

# **Teaching English as a Lingua Franca and the Intercultural Communicative Competence in Spanish secondary education: Exploring multimodal textbook contents and student's perceptions**

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## **1. Introduction**

Over the last century, English has become the world's *lingua franca*, or the language used as «a means of communication among speakers of different first languages» (Jenkins, 2012: 486). These days, people from a myriad of sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds use the English language to communicate in all kinds of contexts (e.g., business, travelling, science, journalism); and this has led to a substantial growth in the number of speakers and learners of English, as well as to the emergence of new varieties of English, such as Malaysian English, Indian English, and Nigerian English (Kachru et al., 2009). This contextual and linguistic diversity inevitably calls for new approaches for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) that acknowledge that many communicative exchanges in English are to take place among non-native speakers who adhere to different varieties of English and follow different social norms.

Scholars such as Seidlhofer (2004), Kirkpatrick (2007), and Jenkins et al. (2011) encourage English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) instruction in the EFL classroom. According to Seidlhofer (2004: 226), this teaching approach implies «ensuring intelligibility rather than insisting on correctness, helping learners develop interaction strategies that will promote friendly relations, and fostering reading and writing skills for learner-selected purposes». To achieve these goals, she advises sensitivity in the choice of cultural content in materials in order to facilitate the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997), whose relevance in the learning process is acknowledged by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). Unfortunately, previous studies on EFL textbooks distributed around Europe show that their cultural content is predominantly Anglocentric and fails to represent a variety of cultures (Seidlhofer, 2003; Kopperoinen, 2011; Calvo-Benzies, 2017). This is also the case for textbooks commercialised in Spain for secondary students (Méndez-García, 2005; Fernández-Agiiero, 2015).

The following chapter claims the need for ELF instruction after an empirical study carried out in a Spanish secondary school, involving (i) a multimodal discourse analysis of the sociocultural content of an English course book and (ii) an ethnographically-oriented study to collect information about students' awareness of ELF. Section 2 explores the rationale of the ICC and how it is addressed in the CEFR, while Section 3 contextualises this research study within the theoretical background that supports both the need for ELF instruction and intercultural approaches for teaching. Section 4 focuses on previous studies on English course books. Section 5 presents the materials collected, the research questions addressed, and the research instruments applied for the analysis. Finally, Section 6 presents and discusses the main findings, and Section 7 summarises the main conclusions gathered from the results.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. The Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and the CEFR**

Several EFL scholars have argued that, to communicate and interact effectively in a foreign language, the learner should not only acquire linguistic competence, but intercultural communicative competence (ICC), defined by Sáñdrová (2016: 179) as «the ability to interact with people from another country in a foreign language». As Corbett (2003) argues, ICC stimulates critical thinking and prepares students to communicate

in other cultures and societies where the target language is to be used. Byram et al. (2002: 7) also point out that this dimension «helps language learners to interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, and to be aware of their own identities and those of their interlocutors». Similarly, Galante (2014: 29) sustains that the ICC «allows learners to express their identities while engaging in meaningful discussions about cultural views».

Byram (1997) established an ICC model that compiles four dimensions to be acquired by students to develop this competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence. This model became so well established from a theoretical point of view that it was considered for the elaboration of the CEFR, which governs all European educational policies for the development of syllabi, curriculum guidelines, and teaching materials for foreign language instruction.

Section 5 of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001: 101) divides the human competences necessary to communicate effectively in a foreign language into two large groups: general competences, or those less closely related to the language itself, and communicative language competences, which are more specific and linguistically focused. The general competences that learners are expected to develop are summarised below:

1. Declarative knowledge (*savoir*)

- Knowledge of the world: knowledge about the country or countries in which the target language (TL)<sup>1</sup> is spoken, such as its major geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features (102)
- Sociocultural knowledge: information about everyday living conditions, values, beliefs, attitudes, body language, social conventions, and ritual behaviour of the people in those countries (102-103)
- Intercultural awareness: understanding of the differences and similarities between one's own culture and the target culture (TC)<sup>2</sup> (103)

2. Skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*)

- Practical skills and know-how: the skills that a learner will need to acquire to communicate effectively in the TL in daily life situations (104)
- Intercultural skills and know-how: a series of abilities and capacities to develop strategies facilitating contact with those from other cultures and avoid misunderstandings and stereotyped relationships (104-105)

3. Existential competence (*savoir-être*): the factors of the learner's personality that affect their ability to understand, learn and communicate in the TL (105-106)

4. Ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*): the ability to incorporate new knowledge about the TL and the TC (106)

In this study, I look into the sociocultural content of an English course book for Spanish students to observe whether it facilitates students' development of the ICC. To fulfil this aim, I focus on the CEFR general competences that are most related to the acquisition of the ICC: Knowledge of the world, Sociocultural knowledge, Intercultural awareness, and Intercultural skills and know-how. If the goal of using EFL is that of communicating with native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) around the world, then the cultural aspects covered in an English course should go beyond native English-speaking countries, and secondary-school learners should be exposed to different English varieties and ELF situations (Seidlhofer, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2007). In other words, in English course books, the English language should not be linked only to the culture of those who speak it as a mother tongue, but also to a variety of other cultures where international communicative exchanges might be carried out through this language.

