



CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN MOROCCAN EFL TEXTBOOKS: A QUANTITATIVE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

The study aims to investigate cultural representation in EFL textbooks, exploring its major role in fostering intercultural competence in the educational context. It examines the portrayal of Moroccan, American-British, and global cultures in second-year baccalaureate textbooks, assessing how these cultural elements promote intercultural competence among learners. Employing a quantitative document analysis, the paper measures both textual and visual representations across the thematic units of *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*. Textual content includes reading passages, informational texts, narratives, examples, dialogues, activities, and tasks. Visual content, on the other hand, encompasses images, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and maps. The analysis of textual content reveals that *Ticket 2 English* adopts a more balanced approach, incorporating Moroccan, American-British, and World cultures. The results related to visual content demonstrate that *Gateway to English 2* tends to include more pictorial and graphical representations of the three cultural categories. Despite the presence of different cultural references, the findings show that the selected textbooks fail to integrate cultural content effectively to develop students' intercultural competence. Based on these results, the article recommends the implementation of context-rich textual and visual cultural representations so as to enhance Moroccan students' communicative competencies in an increasingly globalized world.

Keywords: culture, language, Moroccan EFL textbooks, cultural representation, intercultural competence

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1. Introduction

Language teaching stands as a complex process that includes both the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and the development of cultural awareness. This cross-cultural consciousness enables learners to cultivate their intercultural competence, which refers to the ability to mediate interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. It emerges as a strategic competence that bridges the gap across cultural boundaries, allowing learners to handle misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication effectively. This intercultural negotiation requires an intercultural teacher, or rather speaker, who manages socio-cultural differences in the classroom and creatively teaches, manages, and assesses multidimensional variations. This intercultural mediator encourages the formation of learners as intercultural mediators, rendering them culturally aware individuals who demonstrate mastery of intercultural competence and apply it in their lived experiences. Teachers, hence, appear to be intercultural speakers who navigate cross-cultural interactions inside and outside educational settings. They are intercultural citizens who live in the liminal spaces of cultures, fostering not only language proficiency but also cultural sensitivity and awareness. This centrality of intercultural competence in the educational context establishes the foundation for the current study, which attempts to examine the instructional materials provided by the Ministry of Education in Morocco. The research aims to evaluate whether the Moroccan EFL textbooks designed for the second-year baccalaureate level adequately promote intercultural awareness among Moroccan students. It moves beyond investigations of teachers' practices or students' experiences, delving into the extent to which the selected EFL textbooks adopt an intercultural approach to language learning. The paper investigates the integration of cultural aspects within the following EFL textbooks: *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*. Moreover, it endeavors to assess the role of these cultural aspects in developing cross-cultural understanding among Moroccan students. It, thus, attempts to answer the following questions: What are the frequencies and distribution of Moroccan, American-British, and World cultural references in the textual and visual content of the three selected second-year baccalaureate EFL textbooks used in Morocco? What cultural category is most predominantly represented across the three EFL textbooks? Are there any significant imbalances in the representation of certain cultural categories within the chosen Moroccan EFL textbooks? To what extent do the selected EFL textbooks tend to prioritize American-British cultures over Moroccan and international cultures in their textual and visual content?

2. Literature Review

Language is not only a symbolic tool that facilitates communication but also a system of signs that carries multiple significations. It is a cultural practice, standing as a constitutive element of the collective experience of human beings. This socially configured framework has a twofold role, functioning as both “*an expression of personal meaning*” and “*a reflection*

of the social order" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 10). In this sense, language emerges as a complex signifying scheme that conveys both individual as well as collective meanings. It is a symbolic structure that operates through semantic patterns interpreted in the light of social norms, framing the actual production of cultural meanings. Language and culture, hence, *"are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture"* (Brown, 2000, p. 171). This interdependence generates an ambivalent network of meanings that underlies conceptual metaphors, abstract thoughts, and concrete practices within human experiences.

Culture emerges as a symbolic framework that operates through social signs. It is a system that attributes meaning to human practices, functioning as a framework for identity. It, said otherwise, *"serves the group inclusion function, satisfying our need for membership affiliation and belonging"* (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.13). It creates a mutual arena where people experience comfort, safety, and acceptance. Culture, thus, regulates interactions between a particular group of people and another. This relationship, which is characterized by cultural differences, establishes the foundation for the emergence of intercultural communication. The latter is *"the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two or more different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation"* (Ting-Toomey, 1999, pp. 16-17). It is a constant encounter that occurs between different people, cultures, societies, or ethnicities. This unavoidable interaction is meant to negotiate the dissimilarities between the two opposite poles in order to create common ground or a shared meaning.

Intercultural understanding requires the implementation of intercultural competence. The latter consists of many strategic sub-skills that facilitate the effective occurrence of intercultural encounters. These proficiencies include knowledge, mindfulness, and communication skills. International communicators are supposed to possess a sound knowledge of their culture as well as other cultures. They are supposed to understand the socio-cultural codes that form the identities of other people to better communicate with them. They, as Ting-Toomey (1999) emphasizes, *"need to develop a greater sensitivity concerning the values, identities, behaviors and situations that constitute intercultural communication"* (p. 267). These cultural aspects act as the starting point for understanding the behavior of ourselves and others. Cultural communication, therefore, occurs when communicators are familiar with each other, showing a minimal understanding of each other's affinities and characteristics.

Intercultural competence emerges as a process that underpins complex systems of identification, *"a process, even if language and iconography are poor media for its communication"* (Spizberg and Changnon, 2009, p.5). It continuously develops through cultural interaction and exchange, constituting a fundamental dimension of intercultural education. It is *"one of the long-term goals of intercultural education, if not its primary objective"* (Cushner and Mahon, 2009, p. 312). This competence, nevertheless, is a multifaceted concept that includes a range of skills and intelligences. These capacities render learners sensitive towards themselves, others, and their surrounding world. Lonner and Hayes (2004) argue that intercultural competence is composed of emotional, contextual, and interpersonal intelligences. These dimensions are meant to create *"a person who is*

emotionally caring yet controlled, sensitive to interpersonal dynamics, and genuinely perceptive when in complex and highly interactive situations” (p. 92).

