

## **Cultural Content in Moroccan EFL Textbooks and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Development**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims at investigating the intercultural adequacy of the cultural content of a Moroccan EFL textbook in developing students' Cultural Intelligence (CQ). The activities of the textbook were analyzed using the model of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) to identify the adequacy of the intercultural activities in helping students develop their CQ, to detect, assimilate, reason, and act on cultural cues appropriately in situations characterized by cultural diversity. The scale of the same model, the CQ scale, was used to elicit the perspectives of 112 high school teachers regarding the intercultural adequacy of the cultural content in the textbook to compare the results of the two instruments. The results of the analysis of the textbook's content revealed that the Cognitive CQ is the most present factor of CQ in the textbook activities, but the activities present are not sufficient to develop the students' Cognitive CQ nor the other three CQ factors as illustrated by the CQ model. The elicited perspectives of teachers support the findings of the textbook's content analysis and suggestions for improvement are enlisted.*

*Keywords: Cultural Intelligence, Intercultural Adequacy; Ticket 2 English; Textbook; EFL*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We are living in a globalized world where engaging in culturally diversified situations is the rule rather than the exception. Nowadays, there are higher chances for youth around the world to engage with people from various cultural backgrounds, either in education, exchange programs, work, or fellowships, and Moroccan High school students are no exception. These students should be able to use foreign languages alongside other Cognitive, Metacognitive, Behavioral, and Motivational cultural tools. This matter has become an urgent necessity that the Moroccan educational system needs to act on.

With this concern in mind, the present study attempts to investigate the extent to which the content of the textbook *Ticket 2 English*, which is an important element in the teaching and learning process in Moroccan high schools, is adequate in terms of quantity and quality, to equip learners with the necessary tools to engage in cross-cultural endeavors. None can deny that in Moroccan EFL classrooms, importance is mainly given to grammatical rules, language accuracy, and the preparation of students for standardized tests, at the expense of other important components, such as Culture. The topic of teaching Culture in EFL classrooms, however, is not a new trend as it has been discussed in several works, but it only received much attention during the communicative era of the 1970s (Tran, 2010).

Multiple works globally since then have been published for better understanding and more emphasis on the importance of Culture in EFL classrooms. The teaching of culture in all subject areas has become a necessity and textbooks are one of the supportive tools for this aim. Textbooks guide the process of lesson planning, provide a great variety of activities and tasks and cover a wide range of topics. A great deal of textbooks is designed worldwide each year, and researchers are obliged to set criteria or checklists for the evaluation of their content and decide whether they are suitable for the learners. With the increasing interest in culture and the integration of intercultural approaches in language teaching, many researchers have also created specific checklists that are used to evaluate and analyze cultural contents in EFL textbooks (Yamanaka, 2006; Lee, 2009; Wu, 2010; Chen, 2011; Xiang, 2007; Cunningsworth, 1995; Byram et al., 1994; Risager, 1991; Huhn, 1978). Though, to ensure an inclusive perspective of cultural education is presented to young learners, which also reviews their cognitive, behavioral, and psychological needs, this study is using a recently produced checklist that accounts for cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral factors involved in cultural intelligence development.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Moroccan practitioners argue that baccalaureate students should develop their intercultural skills using the themes of different activities in the textbooks used in classroom teaching (Elboubkri, 2013). However, Moroccan second-year baccalaureate EFL textbooks lack a variety of content that could help learners understand how cultural perspectives and cultural products are interconnected. The focus of the textbooks' activities is found to focus mostly on 'What' and 'How' people do what they do in a certain culture and avoid addressing the 'Why' behind different acts, behaviors, and traditions, which makes the list,

according to researchers, ‘incomplete’ since it does not allow learners to have a complete understanding of different cultural practices (Ait-Bouزيد, 2017).

The activities of the same textbooks are also found to develop the students’ sense of belonging to global and local communities, though there is still room to improve learners’ awareness of further global issues such as democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution (Ait-Bouزيد, 2020). A further cultural component is also regarded to be lacking in the aforementioned textbooks, the religious content as a cultural perspective. The activities of the evaluated textbooks are found to not educate students about respect for diversity, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among different religions (Ait-Bouزيد, 2016 a). The same textbooks also fail to be inclusive of different races and social classes in their activities (Ait Bouزيد, 2016 b).

The available literature on Moroccan textbooks is focused on selected areas for cultural knowledge, and a holistic approach to understanding more than cultural knowledge in Moroccan EFL textbooks is needed. For that, the present study aims to investigate the intercultural adequacy of the aforementioned textbook content within a new theoretical framework, the Cultural Intelligence Model (CQ), which will allow for new insights in the area of EFL and textbook evaluation to be unraveled, and potentially addressed.

