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An Evaluation of the Cultural Aspects in the Empower Coursebook Series

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Abstract

As we live in an era in which the effects of globalization are almost seen everywhere, it is of great importance to understand the cultural diversity that surrounds us. In addition, as English plays a crucial role in the encounters between agents of different cultural communities, analysis of EFL teaching materials, particularly textbooks, is a matter of great importance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain a clearer understanding of how three different levels of an EFL textbook called *Empower* represent cultural diversity. In order to achieve this, the present study aims to answer the following research question: "To what extent do the selected textbooks represent cultural diversity considering the role of English as an international language?" To answer the research question, this study uses *critical discourse analysis* as the evaluation method for the evaluation. An analytical tool which consists of two main categories, was used to analyze the textbooks and organize the results in addition to the notes and follow-up questions. The first category, nations and nationalities, aims to illustrate the variety of nations and nationalities that are portrayed in the textbooks. In addition, it aims to determine whether the textbooks predominantly represent the cultural elements of any dominant countries. The second category explores certain intercultural elements/themes. The results indicate that the textbooks predominantly represent the cultural elements of western nations based on the cultural references in general. This tendency is also observed in the selected textbooks in terms of six most recurrent themes which are *important people/celebrities, travel, charity, work, shopping, and art/music/literature.*

Keywords: *textbooks, culture, representation of cultures, textbook analysis, intercultural communication*