This multidimensional competence can only be achieved through the fulfilment of a set of criteria. These conditions, which ensure the successful implementation of interculturality inside the classroom, include *“positive feelings about intercultural relationships, reciprocity of those feelings from others in the culture, task achievement, and stress minimization”* (Cushner and Mahon, 2009, p. 312). Both teachers and students should be predisposed to value cultural difference, having a deeper understanding and respect for other cultures. This intercultural understanding requires substantial skills, encompassing *“adaptation skills such as positive attitude and flexibility; cross-cultural skills such as realism, cultural involvement, and political astuteness; and partnership skills, including openness, perseverance, and problem solving”* (Cushner and Mahon, 2009, p. 313). Such a strategic competence contributes to transforming the classroom into a cross-cultural space where different cultures, ethnicities, and social groups interact effectively.

Language teaching shifts from focusing on language as a means of communication to language as a carrier of culture. Byram devises a new model for teaching foreign languages that puts *“emphasis on the pedagogical purposes of foreign language teaching in obligatory education”* (Byram, 2009, p. 323). The model goes beyond the four skills that are considered the main components of language towards intercultural competence as an integral skill in the language system. Culture, thus, emerges as *“the ‘fifth savoir’ referred to in English as critical cultural awareness and in French as savoir s’engager”* (Byram, 2009, p. 323). This cultural awareness is meant to help students better understand their own culture as well as other cultures, exploring the characteristics of their identities and those of others. Said otherwise, it encourages them to *“reflect critically on the values, beliefs, and behaviors of their own society”* (Byram, 2009, p. 323). Intercultural competence, in brief, manifests as the ability to evaluate one’s own culture as well as other cultures. It is the capacity to explore and assess the different aspects of one’s identity in relation to others. It is *“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, 2008, p. 65).

The relationship between culture and language encourages teachers to reconsider their teaching approaches. These educational practitioners should include cultural instances in their pedagogical practices. They are meant to *“reassess their definitions of both language and culture, and to declare culture an indissociable component of language teaching”* (Kramsch, 1993, p. 349). Language teaching manifests as a process of teaching both linguistic forms and cultural aspects. This transition from communication competence to cultural competence obliges teachers to reconsider their attitudes towards their own cultural identity as well as other cultures, thus revising the content they deliver to their learners and the methods they adopt to teach linguistic forms. These pedagogical practices need to move beyond linguistic boundaries, foregrounding the cultural dimension of difference, be it related to race, class, or gender. This intersection of language and culture ultimately produces effective language learners who are not only communicatively competent but also culturally aware.

3. Methodology

The research adopts a quantitative approach to statistically investigate the representation of cultural aspects in EFL textbooks designed for second-year baccalaureate students. It focuses on the numerical occurrences of different cultural references within the selected books. These cultural aspects are categorized in terms of a coding scheme that comprises three categories: Moroccan culture, American-British cultures, and World culture. This classification follows Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) framework of cultural patterns in English language textbooks, which distinguishes between the source culture, target culture, and international cultures.

The quantitative approach facilitates the statistical analysis of significant variations in cultural representation across the three textbooks. It is particularly suitable for testing the hypotheses as it highlights objective numerical data to evaluate the balance or imbalance of cultural representation in the selected texts. Concerning the research variables, the independent variable of the study is the EFL textbooks used in Morocco for the second-year baccalaureate level. As for the dependent variable, it is the frequency of cultural representation in the following categories: Moroccan culture, American-British cultures, and World culture. Regarding the sampling technique, the study employs purposive sampling that deliberately targets the second-year baccalaureate level, which is critical in preparing students for intercultural communication and interaction.

The paper approaches the three textbooks as documents to explore cultural representation of the source, American-British, and World cultures. Therefore, it resorts to document analysis as a research instrument that involves systematic examination of the materials. This documentation-based examination allows the researcher to obtain (1) numerical data on the frequency of cultural aspects represented in the three textbooks, be they textual or visual, (2) statistical evidence about the dominant culture within each of the EFL textbooks under study, and (3) objective results highlighting which textbook incorporates a more inclusive approach to the three cultural categories.

To study cultural representation in the three Moroccan EFL textbooks, the research opts for document analysis as the main research instrument. This method allows the categorization of cultural content into two major kinds: textual content and visual content. The inclusion of visuals is significant because, according to Giaschi (2000), textbooks tend to depend on visual representation alongside, or rather more than, text-based information in conveying cultural messages. Textual content refers to all written texts, including reading passages, informational texts, narratives, sentences, written examples, dialogues, conversations, activities, and tasks. Visual content, on the other hand, encompasses pictorial and graphical representations such as pictures, photographs, graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and maps.

4. Data Presentation

4.1 Textbook 1: *Insights into English*

The table below presents a detailed overview of the cultural content found in *Insights into English*. It outlines both the frequency and percentage of cultural elements across all ten units of the textbook.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Textual Cultural Content in *Insights into English*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. Cultural Issues and Values	6	8.57	4	50	6	19.35
2. Gifts of Youth	4	5.71	2	25	6	19.35
3. Advances in Science and Technology	2	2.86	0	0	0	0.00
4. Women and Power	13	18.57	0	0	3	9.68
5. Brain Drain	1	1.43	2	25	3	9.68
6. Humour	5	7.14	0	0	1	3.23
7. Citizenship	22	31.43	0	0	3	9.68
8. International Organizations	9	12.86	0	0	8	25.81
9. Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education	4	5.71	0	0	1	3.23
10. Sustainable Development	4	5.71	0	0	0	0.00
Total	70	100	8	100	31	100