## 2.2. English as a lingua franca and the need for an Intercultural approach for teaching

In a postmodern era where the world has progressively become more intertwined and globalised, and with the emergence of digital technologies as part of this process, the use of English has spread worldwide at a

<sup>1</sup> Target language (TL) refers to the foreign language being learned.

<sup>2</sup> Target culture (TC) refers to the culture associated to the foreign language being learned (Cook, 1993).

rapid pace. Already at the very beginning of the 21st century, Brumfit (2001) highlighted that the number of users of English reached seven hundred million, of which less than half were NSs. These days, most interactions in English are made among a variety of NNSs with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and more varieties of English have emerged (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Meierkord and Schneider, 2022; Peters and Burridge, 2022). This is particularly triggered because NNSs inevitably transfer elements from their mother tongues and cultural identities to the English language.

Such an ever-growing language exchange between NNSs is also having implications in English learning and teaching methods, which are currently demanding for new communicative approaches that facilitate intelligibility among speakers of a variety of cultures and nationalities. As Jenkins et al. (2011: 301) claims, «there is a need to take account of the large number of English non-native speakers (NNSs) as well as native speakers (NSs) who use the language primarily as an international lingua franca» which «involves rethinking for all but the minority whose goal is to communicate and blend in with NSs». To this end, it is suggested that ELF instruction and intercultural approaches to teaching should be adopted for two main reasons. Firstly, ELF teaching advocates that intelligibility is essential and more important than achieving native-like oral production and mastering NS norms (Seidlhofer, 2004; Walker, 2010; Jenkins et al., 2011). Secondly, intercultural approaches to teaching may help learners develop the «ability to empathise with other cultures and to adopt attitudes of openness towards other cultures» (Lund, 2006: 60), thus fostering the ICC, whose importance has been highlighted in the previous section.

The need for teaching approaches focused on ELF and Intercultural communication demands critical reflection on whether learners are provided with the necessary tools to use English successfully in international and multicultural scenarios. These tools go beyond getting learners to acquire standard grammatical features and native-like oral skills. In order to develop the ICC, language instruction should transcend linguistic competences (Sobkowiak, 2021), in such a way that learners should be prepared to accommodate different varieties of English and acknowledge sociocultural norms other than theirs. Teaching materials here can play a fundamental role, since they often determine the contents, tasks, and strategies to be implemented in the classroom, and thus, they are crucial in the introduction of new English varieties and a culturally rich content. If English is to be learnt as an international language for communication with natives and non-natives, the cultural content of textbooks should not only be focused on the American and British societies, for instance, but to other communities that the learner may encounter when speaking to foreigners. Similarly, this cultural content should portray a variety of diverse worldwide cultures, that may help create culture gap awareness and therefore allow learners to elaborate new communication strategies to enhance international interaction.

### 2.3. Importance of textbooks and their sociocultural content

Teachers usually set up the goals of a course on the basis of textbooks, which can have a substantial influence in learners' motivation and foster a cultural transmission function that should be unbiased and accurate (Lund, 2006). Given the importance that the development of the ICC has in language learning, it seems worth observing how sociocultural aspects are presented in textbooks and evaluating whether they incorporate enough material to help learners build this competence. This sociocultural content can have an impact on the learners' perception of the target cultures and plays a fundamental role in representing the current status of English as a worldwide lingua franca (Galante, 2014; Zhang and Zhou, 2019; Sobkowiak, 2021).

Even if there is a wide range of English varieties and cultural contexts in which English can be used, previous studies have shown that the focus of textbooks is mostly on Anglo-American cultures, only including some «exotic extras» where other cultures may be illustrated in a very superficial manner through a «British lens» (Seidlhofer, 2003: 13). Native models of English, along with their norms, tend to be more present than non-native models even in textbooks intended for Tourism students, despite the unique status of English as a *lingua franca* in this communicative context (Calvo-Benzies, 2017). In addition, most of the audio material of textbooks is concerned with native varieties, as Koppenothen (2011) showed in her study of textbooks for Finnish upper secondary students. Even if teachers should probably opt for one variety as a model of instruction, Seidlhofer (2003) and McKenzie (2010) argue that exposing students to a range of native and non-native varieties of English in ELF classrooms could be advantageous and could also facilitate the development of ICC.

