c 8.4% (13.5/160)	Small c 5.05% (9.4/186)	Small c 4.6% (6.9 /150)	Small c 11.28% (21.1/187)	Small c 4.14% (9.2/222)	Small c 7.65% (18.3/239)	Small c 12.71% (32.3/254)	Small c 2.06% (3.8/184)	Small c 17.42% (29.8/171)	Small c 8.2% TB pages (144.3/1753)
(c) Simplistic and/or superficial approaches to teaching culture	13.3% (2/15)	55.5% (5/9)	50% (5/10)	33.3% (4/12)	0% (0/12)	70% (7/10)	11.1% (1/9)	20% (2/10)	0% (0/10)	26.8% (26/97)
(d) A *dual* focus on the similarities and differences between the C1 and the C2	20% (3/15)	33.3% (3/9)	50% (5/10)	66.6% (8/12)	8.33% (1/12)	70% (7/10)	66.6% (6/9)	10% (1/10)	60%% (6/10)	41.2% (40/97)
(e) Cross-cultural activities for reading or listening comprehension based on aspects of the C2 followed by equivalent aspects in the C1	100% (3/3)	100% (3/3)	40% (2/5)	50% (4/8)	100% (1/1)	85.7% (6/7)	100% (6/6)	100% (1/1)	83.3% (5/6)	77.5% (31/40)
(f) Cross-cultural activities designed to *produce* spoken or written texts based on the C2 and the C1	100% (3/3)	100% (3/3)	80% (4/5)	50% (4/8)	100% (1/1)	85.7% (6/7)	100% (6/6)	100% (1/1)	83.3% (5/6)	82.5% (33/40)
(g) Opportunities to become aware of verbal and non-verbal differences in intercultural communication	0% (0/15)	11.1% (1/9)	10% (1/10)	25% (3/12)	8.33% (1/12)	10% (1/10)	22.2% (2/9)	0% (0/10)	10% (1/10)	10.3% (10/97)
(h) Opportunities to become aware of appropriate strategies to deal with such differences in non-judgmental or non-ethnocentric ways	0% (0/15)	0% (0/9)	0% (0/10)	8.3% (1/12)	0% (0/12)	0% (0/10)	11.1% (1/9)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/10)	2.06% (2/97)
(i) Simplified information about verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication from anthropology, social psychology, or international business (especially at more advanced levels)	0% (0/15)	0% (0/9)	0% (0/10)	8,3% (1/12)	0% (0/12)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/9)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/10)	1.03% (1/97)
(j) Key cultural concepts and terms defined and/ or exemplified, and/or illustrated	0% (0/15)	0% (0/9)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/12)	0% (0/12)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/9)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/10)	0% (0/97)

The analyzed TBs present an (inter)cultural approach that is principled and informed since: (a) 100% of the TBs integrate both Big C and small c, and (b) 100% of the TBs include a dual focus which allows comparisons between the C1 and the C2. Nonetheless, the (inter)cultural approach taken in the TBs is not principled and informed for the following reasons: (a) the (inter)cultural approach does not avoid simplistic and/or superficial approaches to teaching culture; (b) it hardly makes the students aware of verbal and non-verbal differences in intercultural communication between the C1 and the C2;c) strategies to deal with such differences in non-judgmental/non-ethnocentric ways are also scarce; (d) simplified information about verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication from other disciplines, for example anthropology, psychology or international business, is almost non-existent, and (e) there are no definitions or examples of key cultural concepts.

The concepts of Big C (civilization) and small c (culture) are integrated in 100% of the analyzed TBs, specifically in 46.39% of the units. Over half of the TBs, that is, 55.5%, present a quite balanced number of pages on Big C and small c aspects. Only 22.2% of the TBs (Intermediate TB, 2018; Advanced TB, 2018) reveal a clear emphasis on small c. Among the examples of Big C that were found in the TBs the following ones can be mentioned: texts on Spanish-speaking writers, features of the Spanish language, the origin of the name Argentina, official languages in the Spanish-speaking world, the history of the Incas, the Spanish health system, etc. On the other hand, examples such as the culture of *tapas* and *pinchos*, specific gestures, the Three Wise Men, sleeping a siesta, Caribbean dances, etc. are considered instances of small c.