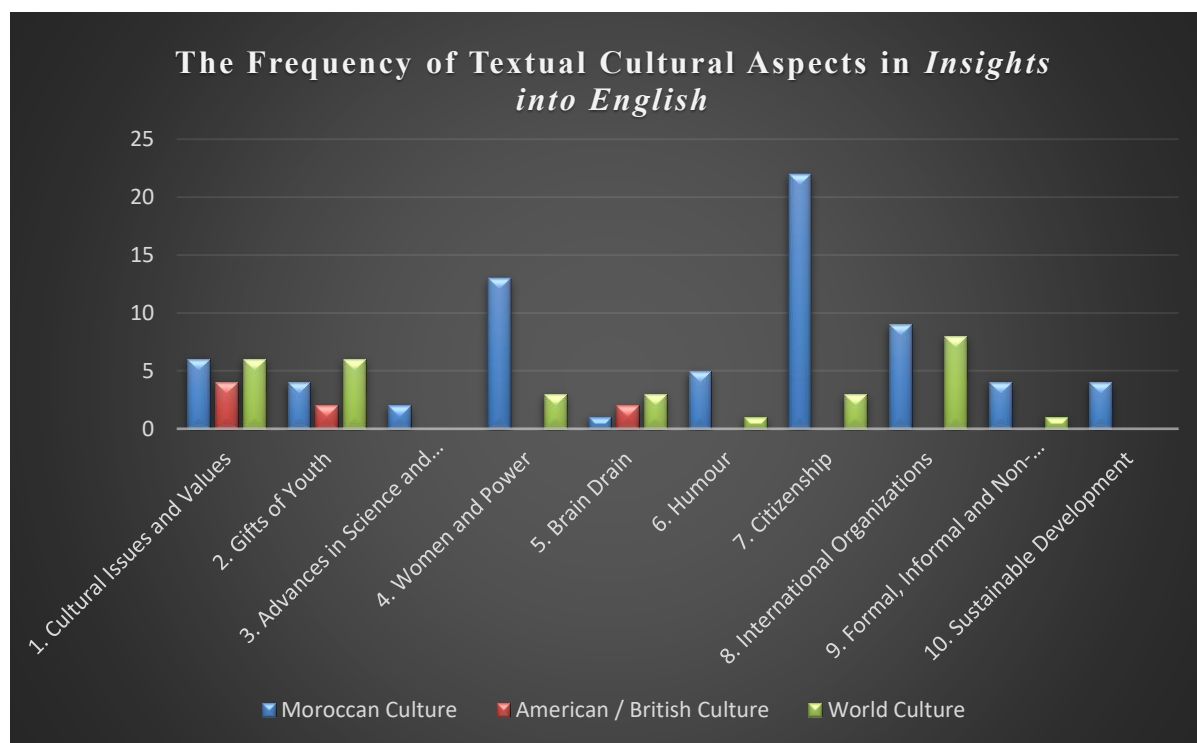


Figure 1: Textual Cultural Representation in *Insights into English*

As shown in the table and figure above, Moroccan culture is the most prominently represented across the ten units of the EFL textbook *Insights into English*; it accounts for 63.64% of the total cultural references. More precisely, Moroccan culture dominates in the units *Citizenship* (31.43%) and *Women and Power* (18.57%). By contrast, American and British cultures are the least represented, with only eight cultural instances throughout

the whole textbook. Their highest frequency occurs in the unit *Cultural Issues and Values*. World culture, on the other hand, is represented through 31 cultural references in the textbook. Its highest percentage appears in the unit *International Organizations* (25.81%). The units *Advances in Science and Technology* and *Sustainable Development* include no references to World culture.

4.2 Textbook 2: *Gateway to English 2*

The table below displays a different distribution of cultural content in the textbook *Gateway to English 2*. Although the textbook covers the same thematic units, their sequence differs from that of other textbooks.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Textual Cultural Content in *Gateway to English 2*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	17.65
2. Cultural Issues and Values	11	47.83	1	14.29	1	5.88
3. Gifts of Youth	2	8.70	0	0.00	1	5.88
4. Women and Power	4	17.39	0	0.00	4	23.53
5. Advances in Science and Technology	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.88
6. Humour	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
7. Citizenship	0	0.00	1	14.29	0	0.00
8. Brain Drain	4	17.39	0	0.00	0	0.00
9. Sustainable Development	0	0.00	4	57.14	0	0.00
10. International Organizations	2	8.70	1	14.29	7	41.18
Total	23	100	7	100	17	100

The table and figure show that Moroccan culture dominates in the *Cultural Issues and Values* unit. It accounts for approximately 47.83% of the Moroccan cultural content across the ten units. However, Moroccan culture is absent from the units that cover education, science and technology, humour, citizenship, and sustainable development. In contrast, American and British cultures are underrepresented, as they appear only seven times throughout the textbook. World culture is represented more frequently, with 17 occurrences. It is mainly concentrated in the *International Organizations* and *Women and Power* units. It constitutes about 41% and 24% of the cultural content, respectively. Still, its presence remains significantly limited in the other units.