Prior research can also be documented on the scarcity of cultural content in textbooks marketed in Spain. Raigón-Rodríguez and Larrea-Espinar (2015) analysed the cultural content of B1 and B2 level textbooks and found that subjective aspects of culture received less coverage on these textbooks. A later study carried out by Raigón-Rodríguez (2018) confirmed that newer textbook editions leave aside general and internal cultural content, too. As for English textbooks aimed for ESO<sup>3</sup> and Bachillerato<sup>4</sup> students, Méndez-García (2005) observed the English-speaking communities described in a set of Bachillerato EFL textbooks and concluded there was a lack of content related to intercultural and international relations. Similarly, Alonso- Belmonte and Fernández-Agüero (2015) suggested the need for improvement concerning ICC in both ESO and Bachillerato textbooks. These latter two studies have served as a source of inspiration for the present study.

### 3. The study

#### 3.1. Aims and research questions

The aim of this study is to observe whether the lack of cultural content in textbooks is still an issue to be addressed in secondary education. To do this, I complement the analysis of a textbook by means of a rubric, with ethnographic methods to learn about the students' perception of English as a Lingua Franca. The latter consist of the completion of an anonymous questionnaire.

In trying to accomplish this aim, I have established the following questions:

- (i) Does the sociocultural content of coursebooks contribute to learners' development of the ICC? If so, in what ways?
- (ii) Do textbooks incorporate varieties of English other than Standard English (SE)?
- (iii) Are learners really aware of the status of English as a Lingua Franca?
- (iv) How important is it to achieve native-like oral proficiency according to learners?

#### 3.2. Research materials and instruments

The context of study was Santa Rosa- Altoaragón school, a Spanish secondary school located in Huesca, where I was working as a trainee English teacher from March to May 2019. The school courses selected for the analysis were the ones I was given the possibility to teach: 1<sup>st</sup> of ESO (students aged 12-13) and 1<sup>st</sup> of Bachillerato (students aged 16-17). A qualitative analysis was carried out by means of two research instruments: (i) a rubric to assess the sociocultural multimodal content of the English course book used in 1<sup>st</sup> of ESO and (ii) a questionnaire handed out to students of both courses to collect information about their perceptions about ELF. The course book analysis enabled me to gain insights into the sociocultural and linguistic varieties that students were exposed to (i.e., exposition to non-native English countries and cultures, as well as varieties of English other than the standard), to see whether the ICC and ELF were promoted by the learning material. The questionnaire was administered to get a first-hand response from students about their awareness of English as a lingua franca, and then, to contrast the results with those of the textbook analysis. In other words, this study seeks to show how the textbook approaches the ICC and observe, through the questionnaire, whether students are developing this competence. In this way an informed decision can be made on whether there is a need for more teaching materials and strategies that promote this competence in the EFL classroom.

The course book selected was *Mosaic 1*, published by Oxford University Press. The book was analysed from a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) approach, which involves the analysis of not only verbal text, but also other modes such as images and sound. According to Paltridge (2012: 170), these modes are also used to «communicate, or make meaning, with each other». Due to space constraints, an exhaustive

<sup>3</sup> ESO stands for *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria* (Compulsory secondary education) and comprises a 4-level secondary education stage for students roughly between the ages of 12 and 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Bachillerato* is the optional stage of secondary education for students of over 16 and consists of a two-year course that prepares students for university or vocational training.

MDA of every page cannot be included. Instead, the analysis focuses on the elements of the teaching material that presented cultural content and varieties of English. These are disclosed as follows:

- (i) The texts and images of sections *Vocabulary and reading* and *Around the World* of the Student's course book<sup>5</sup>; that is, a total of 29 pages<sup>6</sup>. These were used to explore the general sociocultural content of the book.
- (ii) The 24 listening tracks comprising the Class audio CD. With the help of a native English speaker of English, I identified the varieties of English used in each track.

As stated before, the multimodal analysis of the book was carried out with the help of a rubric. This rubric, available in Annex 1, was based on the cultural guidelines described by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001: 101-105) and explored in Section 2. The idea was to observe whether the sociocultural content of this book can really help learners of EFL achieve and develop the necessary competences to acquire the ICC: Knowledge of the world, Sociocultural knowledge, Intercultural awareness, and Intercultural skills and know-how.

As can be seen on the left side of the rubric, several cultural aspects were proposed, concerning the number of English-speaking countries (referred in the rubric as *native countries* –NCs) and non-English speaking countries (*non-native countries* –NNCs) depicted or mentioned on the book; as well as the sociocultural knowledge promoted with regards to interpersonal relations, everyday living conditions and a list of closer identity and cultural aspects, pragmatic strategies for international communication and critical thinking, and varieties of English used, among other features. In this study, NCs are understood as those belonging to Kachru's (2009) inner circle varieties (e.g., USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia), and NNCs include the outer and expanding circle varieties (those countries where English is not the first dominant language). The rating scales were placed at the top and they measured the number of references found for each cultural aspect. If there was no reference found at all related to a particular cultural aspect, the score was zero and the cell was left blank (see Annex 1). When only one reference was found for a specific cultural aspect, one point was given. Likewise, two points were given when two references were found, and three points when three or more references were found. Only the last descriptor «Number of tracks that include different varieties of English» followed a different rating scale: one point was given when the number of tracks ranged between one and three, two points when the range was four-six, and three points when there were seven or more tracks. The points obtained for each aspect show the difference between the quantity of cultural content displayed for NCs and NNCs, and therefore, help draw some conclusions on the richness of the book in terms of sociocultural content and development of ICC. Since the rubric included 20 cultural aspects to be evaluated for each NCs and NNCs to up to three points, the maximum score for each of them was 60.