## **2.1. Theoretical Framework: The Cultural Intelligence Model: An Alternative**

Different models were previously used to evaluate textbooks for cultural content (Byram & Esarte-Sarries 1993, Kilickaya 2004, Reimann 2009). Each of these models developed checklists to evaluate cultural content in textbooks. To the best of our knowledge, no research has so far evaluated textbooks for the content that may help to develop CQ. Hence, this paper aims to look at the extent to which Moroccan EFL textbooks help in equipping the learners with enough tools to develop their Cultural Intelligence (CQ). Earley and Ang (2003) first introduce the model and define Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the capability to function effectively in contexts characterized by cultural diversity. Dyne & Al’s (2012, 296) extended the definition of the concept to capture the exact areas of development to be “an individual’s capability to detect, assimilate, reason, and act on cultural cues appropriately in situations characterized by cultural diversity”. The CQ model came in to explain variables that qualify people as culturally intelligent and capable of functioning effectively in intercultural contexts. It arose as a product and need in the literature of two separate disciplines, cultural studies, and psychology. Since the introduction of CQ, research on it has grown rapidly theoretically and has witnessed practical implications as well.

To measure CQ in individuals, groups, and firms, Ang et al., (2007) developed the Cultural Intelligence 20-items Scale (CQS). The CQS is a Likert scale that measures each of the four factors of CQ based on a set of questions. The components of the four CQ Model are:

- The Metacognitive CQ (MCOG) reflects the mental capabilities of individuals in acquiring and understanding cultural knowledge. It encompasses a set of skills such as strategic thinking, accurate interpretation of actions, and making sense of culturally diverse experiences, with constant checking of the accuracy of one’s expectations.

- The Cognitive CQ (COG) exemplifies individuals' knowledge of other cultures and cultural differences, including their economic and legal systems, cultural values, religious beliefs, marriage systems, arts and crafts, and rules for expressing nonverbal behavior.
- The Motivational (MOT) dimension of CQ is defined by Ang and Dyne (2008) as the individual's ability to direct attention and energy toward learning about and functioning in culturally diverse situations. It reviews individuals' willingness to interact with cultural others and their self-efficacy in cross-cultural contexts.
- The Behavioral CQ (BEH) involves adapting verbal and non-verbal behaviors when interacting cross-culturally; in other words, it requires flexible actions and tailoring of behaviors to fit any cultural situation. The sub-dimensions of the CQ Action are verbal actions, non-verbal actions, and speech acts (Earley & Ang, 2003; Dyne et al., 2017).

Using the CQ model, the present paper addresses the following questions:

- (1) To what extent is the cultural content in the textbook 'Ticket 2 English' interculturally adequate, in quantity and quality, to equip Moroccan learners to develop their CQ?
- (2) What are the perspectives of Moroccan teachers regarding the adequacy of the cultural content in the textbook 'Ticket 2 English' in developing the students' Cultural Intelligence?

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a concurrent convergent mixed-methods design, where both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools are used to collect the data. This type of design allows the two types of data to be compared to one another for a holistic understanding of the issue at stake (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

#### 3.2 Participants

The study involved 112 High School English Teachers working in the public sector. For the sake of reliability, the CQS was shared only with the teachers who were using *Ticket 2 English* in their classroom, have used it before, or are familiar with its cultural content. The choice of high school teachers as participants in this study is based on their expertise in dealing with the textbook and their ability to give an accurate evaluation of its cultural content.

#### 3.3 Instruments

To evaluate the adequacy of the cultural content of the textbook under study a checklist was developed to perform a content analysis of the textbook's activities. Thus, the 20 items of the CQ scale introduced by Ang and Dyne (2008) are adapted and used as checklist items to evaluate the content of the textbook *Ticket 2 English*. Content Analysis is used to answer the first research question of the study. The adapted checklist includes only 19 items, in which the second item of Cognitive CQ, which targets the linguistic content of

the textbook, is removed both from the content analysis checklist and teachers' scale, to not skew the data. To ensure reliability during the narrative data coding, several steps are followed; these steps are used on the adapted CQS checklist as recommended by multiple practitioners (Weber 1990, Krippendorff 1980, Syed & Nilson 2015). The unit of analysis in this study is 'Activity', which is defined in this research as a task or exercise targeting a given area of knowledge (Syed & Nilson, 2015). In this paper, two coders using the same list of items coded the textbook under investigation. To resolve discrepancies in two raters' results, coding is done by averaging their numbers. A special table was then designed for coding the data (Table 1). To ensure inter-rater reliability before averaging the scores of the two raters, their scores were uploaded to SPSS for testing inter-rater reliability and the results showed high inter-rater reliability with an interclass correlation coefficient of 0.88 at the alpha level of .05.