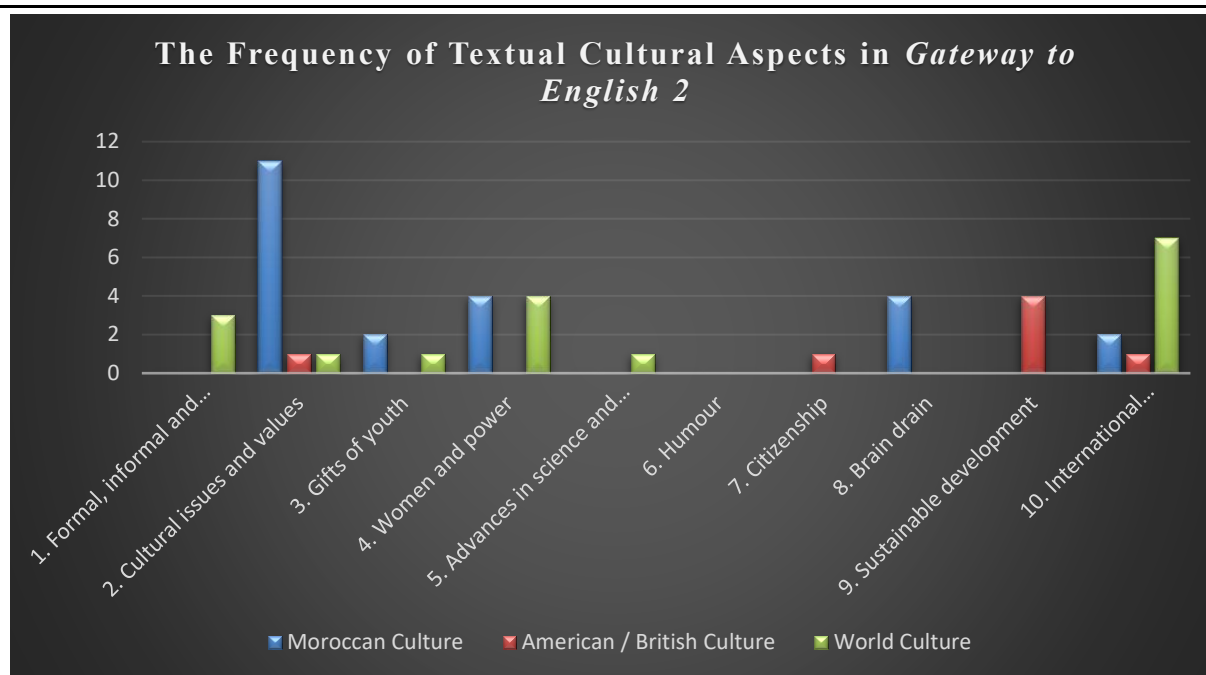


Figure 2: Textual Cultural Representation in *Gateway to English 2*

4.3 Textbook 3: *Ticket 2 English*

The table and figure below display the number of cultural aspects (Moroccan, American and British, and World cultures) in all ten units included in *Ticket 2 English*.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Textual Cultural Content in *Ticket 2 English*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. The Gifts of Youth	6	12.50	5	8.62	3	4.17
2. Humour	1	2.08	6	10.34	0	0.00
3. Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education	3	6.25	2	3.45	0	0.00
4. Sustainable Development	6	12.50	1	1.72	2	2.78
5. Women and Power	17	35.42	5	8.62	10	13.89
6. Cultural Values	11	22.92	4	6.90	23	31.94
7. Citizenship	1	2.08	17	29.31	0	0.00
8. International Organisations	1	2.08	2	3.45	22	30.56
9. Advances in Science and Technology	1	2.08	3	5.17	0	0.00
10. Brain Drain	1	2.08	13	22.41	12	16.67
Total	48	100	58	100	72	100

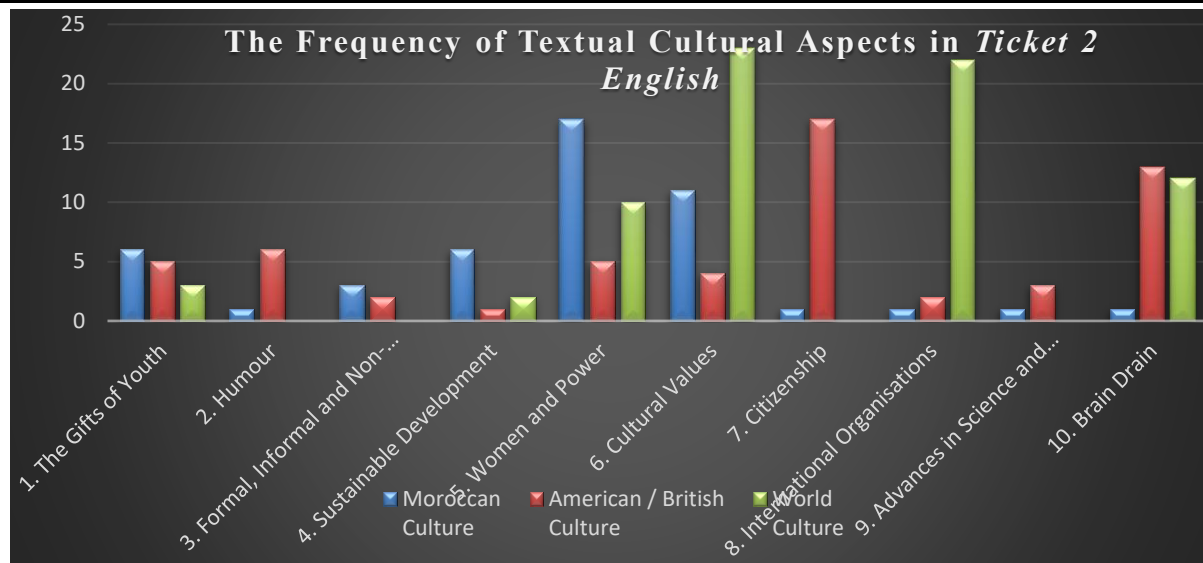


Figure 3: Textual Cultural Representation in *Ticket 2 English*

The table and the figure reveal that Moroccan culture has its highest representation in *Women and Power*, accounting for 35.42% of the cultural content in the unit. While American and British cultures are prominent in unit 7: *Citizenship* (29.31%), World culture is strongly represented in unit 6: *Cultural Values* (31.94%) and unit 8: *International Organizations* (30.56%). By comparison, units such as *Humor*, *Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education*, and *Sustainable Development* include little or no representation of World culture. Regarding the total frequencies across all units, World culture emerges as the most prevalent cultural category, with 72 occurrences throughout the textbook. American and British cultures rank second, with 58 references, whereas Moroccan culture is the least represented compared to the other categories, appearing only 48 instances in the textbook.

4.4 Presentation and Analysis of Data related to Visual Content

4.4.1 Textbook 1: *Insights into English*

The table below highlights cultural aspects presented in the form of visuals in the textbook *Insights into English*. The table outlines both the frequency and percentage of cultural elements across all ten units of the textbook.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Visual Cultural Content in *Insights into English*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. Cultural Issues and Values	5	17.86	0	0.00	1	4
2. Gifts of Youth	1	3.57	4	57.14	3	12
3. Advances in Science and Technology	0	0.00	3	42.86	4	16
4. Women and Power	8	28.57	0	0.00	1	4
5. Brain Drain	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4
6. Humour	3	10.71	0	0.00	1	4
7. Citizenship	2	7.14	0	0.00	0	0
8. International Organizations	2	7.14	0	0.00	12	48
9. Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education	5	17.86	0	0.00	0	0