The second part of the study comprised a 10-question anonymous questionnaire handed out in class to 1<sup>st</sup> ESO students (groups A and B) and to 1<sup>st</sup> Bachillerato students (groups B and D). In total, 95 students filled in the questionnaires: 49 ESO students (of which 25 were women and 24 were men) and 46 Bachillerato students (25 women and 21 men). The questionnaires included 2 open questions (1 and 3), 4 dichotomous (true-false) questions (2, 5, 7, and 9), 2 multiple-choice questions (4 and 6), and 2 rating Likert scale questions (8 and 10). After administering them, percentages illustrating the answers were calculated. For instance, for the 3rd question *In which countries is English spoken?* a percentage was obtained according to the number of times that a certain country was mentioned. In the case of the multiple-choice, dichotomous and Likert scale questions, the procedure was the same, so that in the end X true responses, Y false responses, and so on, were collected. This questionnaire was my own creation, and the questions were not based on any previous ethnographic method.

<sup>5</sup> The package also includes a Workbook with exercises that was not considered for the analysis.

<sup>6</sup> These correspond to pages 10, 14, 15, 22, 26, 27, 34, 38, 39, 48, 52, 53, 60, 64, 65, 72, 73, 76, 86, 87, 90, 91, 98, 102, 103, 110, 114 and 115.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Analysis of the Course Book *Mosaic 1*

The results of the assessment of the cultural aspects of the course book *Mosaic 1* can also be found in Annex 1. As can be seen, the scores obtained were 32 points for NCs references and 27 points for NNCs references. This initial observation shows that the content analysed is quite balanced in terms of the representation of cultural variety. However, being 60 the total number of points that can be obtained for the evaluation of each cultural aspect involving native and non-native countries, it can also be noticed that the overall cultural content included may be a bit scarce, as in both cases it is approximately half of the possible scoring. To illustrate and discuss the results, each of the general competences covering the different cultural aspects is commented and exemplified below.

#### 4.1.1. Knowledge of the world

The maximum points that could be obtained in this section were 18 for NCs and 18 for NNCs, and 9 points were obtained for each category. There were several NCs (5) and NNCs (24) depicted or mentioned in the texts (e.g., the UK, Ireland, Hong Kong). Regarding geographical content, there was a map in every *Around the world* section for students to locate the NCs and NNCs that the texts were dealing with, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 below.



Figure 1: Around the world, page 14.

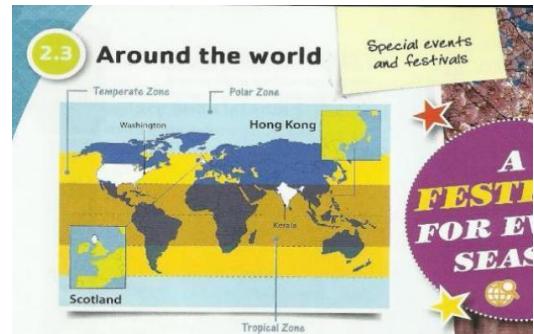


Figure 2: Around the world, page 26.

The *Around the world* section also included pictures that displayed landscapes and local people, such as the images of black South African people as can be seen on Figures 3 and 4.

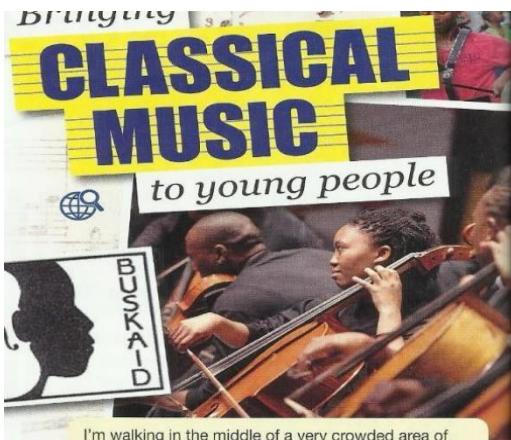


Figure 3: Black people, page 64.