Simplistic and/or superficial approaches are not avoided. All of the TBs except the Intermediate TB, 2014 and Advanced TB, 2018, include one or more of the following approaches identified as such (Omaggio Hadley, 1993): (a) the 4 Fs approach (folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food), (b) the Frankenstein approach by which very different topics appear throughout the units without any apparent relation among them, (c) the By-the-way approach which is based on pieces of information to mark contrasts, and (d) the Tour Guide approach which focuses on historical sites and very well-known architectural monuments in urban areas. Instances of the 4 Fs (Carnivals in Cádiz and Santo Domingo, paella, Mediterranean diet, The Three Wise Men, etc.) and the By-the-way approaches (contrasts between life in a town and in a city) can be found, for example, in the Beginning TB, 2013.

Regarding the presence of a dual focus based on the similarities and differences between the C1 and the C2 that will allow the students to deal with cultural misunderstandings in a better way, 100% of the TBs include it. Nonetheless, 44.4% of the TBs offer very limited opportunities to compare the C1 and the C2 (8.33%, 10%, 20%, and 33.3% of the units from the Intermediate TB, 2014; Advanced TB, 2012; Beginning TB, 2008, and Beginning TB, 2013, respectively). In 77.5% of the units with a dual focus, comparisons between the C1 and the C2 are carried out through reading- and listening-comprehension activities based on any C2 aspect followed by questions that demand information about the C1 from the student. Likely, 82.5% of the units with a dual focus contain activities designed to produce spoken or written texts based on sociocultural aspects from the C1 and the C2. In the case of the Advanced TB, 2018 the demand for information about the C1 is always preceded by the words *Ahora tú* (Now you).

Concerning interculturality and communication, 77.7% of the TBs (Beginning TB, 2013; Beginning TB, 2018; Intermediate TB, 2008; Intermediate TB, 2014; Intermediate TB, 2018; Advanced TB, 2008; Advanced TB, 2018) offer the students opportunities to become aware of verbal and non-verbal differences in intercultural communication, although that occurs in a reduced number of units (10.3% of the units). In those units where those differences are taught once again the student has to provide the information about intercultural communication from the C1. In the same way, the students are hardly offered negotiation strategies to deal with the differences between their C1 and the C2 in a non-ethnocentric way in intercultural communication, since those strategies are only present in 2.06% of the units. For example, in the Intermediate TB, 2008 the students are introduced to the use of *llamadas perdidas* (signal calls) made with the cellphone in Spain to indicate that we have already arrived. This was common practice among Spanish people when cellphone users did not enjoy flat rates and/or the use of WhatsApp. Furthermore, intercultural dialogues between native and non-native speakers of Spanish are scarce. They were found in the Beginning TB, 2013; Beginning TB, 2018, and Advanced TB, 2008. In these dialogues non-native speakers' productions are indistinguishable from the native speakers' ones. The only distinctive feature between both types of production can be found in the non-native speakers' pronunciation as shown in recorded dialogues. In these intercultural dialogues negotiation strategies are non-existent. Only 11.1% of the TBs (Intermediate TB, 2008), that is, 1.03% of the units that were analyzed include simplified information about verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication from international business. In this case, sociocultural aspects of business negotiation in sub-Saharan Africa are introduced in a written text. The students are required to specify the main sociocultural aspects that should be taken into consideration in a business negotiation in the Spanish culture such as collectivism (versus individualism), and directness (versus indirectness) together with specific gestures, etc. In the same way, the students need to look for similarities and differences regarding business negotiation between the African culture and their C1. Furthermore, none of the analyzed TBs, not even Advanced TBs, contain definitions, examples, and illustrations of key cultural concepts, for example, culture, acculturation, ethnocentrism, stereotype, etc.

5.2. Results from Category 2: Is the approach to (inter)cultural content organized and structured?

Category 2 is composed of 9 criteria that were measured following this scale: 1=no; 2=partially, and 3=yes (see Table 3 below). In case a criterion was rated as "partially", the number of TB units in which it appears was indicated.