10. Sustainable Development	2	7.14	0	0.00	2	8
Total	28	100	7	100	25	100

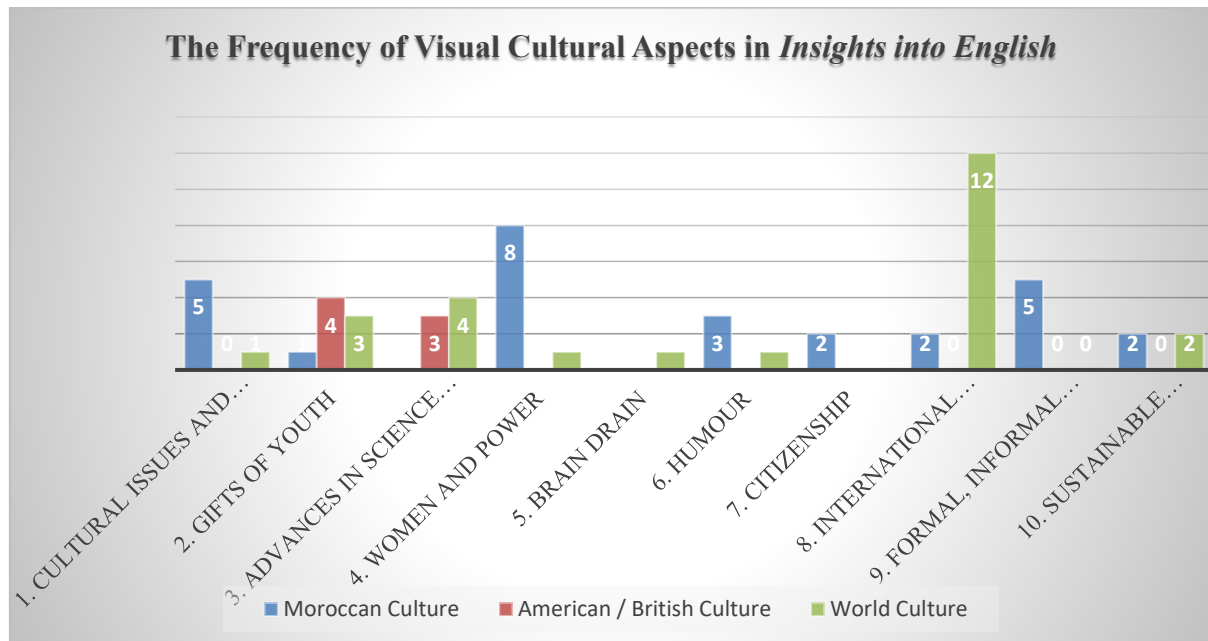


Figure 4: Visual Cultural Representation in *Insights into English*

The table and figure show that Moroccan culture is significantly represented in the *Insights into English* textbook through visual content. It is predominantly featured in the unit *Women and Power*, accounting for 28.57% of all Moroccan cultural visuals. In contrast, American and British cultures are underrepresented in the textbook, with only seven visuals distributed across the units *Gifts of Youth* and *Advances in Science and Technology*. Regarding World culture, the unit *International Organizations* contains the largest proportion of cultural visuals, representing 48% of the textbook's global culture visuals. Other units like *Brain Drain* and *Citizenship* display minimal representation of cultural visuals, indicating an unequal distribution of cultural content across the textbook.

4.4.2 Textbook 2: *Gateway to English 2*

The table and figure below display the number of cultural aspects (Moroccan, American and British, and World cultures) in all ten units of the textbook *Gateway to English 2*.

Table 5: Frequency and Percentage of Visual Cultural Content in *Gateway to English 2*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Education	1	5	2	14	8	23
2. Cultural Issues and Values	4	20	1	7	8	23
3. Gifts of Youth	2	10	2	14	3	9
4. Women and Power	4	20	3	21	4	11
5. Advances in Science and Technology	1	5	0	0	2	6
6. Humour	1	5	5	36	1	3
7. Citizenship	1	5	0	0	0	0
8. Brain Drain	2	10	0	0	0	0
9. Sustainable Development	0	0	1	7	2	6

10. International Organizations	4	20	0	0	7	20
Total	20	100	14	100	35	100

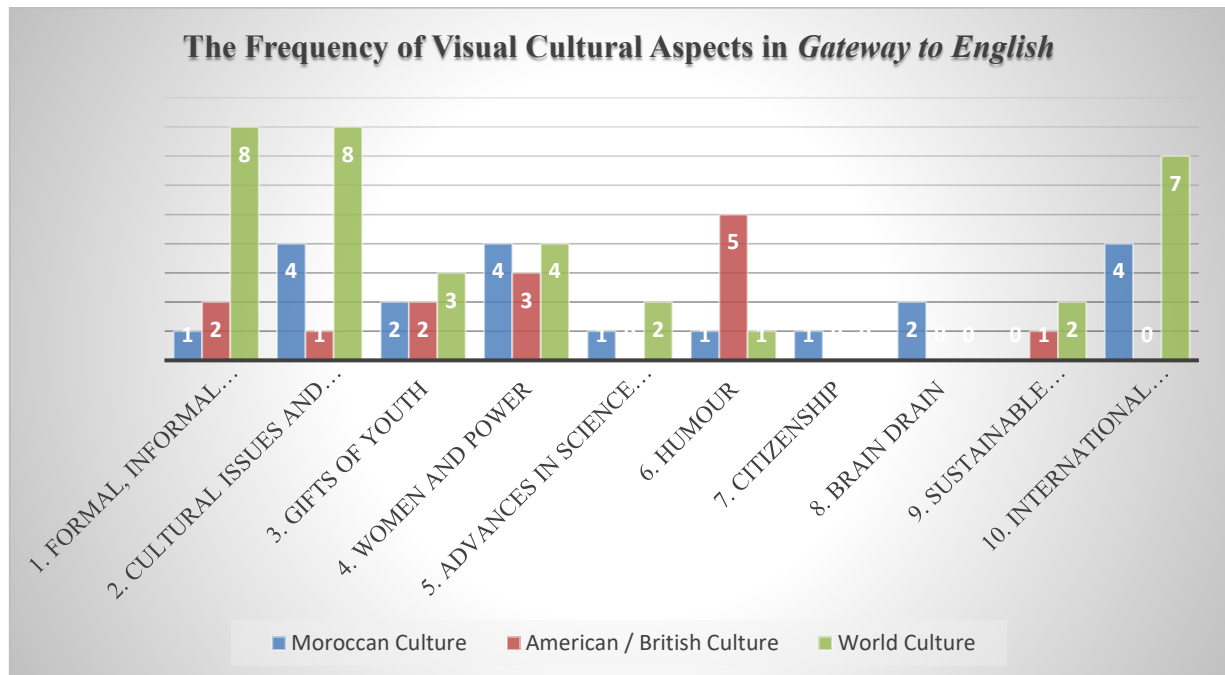


Figure 5: Visual Cultural Representation in *Gateway to English 2*

The table and figure show that World culture is more prominently represented in *Gateway to English 2* than Moroccan and American-British cultures. Concerning Moroccan culture, its visual references are equally distributed across the units *Cultural Issues and Values* and *Women and Power*, accounting for 20% of the total Moroccan cultural visuals. American and British cultures are dominant in the unit *Humour*, with five instances. In contrast, World culture has its highest representation in the units *Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education* and *Cultural Issues and Values*, each making up 23%. These units include 16 of 35 global cultural visuals presented in the textbook.

4.4.3 Textbook 3: *Ticket 2 English*

The following table uncovers the visual references included in the textbook *Ticket 2 English*, indicating how cultural visuals are distributed across different units.