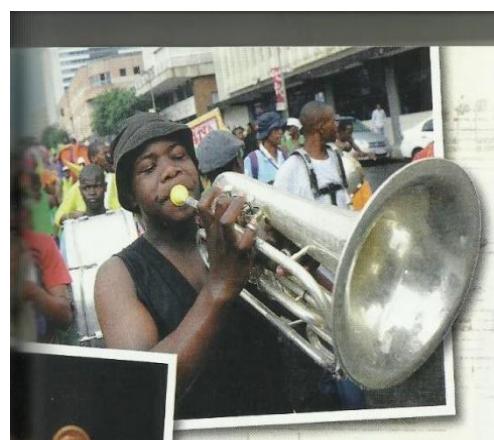


Figure 4: Black people, page 65.

As for the environmental section, it focused mostly on the biodiversity that can be associated to each country; for instance, jungles in Papua Guinea (Figure 5), wallabies in Australia (Figure 6), and elephants in Kenya (Figure 7). There were no specific references found related to demographic, economic or political content.

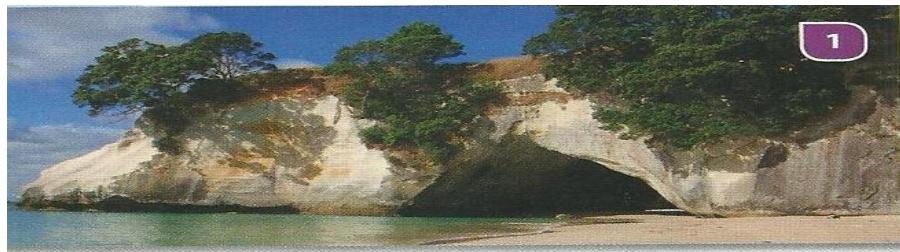


Figure 5: Jungles in Papua Guinea, page 98.

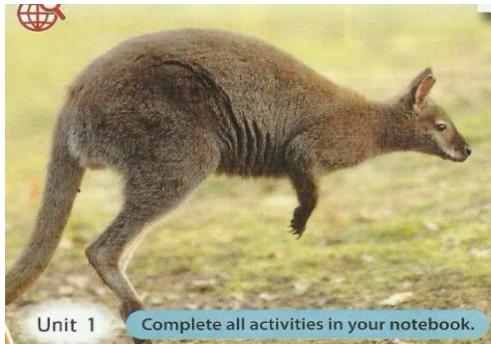


Figure 6: Wallabies in Australia, page 10.



Figure 7: Elephants in Kenya, page 22.

#### 4.1.2. Sociocultural Knowledge

In this section, 21 points were given to each category, and 16 references for NCs and 12 for NNCs were observed. Everyday living depictions represent meals, hobbies, and school hours in both categories. The living standard depictions promoted were clearly western, since it was assumed that people can afford travelling, attend festivals and have pets at home (and even take them to beauty salons, as portrayed in the reading *Pets in the UK*, on pages 14-15). Moreover, NNCs were given no points in this subcategory since no references were found. Content related to interpersonal relations could only be seen in pictures, where it seemed that relationships only occurred among peers (children with children, teenagers with teenagers). The family model that was pictured is that of a heterosexual couple with children, as the Argentinian family on page 10.



Figure 8: Argentinian family, page 10.

There was hardly any reference to body language behaviour and the values and beliefs promoted had to do with festivals, art, and music. No content related to social minorities or regional cultures was found. As for social conventions, the text *Schools: a world of differences* (pages 38-39) included some social codes about uniforms. There were no depictions about marriage, birth, conversational conventions, or religious rites.

#### 4.1.3. Intercultural Awareness

In this section, 6 points for NCs and 7 for NNCs were given, out of a possible total score of 9 points for each category of countries. No cultural stereotypes were found, which is positively interpreted, for stereotypes can «distort» the general knowledge of the world (Council of Europe, 2001: 102). The only content that contrasts other cultures with the learners' one (Spanish) is the text *Street food* (pages 72-73), where typical food is compared between Spain and several NNCs, such as Malaysia, Italy, Turkey, and Cambodia. With regards to the documents that promote critical thinking about other ways of living, only one was observed: *Schools: a world of differences* (pages 38-39), in which students were provided with some information about daily life in other parts of the world that could make them reflect about other cultures and about their own. Figure 9 provides some extracts from these texts.



Figure 9: Schools: a world of differences, pages 38-39.

#### 4.1.4. Intercultural Skills and Know-how

This is the cultural aspect that deserves most attention given that the textbook lacks content concerning intercultural communication strategies, negotiation of meaning approaches, and possible intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts. With regards to the varieties of English section, only 8 audios out of 24 included varieties other than British RP<sup>7</sup>, suggesting that this is the model imposed to students.