Table 3. *Category 2*

Is the approach to (inter) cultural content organized and structured?	BEGINNING			INTERMEDIATE			ADVANCED		
	Beg. TB 2008	*Beg. TB 2013*	*Beg. TB 2018*	*Int. TB 2008*	*Int. TB 2014*	*Int. TB 2018*	*Adv. TB 2008*	*Adv. TB 2012*	*Adv. TB 2018*
(a) Is the (inter)cultural content explicitly identified in the table of contents?	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3
(b) Judging by the information provided in the table of contents, is there a reasonably stable structure in the treatment of cultural aspects?	3	3	3	3	3	3	N/A	N/A	3
(c) Are illustrations placed next to the cultural content and/or activities included?	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
(d) If so, do they tend to be pedagogically appropriate (i.e., they are directly related to the content)?	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
(e) Is the approach to (inter) cultural content based on a miscellaneous or rather unstructured coverage?	2 (1/15)	1	2 (3/10)	2 (1/12)	2 (1/12)	2 (1/10)	2 (2/9)	1	1
(f) Is a practical (e.g., pedagogical) distinction made between countries where Spanish is spoken as a first language (L1) and countries where it is used as a second (L2-SL)?	2 (1/15)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
(g) Does it mention the use of Spanish as a lingua franca?	2 (1/15)	1	1	1	1	1	2 (1/9)	1	1
(h) Are there examples of gradual/appropriate development of (inter)cultural content?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
(i) Are there *regular* sections that deal with cross-cultural and/or inter-cultural awareness?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

The results indicate that the (inter)cultural approach is organized and structured with respect to (a) the explicit identification of (inter)cultural content in the table of contents, (b) the presence of a reasonably stable structure of (inter)cultural material in the table of contents, (c) the use of illustrations related to the (inter)cultural content which are not only placed next to the (inter)cultural content and/or activities but they are also pedagogically appropriate, and (d) the information coverage of sociocultural content which is hardly miscellaneous.

However, the (inter)cultural approach in the analyzed TBs is not organized and structured since (a) a distinction between countries where Spanish is spoken as a first language (L1) and countries where Spanish is a second language (L2-SL) is almost non-existent; (b) very

few TBs indicate the prominent role of Spanish as a lingua franca, that is, the language used among speakers with different L1 especially in economic and political scenarios; (c) there is an absence of a gradual and appropriate development of (inter)cultural content, and (d) there are no *regular* sections on cross-cultural and/or intercultural awareness.

In 77.7% of the TBs (with the exception of Advanced TB, 2008 and Advanced, TB 2012) the (inter)cultural content to be taught appears in the table of contents apart from other language components (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and pragmatic functional features). All the TBs that include (inter)cultural aspects in the table of contents, that is, 77.7%, present a stable structure since every unit has an explicit section on (inter)cultural material. In the same way, illustrations next to the cultural content in units are pedagogically appropriate since they relate to the sociocultural content of the TB section.

In 66.6% of the TBs (Beginning TB, 2008; Beginning TB, 2018; Intermediate TB, 2008; Intermediate TB, 2014; Intermediate TB, 2018; Advanced TB, 2008) the approach to the (inter)cultural content is based on a miscellaneous coverage where whatever country, region, community, area or any aspect (objects, products, events, festivities, customs, etc.) belonging to the non-Spanish-speaking world may well be included as long as it is related to the main topic or subtopic being addressed. Nonetheless, those TBs contain a small number of units (9 out of 97 units, 9.27%) with examples of a mixed scope of sociocultural information. Some examples of this miscellaneous coverage in the units are as follows: (a) a text on weddings from different parts of the world (India, Ireland, South Africa, Greece, and Poland) (Beginning TB, 2018); (b) texts on two famous rock bands, that is, the Beatles and the Spice Girls (Intermediate TB, 2008), and (c) a description of famous people such as Eva Perón, Rigoberta Menchú, Che Guevara, King Juan Carlos I, Napoleon, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Mandela, etc. (Advanced TB, 2008).