Table 6: Frequency and Percentage of Visual Cultural Content in *Ticket 2 English*

Unit / Culture	Moroccan Culture	%	American / British Culture	%	World Culture	%
1. The Gifts of Youth	6	25	2	12.50	5	25.00
2. Humour	2	8.33	4	25.00	0	0.00
3. Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education	5	20.83	3	18.75	0	0.00
4. Sustainable Development	2	8.33	0	0.00	2	10.00
5. Women and Power	6	25.00	4	25.00	4	20.00
6. Cultural Values	1	4.17	0	0.00	1	5.00
7. Citizenship	0	0.00	1	6.25	0	0.00
8. International Organizations	0	0.00	2	12.50	7	35.00
9. Advances in Science and Technology	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00

10. Brain Drain	2	8.33	0	0.00	1	5.00
Total	24	100	16	100	20	100

The data show different variations in the visual representation of cultural categories across the textbook *Gateway to English 2*. Moroccan culture is the most represented category in terms of visual content. American and British cultures, in contrast, receive less visual representation in this textbook.

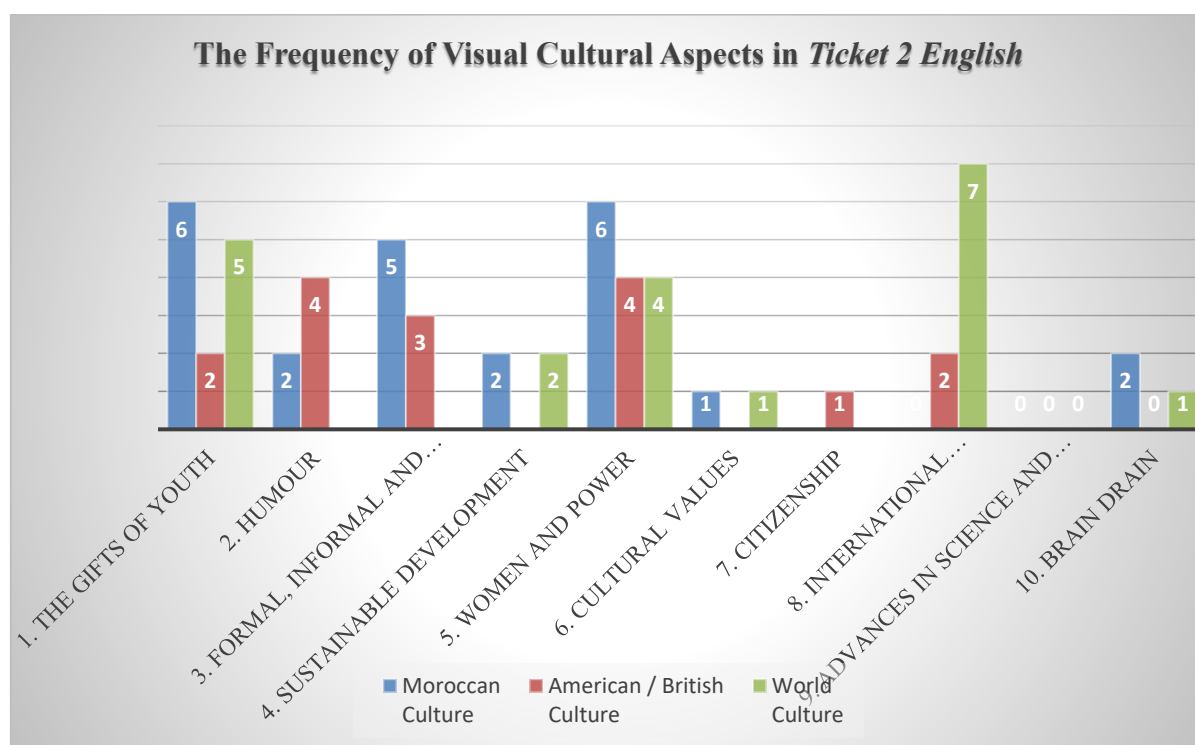


Figure 6: Visual Cultural Representation in *Ticket 2 English*

5. Analysis

5.1 Textual Content

The table below presents a quantitative analysis of the cultural representation in the textual content of the selected EFL textbooks: *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*. The textual content is classified into three major cultural groups: Moroccan culture, British/American culture, and World culture. The examination of the table offers insights into the extent to which each textbook emphasizes local Moroccan cultural content, exposes learners to the cultural backgrounds of major Anglophone nations, especially Britain and the United States, and provides representations of diverse global cultures. This quantitative classification allows for a comparative analysis of cultural diversity, balance, and inclusivity reflected in the textual materials of these EFL textbooks.

Table 7: Percentage of Textual Cultural Content
in *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*

Culture \ Textbook	Insights into English	%	Gateway to English 2	%	Ticket 2 English	%
Moroccan Culture	70	64.22	23	48.94	48	26.97
British/American Culture	8	7.34	7	14.89	58	32.58
World Culture	31	28.44	17	36.17	72	40.45
Total	109	100	47	100	178	100

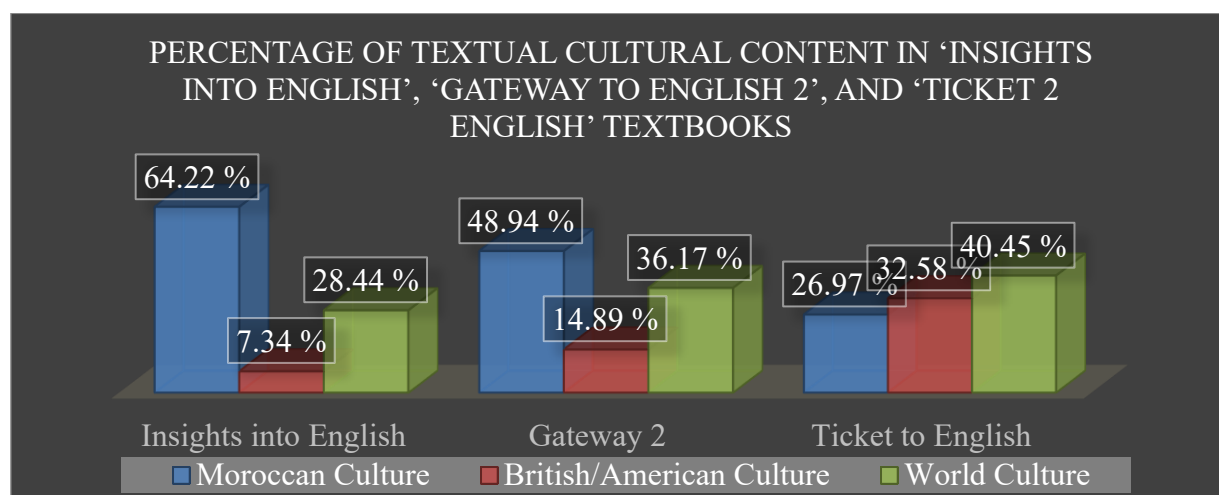


Figure 7: Textual Cultural Content in *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*