Overall, the analysed book is mostly centred on surface cultural elements, providing only a few data about deep cultural aspects when dealing with both NCs and NNCs. Surface elements refer to what can easily be observed or «static elements that represent a nation», like «holidays, tourist sites, famous' people's achievements and food», and deep elements embrace «invisible meanings associated with a region, a group of people, or subcultures that reflect their own particular sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and values», which are involved in the notion of culture too (Gómez- Rodríguez, 2015: 168). When teaching EFL, learners need to be presented with appropriate and sufficient cultural content to face the sociocultural exchanges that may take place in different contexts. To achieve that goal and understand the TC, surface culture elements may not be enough. Although two texts were found pointing out cultural differences between diverse American, European and Asian countries (*Schools: a world of differences* and *Street food*), the majority of the reading activities in *Mosaic 1* emphasise Western lifestyles and native characters' stories. NNCs, such as Cambodia, South Africa, or Malaysia, are mostly illustrated as mere exotic places or top travelling destinations, without adding significant information about their economy, demography, geography, politics, and environment.

<sup>7</sup> Received Pronunciation (RP) is defined by Oxford Dictionary as «The standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England, widely accepted as a standard elsewhere».

As for the recordings, they reaffirm the «British-centrism» of this material since the vast majority of the voices in the audios prove to have a standard British accent or Received Pronunciation. Of the 24 tracks analysed, only 8 audios included varieties other than RP, and only one track did not include RP. It seems that this is the right accent or model to follow by learners, and after listening to these audios with a native speaker from Scotland, it was interesting to find that even those non-native accents, such as Chinese and Indian, were not real, as it was quite noticeable that the speaker was faking them. Given that students may be involved in diverse speaking contexts while travelling or working in the future, it would be fruitful that they are exposed to real varieties. Of course, the range of accents and varieties is very large, but at least students can be aware of that if a few more are presented to them. Even if they should pick one variety as a model to follow and be consistent with (and undoubtedly, British and American cultures have high prestige to this regard) it would be ideal to, as Lund (2006: 75) discusses, ability to empathise with other cultures and to adopt attitudes of openness towards other cultures «find a balance between the accommodation for the learners' obvious needs to become proficient in dominant forms of language and culture on the one hand and for their needs to be able to speak with their own voice on the other».

#### 4.2. Questionnaire responses

In this sub-section, responses from the 10-question questionnaire will be illustrated. To do this, a table for each question will be displayed with percentages, followed by a discussion explaining the most representative and interesting findings.

*Question 1: When you think of the English language, which countries come to your mind?*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
UK	80%	91%	85.5%
USA	73%	96%	84.5%
Canada	16%	46%	31%
Ireland	18%	28%	23%
Australia	6%	20%	13%
New Zealand	6%	4%	5%
Netherlands	0%	9%	4.5%
India	0%	4%	2%
Germany	2%	0%	1%
South Africa	0%	2%	1%

Table 1: Responses to question 1.

The first question consisted of an open question. As the results show above (Table 1), most students relate the English language to the UK and the USA, followed by Canada and Ireland. Only a few of them thought of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa; and the only NNCs pointed out by a few students were the Netherlands, India, and Germany.

*Question 2: If you wish to communicate properly in English, you should sound like a native speaker (choose one option and justify your answer)*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
TRUE	35%	22%	28.5%
FALSE	61%	78%	69.5%
No response	4%	0%	2%

Table 2: Responses to question 2.

In this dichotomous (true-false) question, most students said that having a native accent was not necessary to convey meaning (69.5%), and only 28.5% responded otherwise, the eldest group of students being the ones

who gave less importance to pronunciation (Table 2). Among the justifications for the answer choice, some interesting comments were recurrently made by learners:

TRUE

- People can understand you better (mentioned 13 times)
- You can communicate better with a native accent (x3)
- Sounds better/more professional (referring to native English) (x3)
- Pronunciation is very important/ is the main goal (x3)
- People will take you more seriously (x2)

FALSE

- The most important aspect is intelligibility, regardless of accent (x14)
- You can speak correctly without a native accent (x13)
- Not everyone can have the same accent (x4)
- Vocabulary is more important than accents (x2)

*Question 3: As you know, the Spanish language is spoken in Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Ecuador, and many other countries in the world. In which countries is the English language spoken?*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
UK	90%	76%	92%
USA	76%	72%	83%
Ireland	41%	39%	40%
Canada	22%	54%	38%
Australia	37%	33%	35%
New Zealand	25%	22%	23.5%
India	0%	20%	10%
Singapore	0%	17%	8.5%
South Africa	0%	9%	4.5%
Jamaica	0%	5%	2.5%
Netherlands	0%	4%	2%
Malta	0%	4%	2%
China	2%	0%	1%

Table 3: Responses to question 3.

In this open question, more countries were mentioned, as compared to the answers in question 1 (Table 3). It seems that students associate more the English language to a few native countries, but when they think of other areas where English is spoken, other NCs spring to their minds, such as Singapore, Jamaica, and Malta. Still, the preferred countries were the UK (92%) and the USA (83%).

*Question 4: The English variety that I understand best is...*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
British (BE)	57%	52%	54.5%
American (AE)	31%	37%	34%
Other	0%	0%	0%

Table 4: Responses to question 4.