Concerning the different countries that are included in the TBs, only 11.1% of them (Beginning TB, 2008) make a distinction between countries where Spanish is spoken as a first language (L1) and countries where it is used as a second language (L2-SL). In the Beginning TB, 2008 a text indicates that Spanish is one of the official languages in Spain and many other countries in Central and South America (L1) and it is also spoken in several USA states/areas, the Philippines and among the Sephardic Jews (L2-SL). The Advanced TB, 2008, although it does not make such distinction, asks the student to answer questions on his/her use of Spanish as an L2, second or foreign language, in the near future. It also demands from the student a reflection on how relevant it is to get used to the Spanish language spoken by non-native speakers. Regarding the use of Spanish as a lingua franca, only 22.2% of the TBs under scrutiny (Beginning TB, 2008; Advanced TB, 2008) echo its importance as an international language in economic and political contexts.

None of the TBs include a gradual and/or appropriate development of the (inter)cultural content throughout the TBs since they do not start by introducing aspects related to a specific setting (micro-culture) to then gradually move on to broader ones (macro- culture) or vice versa. Lastly, in spite of a dual focus in all the analyzed TBs, none of the TBs include regular sections to raise students' cross-cultural and/or intercultural awareness. In other words, comparisons based on sociocultural aspects (e.g., mealtimes, health system, compulsory education, etc.) that are different in the C1 and C2 (cross-cultural awareness) and on different aspects between the C1 and C2 regarding intercultural communication

(intercultural awareness) (e.g., distinct ways of greetings, gestures, small talks, etc.) are not *regularly* addressed in these TBs.

6. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the (inter)cultural approach in the 9 TBs under study has some promising features. First, all the TBs integrate both Big C and small c manifestations of culture. Over half of the TBs show a balance between the presence of Big C and small c content. Only 22.2% of the TBs evince an emphasis on small c aspects. This contrasts with the results from other studies on L2 TBs (cf. Baleghizadeh & Shayestesh, 2020; Larrea Espinar & Raigón Rodríguez, 2020; Liu, 2013; Rajabi & Ketabi, 2012; Zu & Kong, 2009) in which themes belonging to small c dominate them, following a tendency that started in the 1990s.

Second, a dual focus that promotes comparisons between the C1 and C2 is present in the TBs. It is no longer desirable or possible to foster only C2 competence (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) when learning an L2/C2. The inclusion of the C1 through cross-cultural activities, for example, in L2 TBs provides the learners with opportunities to learn more about their C1 and to acquire the vocabulary needed to discuss (cross-)cultural topics in the L2 (McKay, 2003).

Third, in most of the TBs the (inter)cultural content to be taught appears explicitly identified in the table of contents. In addition, those TBs with an explicit identification of the (inter)cultural material in the table of contents also reveal a very stable structure since they introduce (inter)cultural content in every unit. Fourth, the visual support that accompanies the sociocultural content and activities is not only placed next to them, but it is also pedagogically appropriate. Fifth, the approach to sociocultural content is not based on a miscellaneous coverage as TBs seldom contain units with (inter)cultural material from the non-Spanish speaking world. However, in the analyzed TBs the following features emerge as weaknesses.

Unstructured and unrealistic approach

The TB authors seem to have based their pedagogical decisions on the here and now regarding the (inter)cultural content. There is no gradual development of (inter)cultural content to be taught in the TBs. Instead, information coverage referring to specific social groups and/or settings (micro-culture) from the Spanish-speaking world does not lead to more broadly focused information in the form of larger groups and/or settings (macro-culture) or vice versa. Previous studies on English (cf. Paige et al., 2003; Yuen, 2011) and Spanish (cf. Pinnix, 1990) as L2 note that the C2 content in TBs is generally fragmented. Pinnix (1990) suggests that cultural elements are introduced and taught in such a way that increase in complexity: "Under this principle each concept should be introduced and defined, allowing for a more complete overview of the target culture and thus avoid boring and repetitious facts" (p. 130). Also, the position of Spanish at the international sphere is mostly ignored. Spanish is not only one of the L1 with a larger number of native speakers but also an increasingly prominent L2 and lingua franca.