The table and the figure display a comparison of how the three EFL textbooks used in Morocco, *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English*, represent different textual cultural categories. The findings demonstrate a significant predominance of Moroccan cultural content in the EFL textbook *Insights into English*, indicating a strong emphasis on learners' local identity. In contrast, *Ticket 2 English* shows a greater presence of British culture and a substantial representation of World culture, with 72 instances. Nevertheless, *Gateway to English 2* displays a limited representation of all three cultural categories. Moroccan culture has 23 references, American and British culture appear only seven times, and World culture is represented in 17 instances throughout the textbook.

5.2 Visual Content

The table below presents the data on cultural representation across the three sampled EFL textbooks. This analysis mainly focuses on the visual content within these textbooks, categorizing it into three cultural categories: Moroccan culture, American-British culture, and World culture. The table displays the frequency of visual elements referring to each of these cultural categories.

Table 8: Frequency of Visual Cultural Content in
Insights into English, Gateway to English 2, and Ticket 2 English

Culture/Textbook	Insights into English	%	Gateway to English 2	%	Ticket 2 English	%
Moroccan Culture	28	46.67	20	28.99	24	40
British/American Culture	7	11.67	14	20.29	16	26.67
World Culture	25	41.66	35	50.72	20	33.33
Total	60	100	69	100	60	100

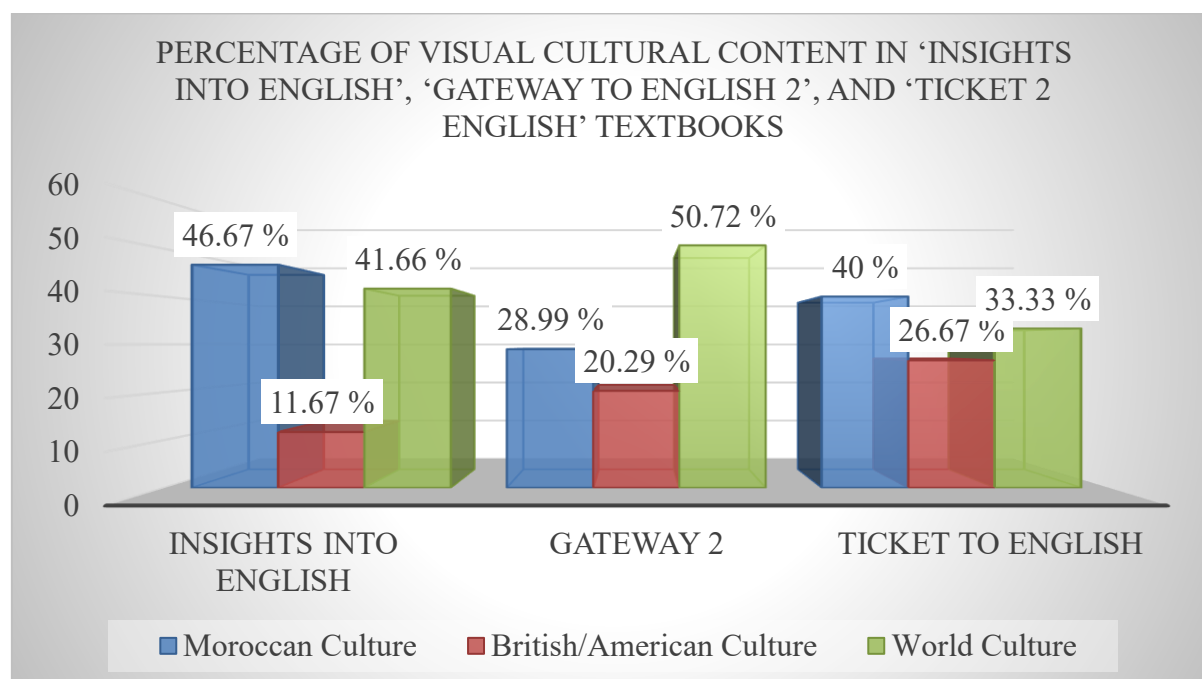


Figure 8: Visual Cultural Content in *Insights into English, Gateway to English 2, and Ticket 2 English*

Concerning the representation of visuals that target Moroccan culture, *Insights into English* textbook includes the highest number of instances, followed by *Ticket 2 English* and *Gateway to English 2*. In contrast, World culture, the EFL textbook *Gateway to English 2* mainly focuses on World Culture, with 35 visual representations. It also contains 20 instances of Moroccan culture and 14 references to American and British. Similarly, the other two EFL textbooks, *Insights into English* and *Ticket 2 English*, show a notable representation of World culture, with 25 and 20 instances, respectively.

To sum up, *Insights into English* puts greater emphasis on Moroccan culture (28) and World culture (25) than on American and British cultures (7). These results indicate that the textbook tends to place English in a local context while fostering understanding of global cultures. As for the textbook *Gateway to English 2*, it prioritizes World culture over both the source culture and American-British cultures. This textbook seems to be more oriented towards multicultural and international perspectives. Meanwhile, *Ticket 2 English* adopts a more balanced distribution across the three cultural representations, offering learners a relatively even mixture of local, English-speaking, and global cultural content.

6. Hypotheses Testing

6.1 Hypothesis (H0)

The hypothesis (H0) suggests that there is no difference in the number of occurrences of Moroccan, American, British, and World cultures in the three EFL textbooks. The results reveal significant variations in cultural representations across the EFL textbooks under study. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected.

6.2 Hypothesis (H1)1

The first hypothesis (H1) assumes a significant imbalance in the representation of Moroccan, American, British, and World cultures in the selected EFL textbooks. The study demonstrates that both textual and visual content differ remarkably from one textbook to another. Accordingly, the hypothesis is confirmed.

6.3 Hypothesis (H1)2

The second hypothesis (H1) indicates that the chosen EFL textbooks tend to place greater emphasis on American and British cultures than on local and global cultures. However, the results demonstrate that cultural references to American and British cultures have a limited presence in the EFL textbooks in terms of both textual and visual content. An exception is the textbook *Ticket 2 English*, which shows a low representation of American and British culture in textual content. Still, this category is not the least represented compared to the other two cultural categories. Thus, the findings do not support the second hypothesis, which is rejected.