In this multiple-choice question, 54.5% of the students chose BE versus 34% AE (Table 4). It seems that they favour BE, as it may be the variety they are mostly exposed to (as discussed in the previous textbook analysis,

the chosen variety in most audio files was BE). No other variety of English at all was mentioned by any student, suggesting that either they do not acknowledge them, or they believe they have not been exposed to them.

*Question 5: I prefer doing listening activities in which native speakers can be heard, to those in which non-native speakers intervene (justify your answer)*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
TRUE	41%	65%	53%
FALSE	59%	27%	43%
No response	0%	8%	4%

Table 5: Responses to question 5.

The answers for this dichotomous question reveal a significant difference between the two groups of students. 65% of 1<sup>st</sup> Bachillerato students prefer listening to native speakers, over 41% 1<sup>st</sup> ESO students (Table 5). These results contrast with those of question 2, where Bachillerato students did not consider relevant to sound like a native speaker. This possibly implies that even if they do not pursue native-like oral proficiency, they still prefer interacting with native speakers than with non-native ones, for the former are believed to speak «proper» English. The most interesting justifications can be found below:

TRUE

- I understand them better (x23)
- You learn more from natives (x7)
- This way you can get used to native accents (x6)
- It is more real (x3)
- I like native accents better than non-native ones (x2)
- If the speakers are native, you can be sure that they speak properly (x2)

FALSE

- Native speakers are more difficult to understand (x16)

*Question 6: English is considered to be a lingua franca nowadays. This means that English is...*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
A language for international communication	27%	61%	44%
No answer	45%	30%	37.5%
A language of a francophone origin	16%	9%	12.5%
A language spoken in France	6%	0%	3%
An honest language	6%	0%	3%

Table 6: Responses to question 6.

Findings from learners' responses in this multiple-choice question demonstrate that ESO students may not be familiarised with the term *lingua franca* since most of them chose an incorrect answer or did not provide an answer at all (Table 6). In contrast, it seems that most 1<sup>st</sup> Bachillerato students (61%) are aware of the meaning of ELF. This may suggest that ELF instruction is reserved to upper secondary levels.

*Question 7: If I speak English, I can communicate with any person around the world (justify your answer)*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
TRUE	63%	67%	65%
FALSE	33%	33%	33%

Table 7: Responses to question 7.

65% of the students have positive feelings towards the status of English as an international tool of communication, whereas 33% did not (Table 7). Some of the most salient answers of this dichotomous question are listed below:

TRUE

- It is the mostly spoken language (x20)
- It is the universal language (x7)
- Everyone learns English (x6)
- Everyone knows English (x5)

FALSE

- There are people who do not speak English (x19)
- There are countries with few resources, and their populations are not taught (x3)
- English is not spoken in all countries

*Question 8: Achieving a native-like pronunciation (with no Spanish accent) is...*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	Total (Average)
Very important	25%	15%	20%
Quite important	25%	46%	35.5%
Somewhat important	43%	28%	35.5%
Not very important	6%	9%	7.5%
Not important	0%	2%	1%

Table 8: Responses to question 8.

Most students responded in this Likert scale question that achieving native-like pronunciation is *quite important* or *somewhat important* (35.5% in both cases) and 20% opted for *very important* (Table 8). Very few students said that pronouncing like a native is *not very important*, and only one student gave no importance to this at all. This means that they rather believe that one of the most important goals of learning English is achieving native-like pronunciation, even if they do not consider it absolutely essential to communicate (see Question 2).

*Question 9: In the future, I will use English more with NNSs than with NSs (if you choose 'False', justify your answer)*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	TOTAL (Average)
TRUE	63%	63%	63%
FALSE	33%	33%	33%
No response	4%	4%	4%

Table 9: Responses to question 9.

Most students considered in this dichotomous question that they would have more exchanges with non-native speakers (63%) in English than with native ones (33%) (Table 9). In this question, they had to justify their answer if it was FALSE. Most justifications show that students are rather unaware of the status of English as a lingua franca, since they do not believe they will use English with non-native speakers.

- I only expect using English with NSs (x10)
- If I speak English with NNS, they will not understand me (x9)
- You will have as many interactions with NSs as with NNSs (x3)

*Question 10: When I listen to an audio file in English (listening activities in class, TV series, radio, music, etc.), speakers have either British or American pronunciation...*

	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO	1 <sup>st</sup> Bachillerato	TOTAL (Average)
Most of the times	39%	59%	49%
Many times	31%	28%	29.5%
Sometimes	16%	13%	14.5%
Few times	4%	0%	2%
Hardly ever	4%	0%	2%

Table 10: Responses to question 10.

The preferred answers in this final Likert scale question were *most of the times* (49%) or *many times* (29.5%) (Table 10), so that they mostly agreed on the presence of BE and AE in most audio files in English.