Persistent external and visible cultural aspects

Superficial approaches to (inter)cultural teaching are present throughout the analyzed TBs. These approaches are characterized by external, visible manifestations of culture, ignoring

deep, invisible aspects of the C2, such as beliefs, ideas, feelings, and attitudes (perspectives), among others, which may differ from those in the C1, leading to cultural misunderstandings. Lack of depth in cultural material remains an unresolved issue. Byram (2014) and Paige et al. (2003) indicate that L2 TBs often stay at a superficial tourist information level introducing stereotypical images of the C2. According to Yuen (2011), this tourist perspective may appear more appealing to young people. Taking into account that the analyzed TBs in this study were aimed at young adults (17-19 years old) and adults (20 years old or over), the TB writers may have considered this approach based on external and visible aspects adequate for their targeted audience, at least for the young adults. The absence of these deep cultural content is concomitant with the non-existence of definitions, examples, and illustrations of basic cultural concepts that are deemed essential to avoid cultural misunderstandings.

Absence of explicit cross-cultural information based on the C1

TB writers promote cross-cultural comparisons mainly at the end of reading/listening comprehension activities and during oral/written production in which the student has to supply the information regarding his C1. This tendency leads us to believe the following: (a) TB writers are not familiar with the students' C1, (b) TB writers wrongly assume that young-adult and adult L2 learners are always prepared to draw appropriate comparisons, and (c) it is the publishers' decision to market their TBs internationally. All these issues make the implementation of a dual approach based on C2 and C1 comparisons pedagogically unsound. These results just confirmed those obtained in prior research on English as an L2 TBs, that is, the exclusion of explicit sociocultural information from the C1 (cf. Larrea Espinar & Raigón Rodríguez, 2020).

Deficient intercultural interaction/communication

Only 10.3% of the units offer opportunities to become familiar with verbal and non-verbal intercultural differences. The treatment given to verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication is also inadequate due to (a) the almost non-existence of information from other disciplines such as anthropology, social psychology, or international business that is pertinent for successful communication among people that do not share the same C1, especially at more advanced TBs (e.g., intermediate and advanced TBs) and (b) the fact that negotiation strategies are conspicuous by their absence. These strategies seem particularly relevant in intercultural dialogues among non-native speakers of Spanish and among native speakers and L2 learners of Spanish (L2-SL). According to Alptekin (2002), TBs should include both, that is, native and non-native discourse. The inclusion of both types of discourse would provide TBs with a more realistic view of the C2. This becomes especially relevant in the case of Spanish with its growing number of L2 learners and speakers of Spanish as a lingua franca. In addition, native and non-native discourse would help develop ICC (Byram, 2008, 2011) and weaken the myth of considering native speakers the only providers of Spanish culture and/or discourse.

7. CONCLUSION

The findings show that the (inter)cultural approach in the analyzed TBs do not promote the development of ICC. First, the approach is hardly principled and informed due to limitations regarding the quality and quantity of the sociocultural content in the TBs. These

limitations can be seen in the (a) absence of explicit cross-cultural information from the C1, (b) scarcity and deficiency of intercultural communication, and (c) presence of superficial and/or simplistic approaches, focusing on practices and products and, thus, ignoring internal, invisible perspectives in both, C1 and C2. Second, its unorganized and unstructured coverage of the sociocultural information is mainly reflected in the fragmented introduction of culture that appears without any kind of gradual development.

Additionally, the TB publication years and proficiency levels do not seem to exert a clear influence on the presence of sociocultural content in the TBs under research. Regarding the publication years, for example, it was expected that the most recently published TBs, those published in 2018, would have made echo of the growing internationality of the Spanish language and of its sociolinguistic uses as an L2-SL and lingua franca (criteria (f) and (g) from Category 2, respectively). However, the only two TBs that explicitly indicate the different sociolinguistic uses of Spanish in a globalized world were published in 2008, that is, the Beginning TB, 2008 and Advanced TB, 2008.

As for the proficiency levels, a major presence of criterion (d) from Category 1 at the intermediate and advanced levels and criterion (g) from Category 1 at the intermediate level is not supported by the existing literature on intercultural studies. Instead, TB writers may have wrongly assumed that more advanced L2 learners (for example, intermediate and advanced) are better equipped with vocabulary and strategies to deal with intercultural differences between their C1 and the C2.

Finally, the strong influence on publishing houses and TB authors exerted by the market is present in the analyzed TBs. This can be seen in the avoidance of any explicit sociocultural information from the students' C1 so that the TB can be internationally marketed.

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