7. Discussion

The study mainly seeks to investigate the extent to which Moroccan EFL textbooks designed for the second-year baccalaureate level integrate cultural content in order to enhance intercultural competence and awareness. The selected textbooks are analyzed in the light of McKay's (2000) perspective, which suggests that effective English language teaching materials should cover cultural knowledge from multiple countries and societies. This view underscores the role of English as an international language, undermining the importance of native English-speaking societies' cultures. In addition, the textbooks are examined in consideration of the *English Guidelines for Secondary Schools* in Morocco. These guidelines, which adopt Standards-Based Instruction, emphasize the crucial role of cultural knowledge in establishing effective language teaching and learning. The guidelines highlight the five Cs: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparison, and Communities. They outline the significance of developing students' intercultural competence, which enables them to gain a deeper understanding of their own cultural identity as well as other cultural backgrounds. By objectively exploring the selected textbooks, the study unveils the extent to which they align with the objectives of the English guidelines.

7.1 Distribution of cultural content across the three selected EFL textbooks

The EFL textbooks *Insights into English*, *Gateway to English 2*, and *Ticket 2 English* vary significantly in the representation of cultural patterns. With respect to textual content, the frequency of cultural aspects substantially differs across the textbooks. While *Ticket 2 English* includes 178 cultural references, *Insights into English* and *Gateway to English 2* incorporate 109 and 47 cultural references, respectively. These textbooks have limited references to American and British cultures. *Ticket 2 English* is the only EFL textbook that tends to adopt a more balanced approach. It encompasses Moroccan, American-British, and World cultural instances, foregrounding global perspectives. This conclusion is consistent with Astaifi's and El Allame's (2024) quantitative study. The latter suggests that *Ticket 2 English* integrates a wide range of references to multiple cultures. As for visual content, the frequency of the presented cultural aspects in the three EFL textbooks is almost identical. Concerning the textbooks *Insights into English* and *Ticket 2 English*, they display 60 cultural aspects in the form of pictorial references. As for the textbook *Gateway to English 2*, it incorporates 69 cultural aspects in total, with reference to World culture, which represents almost half of all references. When comparing the number of visual cultural references, the study may conclude by mentioning that all three EFL textbooks incorporate a similar number of visuals. However, *Ticket 2 English* underscores a higher degree of exposure to World culture. Consequently, it aligns with McKay's (2000) perspective.

7.2 The imbalance of cultural categories within the Moroccan EFL textbooks

Regarding textual content, the EFL textbooks *Insights into English* and *Gateway to English 2* tend to put greater emphasis on Moroccan culture than on American-British or World cultures. These results differ from Ababneh's (2012) study of *Gateway to English 2*, arguing that the textbook privileges the target culture over local and international cultures. As for *Ticket 2 English*, it seems to include different global cultures, aiming at presenting diverse global perspectives. Concerning visual content, *Insights into English* and *Ticket 2 English* show a predominance of Moroccan culture. This focus on the source culture has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, familiar cultural contexts enhance students' engagement, rendering the learning process easier and more relevant. The overemphasis on the local culture, on the other hand, would not prepare learners to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in real-world English communication contexts, especially in an ever-changing globalized world. By contrast, *Gateway to English 2* tends to highlight other global cultures. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), EFL textbooks, produced at a national level, often focus on the source culture for two main reasons. First, they aim to equip students with the ability to express their cultural identity to visitors and speakers from other cultures; second, they seek to foster a deep understanding and appreciation of learners' own cultural heritage. This rationale aligns with the pedagogical guidelines, which urge the need for developing learners' intercultural competence. In conclusion, *Insights into English* and *Gateway to English 2* prioritize Moroccan culture in their textual content. This tendency contradicts McKay's (2000) view of English as an international language; nevertheless, it is consistent with one

of the objectives of the Moroccan pedagogical guidelines. Regarding visual content, *Insights into English* and *Ticket 2 English* foreground Moroccan culture, while *Gateway to English 2* presents a broader representation of World culture.

8. Recommendations

Based on these results, the paper makes several recommendations. It first encourages textbook designers to update textbooks regularly in order to keep pace with the demands of an increasingly globalized world. Such revisions should include both textual and visual content in order to foster relevance, authenticity, and engagement. Textbooks are meant to incorporate interactive cultural aspects that allow students to engage actively with diverse cultural perspectives. Furthermore, textbook developers need to prioritize different authentic representations that enable learners to develop critical reflection, cross-cultural exploration, and appreciation of cultural diversity. The paper also urges ELT supervisors to conduct regular workshops that highlight the importance of culture in teaching English. These training programs are supposed to emphasize the effective teaching of culture and the efficient use of textbooks' cultural content to help students acquire cross-cultural awareness. They also ought to foreground the integration of culture learning across all language skills and components to maximize students' exposure to target and global cultures. The paper, finally, calls for the preparation of intercultural competent educators equipped with the pedagogical tools, knowledge, and skills that allow them to cultivate such competencies among learners. These culturally aware teachers play a crucial role in helping students to become active global citizens. All these recommendations aim to facilitate the development of effective communicative, intercultural, and civic competencies in accordance with the Moroccan Education Standards.

9. Conclusion

The paper investigates the integration of cultural aspects in Moroccan EFL textbooks designed for the second-year baccalaureate level. It examines both textual and visual representation across the ten units of each textbook. The textual analysis focuses on narratives, reading passages, and activities, whereas the visual analysis targets pictures, photographs, and graphs. The results reveal that *Ticket 2 English* tends to adopt a more balanced approach in consideration of textual content, compared to the other two textbooks. It includes the highest proportion of World cultures, and it presents Moroccan, American-British, and global cultures in a relatively equal manner. In contrast, *Insights into English* and *Gateway to English 2* seem to maintain a greater emphasis on local culture, with limited representation of other cultural references. The analysis of visual content demonstrates that *Gateway to English 2* encompasses the greatest number of pictorial and graphical representations of the three cultural categories, Moroccan, American-British, and World cultures. However, the results show that the selected textbooks provide insufficient coverage of international cultural aspects, despite the substantial presence of

diverse cultural references. Therefore, they are not adequately designed to promote intercultural awareness and develop intercultural competence, especially among second-year baccalaureate students in Morocco.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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