To sum up, the responses obtained through these questionnaires have provided this study with significant findings. First, the responses to questions 1 and 3 show that students clearly relate the English language with the USA and the UK. Not only are most of them unaware of countries where English is an official language, but they also forget to mention other countries in the inner circle of World Englishes, such as Australia or New Zealand. This could be the result of an overexposure to American and British cultures and English varieties, in which globalisation and the music and cinema industries play a fundamental role. To this regard, the answers to questions 4 and 10 confirm that students are often exposed to American and especially British varieties of English in the classroom. Second, as far as native-like pronunciation is concerned, most students acknowledged that sounding like a native is not indispensable to communicate in English (question 2), although they believe that it is an important goal to achieve (question 8). In addition, the majority of Bachillerato students prefer learning from native speakers, as shown in question 5. Finally, the answers collected in questions 6, 7, and 9 reveal that students are aware of the status of English as an international vehicle for cross-cultural communication.

## 5. Conclusions and suggestions for material improvement

In this chapter, the issues of ELF and the ICC in language teaching and learning have been explored through the analysis of the sociocultural content of an English textbook, as well as the collection of some questionnaires filled in by secondary education students. This final section provides an answer to the research questions proposed in section 3.1.

Findings show that the chosen English textbook is Anglo centric, written from a Western perspective and knowledge of the world. Whenever a NNC is presented, it is from an exotic perspective, without going deeper into cultural issues, and there are just two texts which actually compare cultures (food and schools). Consequently, it can be argued that the sociocultural content of this book does not contribute totally to the learners' development of their ICC as indicated by the CEFR (Research question i). Furthermore, the audio material of the book is mostly focused on the British RP variety of English, with only 8 tracks out of 24 using non-native voices (Research question ii). It would be therefore interesting to complement the content of this book with extra material that provides learners with deep culture knowledge and intercultural awareness about both NCs and NNCs, to compensate the superficial cultural overload mentioned earlier, as well as to

implement some activities that promote communication strategies with people from other countries. Moreover, given that students may be involved in diverse speaking contexts while travelling or working in the future, it would be desirable that they are exposed to varieties other than BE and AE.

As for the questionnaires, results reveal the need for some ELF instruction and ICC development. On the one hand, students tend to relate the English language with the Anglo-Saxon world only, even if they acknowledge that most of their verbal encounters may take place with non-native speakers. On the other hand, they seem to be aware of the status of English as an international language (Research question iii). They also consider that achieving a native-like pronunciation is somewhat important (Research question iv), and that most of the times the English varieties they listen to in audios are either British or American, which also matches the course book's analysis results in terms of the varieties proposed.

All in all, the results of this study display, in alliance with previous studies, that there is still room for improvement in English course books, as far as the sociocultural content and the treatment of English as a lingua franca are concerned. This is confirmed by the results of the questionnaire, which provide an insight into the students' general negative perception of non-standard varieties of English. Even if they are aware of the international communicative function of English, the repertoire of varieties to which they are exposed in the classroom should be larger, and so should the textbook content be related to cultural aspects and the development of intercultural communication skills.

For future research, I suggest comparing these results with those obtained from analysing more up-to-date textbooks, to observe whether there is a trend of improvement. It would also be interesting to analyse the full content of the materials, in order to detect more learning and teaching necessities and thus contribute to innovative proposals for the EFL classroom. In any case, this case study has attempted to illustrate the need for ELF instruction and intercultural methods of teaching.

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### Appendix 1: Rubric for the course book analysis with results

		1p	2p	3p
KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD	How many native countries (NC) are depicted?			X
	How many non-native countries (NNC) are depicted?			X
	Geographical content	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Environmental content	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Demographic content	NC	X	
		NNC		
	Economic content	NC		
		NNC		
SOCIOCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE	Political content	NC		
		NNC		
	Everyday living depictions: meals, public holidays, hobbies, working hours	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Living conditions depictions: living standards, housing, welfare arrangements	NC		X
		NNC		
	Interpersonal relations depictions: relations among people according to gender, age, status, classes and place of interaction	NC		X
		NNC	X	
	Values, beliefs and attitudes depictions: social class, wealth, regional cultures, security, institutions, traditions, social minorities, identity, arts, humour	NC		X
		NNC		X
INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS	Body language depictions	NC		
		NNC	X	
	Social conventions depictions: punctuality, presents, dress, conversational conventions and taboos	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Ritual behaviour depictions (NC): religious rites, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals, audience behaviour at performances	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Cultural stereotypes represented	NC		X
		NNC		X
	Content that contrasts the target culture with the learners' (Spain)	NC	X	
INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOW HOW		NNC		
	Documents that promote critical thinking about other ways of living	NC	X	
		NNC	X	
	Strategies for contact with people from foreign cultures	NC		
		NNC		
	Negotiation of meaning	NC		
		NNC		
	Intercultural misunderstandings or conflicts	NC		
		NNC		
INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOW HOW	Number of tracks that include different varieties of English	NC		X
		NNC	X	