The second research instrument used is a differently adapted CQS. The original CQS statements were adapted to fit the purpose of eliciting the teachers' perspectives on the intercultural adequacy of cultural content in the textbook *Ticket 2 English* to help second-year baccalaureate students develop their CQ. The CQS contains 20 statements targeting each of the four factors of the CQ model. Respondents had to rate each statement with a number ranging from 1 to 7, representing 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Strongly Agree', respectively. The statements on the scale are worded as straightforward positive statements. For example, item 3 of Metacognitive CQ is put as follows: "The textbook "Ticket to English 2" teaches students to be conscious of the cultural knowledge they apply to cross-cultural interactions". The adapted CQS was created using Google Forms and administered online through social media, mainly Facebook, and e-mails. A hard copy of the CQS was also created and distributed to teachers who were not familiar with Google Forms.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the textbook's content analysis and teachers' perspectives were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. First, the activities targeting the CQ components in the textbook were calculated by two raters, tested for inter-rater reliability, averaged, and recorded as frequencies and percentages using the designed checklist. On the other hand, the data of the teachers' perspectives collected using the adapted CQS were treated descriptively on SPSS and then compared to the data yielded from the textbook using content analysis.

## **4. FINDINGS**

The results of content analysis (See Table 1) show that only 13.18% of the activities in the textbook could help students develop their CQ, a total of 60 activities out of 454 composing the 10 units in the textbook. The highest percentage of activities supporting CQ development in the textbook, with a percentage of 9.01% could help students develop their Cognitive CQ. The Metacognitive CQ is found to be the second CQ factor the activities of the textbook could help students develop their CQ levels, supported by 2.41% of the textbook's activities. While only 0.87% of the textbook activities each, could help students develop their Metacognitive CQ, and Motivational CQ.

Table: 1 Percentage and Averaged Number of Activities Targeting CQ Factors in the Textbook Ticket 2 English

Unit		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Percentage
MC CQ	1											3.5	0.7%
	2											1	0.2%
	3											6.5	1.4%
	4											0	0%
	Total											<b>11</b>	<b>2.41%</b>
COG CQ	1											17	3.73%
	3											13.5	2.9%
	4											0	0%
	5											8.5	1.86%
	6											1	0.2%
	Total											<b>41</b>	<b>9.01%</b>
MOT CQ	1											1	0.2%
	2											0	0%
	3											0.5	0.10%
	4											1.5	0.32%
	5											1	0.2%
	Total											<b>4</b>	<b>0.87%</b>
BEH CQ	1											0	0%
	2											0	0%
	3											1	0.2%
	4											2	0.43%
	5											3	0.65%
	Total											<b>4</b>	<b>0.87%</b>
Total Number		4/49	5.5/49	4/34	5/49	5.5/59	21/41	6/48	4/41	2/44	3/41	<b>60/455</b>	<b>13.18%</b>
Percentage		<b>8.16%</b>	<b>11.22%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>9.32%</b>	<b>51.21%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>9.75%</b>	<b>4.54%</b>	<b>7.31%</b>	<b>13.81%</b>	

With a general mean of 2.91 on a 1 to 7 Likert scale rating (See Table 2), teachers almost ‘somehow disagree’ that the activities of the textbook are adequate culturally to develop Moroccan students’ CQ. Teachers’ rates for each of the CQ factors’ presence in the activities fall on the disagree spectrum of the scale. Yet, as opposed to the findings of content analysis, teachers’ responses suggest a different order of activities present. They claim that activities that help develop Metacognitive CQ are the most present, followed by Cognitive CQ, then Behavioral, and finally Motivational CQ with the lowest rate.

Table: 2 Teachers’ Perspective of Activities in the Textbook

CQ Factor	Mean	SD
Metacognitive CQ	3.70	1.6
Cognitive CQ	3.12	0.08
Motivational CQ	1.80	0.08
Behavioral CQ	3.00	0.03
General CQ	2.91	0.45

## 5. DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the extent to which the cultural content of the textbook *Ticket 2 English* is adequate, in quantity and quality, in developing the CQ levels of Moroccan high school learners. The analysis of the textbook's cultural content and the elicitation of the teachers' perspectives on the adequacy of the cultural content revealed that the textbooks' cultural content is not enough, neither in quantity nor quality. Only 13.18% of the analyzed activities in the textbook target the four factors of the CQ, representing only 60 activities out of 455 activities in the textbook. Activities that could develop the Cognitive factor represent the highest number of activities in the textbook (9.01%), while activities that could support Motivational and Behavioral CQ development are the ones with the lowest percentage of activities, a percentage of .87% each, followed by activities supporting Metacognitive CQ development with a percentage of 2.4%.

On comparing the results of content analysis with the teachers' perspectives, the Metacognitive CQ's four components are found to not fully be absent from the textbook, since teachers gave them rates that fall between "Somehow Disagree" and "Neutral", meaning, they do believe that the activities in the textbook somehow help students develop their Metacognitive CQ. Concerning the results of the content analysis, there is a very little percentage (2.41%) of activities in the textbook that target Metacognitive CQ development. That being said, the textbook largely requires activities that will help students think strategically and accurately interpret actions and be able to sense culturally diverse experiences to be considered culturally intelligent. These findings confirm those of Ait Bouzid (2017) in that EFL textbooks in Morocco, namely *Ticket 2 English*, *Insights into English 2*, and *'Gateway to English 2*, provide activities that target the "What" and the "How", but never the "Why", as reflected in what Metacognitive CQ entails.

For the Cognitive CQ, the results of the first instrument reveal that although the Cognitive CQ is with the highest percentage of activities in the textbook, the knowledge these activities provide is not enough to develop learners' Cognitive CQ. Similarly, teachers' perspectives expose that the activities with cognitive cultural content in the textbook do not provide enough knowledge that will help enhance the students' Cognitive CQ. The cognitive factor of CQ looks into specific areas of cultural knowledge, specifically economic and legal knowledge of other cultures represented in 17 activities, values and religious beliefs represented in 13.5 activities, marriage systems of other cultures with no activity, arts and crafts represented in 8.5 activities and rules of non-verbal behavior represented in one activity. Though 13.5 activities in the textbook under investigation look into the religious content, previous studies do not believe they represent enough about the religions of the world (Ait Bouzid, 2016a). Although previous findings from Ait Bouzid's provided insights and allowed for comparisons, they cannot be fully compared to the results of this study since they represent the results of three manuals instead of just *Ticket 2 English*.

The Motivational CQ factor is one of the least present factors in the textbook activities, according to content analysis and teachers' perspectives results. In other words, teachers do believe that the activities in the textbook do not at all help students direct their attention and energy toward learning about and functioning in intercultural settings, nor test their willingness to interact with other cultures. The Behavioral CQ is reported as another least present factor (0.87%) besides the Motivational CQ of the CQ model in the activities of the

textbook under study, according to the results of content analysis. Similarly, teachers' perspectives also reveal that the Behavioral CQ is minorly present in the activities of the textbook. Therefore, and according to the two instruments, the activities in the textbook do not provide students with enough tools to help them adapt both their verbal and non-verbal behavior to cross-cultural interactions.

This research contributes to the field of EFL teaching in Morocco by exposing the gaps and needs curriculum designers and high school EFL instructors need to account for in their day-to-day classroom teaching. Relevant cultural content is and should be embedded in every activity taught to ensure that students are prepared for future intercultural encounters. The study also highlights the importance of accounting for all the four factors of CQ to equip learners with more than just the "What" of cultures, but go beyond and introduce the "Why" and "How" by addressing Metacognitive, Motivational, and Behavioural factors of CQ along with the Cognitive ones. Future research should address different strategies to adapt the cultural content of the textbooks used in teaching high school students in Morocco, to ensure enough exposure to such content and help them develop their cultural skills and adopt an intercultural lens.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to evaluate the adequacy of the cultural content of the textbook *Ticket 2 English* currently used as a manual of instruction for second-year baccalaureate students in Morocco. It aimed at reviewing the extent to which the activities of the textbook could help Moroccan students develop four areas of CQ. The study used the CQ model as a theoretical framework to examine the content of the textbook and adopted a concurrent convergent mixed-methods design that relied on quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, namely a checklist for content analysis and a Likert scale for teachers' perspectives. The findings support previous findings done on the same textbook and revealed that the cultural content of *Ticket 2 English* is not sufficient to develop students' CQ as illustrated by the CQ model. A suggestion for improving the content of the textbook to align with the CQ model, hence helping students develop their CQ levels, is to ensure that all the four factors are presented in the textbook, and not only cultural knowledge, or Cognitive CQ. Further content should help students be aware that there is more to communication than verbal behaviors, and those nonverbal ones are also as important. It is also important that the activities of the textbook address metacognitive processes suggested by the CQ model such as awareness and checking of the accuracy of cultural knowledge students possess as they engage in cross-cultural conversations. The activities of the same textbook should also promote emotional knowledge such as self-efficacy, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation involved in situations of diversity, as exemplified by the CQ model.

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