Chapter 1

Introduction

Coursebooks have been variously regarded by teachers as the Bible, a guide, a crutch, a necessary evil, or a burden.

Costas Gabrielatos (2004)[1]

Materials are considered as an essential part of most language teaching programs in various contexts all over the world. Teachers frequently depend on a range of materials such as textbooks, video tapes or audio tapes, pictures, etc. to support their teaching as well as their students' learning. Among these materials, textbooks are regarded as a key element and the main support both for teachers and learners in most language curricula because they can offer useful language forms and input, a fixed structure and syllabus for a program, and consistent instruction (Crawford, 1995; Domínguez Gaona, 2000; Mahmood, 2009; Tok, 2010; Thaler, 2012). Put differently, "the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many teachers and learners is the textbook" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986: 167).

Like all language teaching programs, English language instruction has many essential factors; however, one of the crucial components to many ESL (English as a Second Language)/EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms is the textbook which is often used by language teachers. Arguments have covered both the potential and the pitfalls of textbooks in the learning process and researchers have provided a great deal of information in this regard (Litz, 2005). Many of them believe that textbooks can play different roles in a language program, such as "a core resource, a source of supplemental material, an inspiration for classroom activities, and even the curriculum itself" (Garinger, 2002: 1). Among these scholars, Cunningsworth (1995: 7) defined the roles of coursebooks in English Language Teaching (ELT) as …

- a resource for presentation material (spoken/written)
- a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
- a reference source
- a syllabus

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[1] source: Session Plan: The coursebook as a flexible tool

- a resource for self-directed learning or self-access work
- a support for less experienced teachers

Moreover, Hutchinson and Torres (1994: 315) suggest …

> The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries […] No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook …

While many scholars try to draw attention to the wide-ranging advantages of using ESL/EFL textbooks, other practitioners take the opposite view and refer to the disadvantages of working with textbooks. Allwright (1981), for example, states that textbooks are not really flexible enough to be used freely as training materials in the classroom since they always show their authors' perspectives and points of views regarding the didactic, psychological, and linguistic aspects of language learning (see also Kitao, 1997; Litz, 2005). Moreover, they present the world "through the cultural lens of the author" (Paige et. al, 2003: 208). Brumfit (1980: 30) also argues that "even the best textbooks" reduce the teachers' inventiveness and creativity by suggesting that there is always a hidden "expert" somewhere who can help them in solving their problems.

Generally speaking, extensive reactions accompanying EFL/ESL textbooks often vary between two extremes. One viewpoint refers to the textbooks as efficient, practical, and profitable tools, but the other sees them as "masses of rubbish skillfully marketed" (Brumfit, 1985: 100, 1980: 30). Due to these two perspectives, teachers have various tendencies towards using textbooks. Some of them plan their lessons working with the textbooks, while others prefer to design their own materials. There is also a group of teachers who use textbooks alongside their own materials simultaneously (see also Thaler, 2012). Because of these tendencies, textbooks have always been exposed to the process of evaluation and analysis in order to be improved for different language programs (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

The other important factor which has often had a great influence on textbooks is the emergence of different teaching methodologies throughout the history of language teaching. Owing to this fact, textbook designers and practitioners try to develop their books to reflect the current methodologies and the needs of learners. Following the improvement of different methods of teaching, textbooks are always evaluated by the experts from the per-

spective of the latest methodological reform. As Fäcke (2010: 217) maintains, „Lehrwerke spiegeln nicht nur in der visuellen Darstellung ihre Zeit, sondern auch in der methodisch-didaktischen Gestaltung[2]." Thus, the advent of different teaching methodologies always provides fresh grounds for the critical evaluation of textbooks.

With the emergence of the Communicative Approach and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and their emphasis on socio-cultural factors, discourse competence, and learners' roles in the classroom, the concept of foreign language learning was perceived as more than just becoming proficient in the vocabulary, the grammar, and the expressions of the target language. Within this framework, students should be able to use the language in real-life communication. In order to fulfill this task, learners require an understanding of the relationship between language and culture and need to become familiar with those aspects of culture that are significant in situations of language use (Kramsch, 1993). Therefore, the need to include societal context and to acquaint the foreign language learners with the target culture became more and more important. In other words, besides linguistic issues, one of the important aims of English textbooks in non-English speaking societies was to promote intercultural analysis and reflection on the culture of English speaking communities. Furthermore, it was believed that adding cultural content to textbooks could also promote learners' motivation in the process of mastering a foreign language (McKay, 2000).

Following this trend in language teaching, textbook evaluators paid much more attention to the relationship between language and culture. Some of them stated that some textbooks failed to present authentic language models (Porter & Roberts, 1981; Nunan, 1989) and contextual language activities (Walz, 1989), to present adequate cultural understanding (Kramsch, 1987), to address discourse competence (Kaplan & Knutson, 1993), to teach idioms (Mola, 1993), and to represent gender matters in a balanced way (Graci, 1989). On the whole, in their review of the status of culture teaching in the history of foreign language, Paige et al. (2003: 209) conclude that language textbooks mostly indicated cultures from a touristic point of view. Thus, they focused more on cultural topics like "food" and "transport". These kinds of information were presented fragmentally with a high level of generalization, referring to the norms of behaviors in the target society, which usually led to prejudicial and stereotypical images. However, the problems mentioned by these scholars

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[2] Textbooks do not only reflect their time of production in their visual appearance but also in their methodological and didactic design. (My own translation)

cannot be generalized to all of the textbooks since there are also some coursebooks which consider way of life, contextual activities, cultural understanding, gender differences, idiomatic expressions, and non-prejudicial and stereotypical images in the target society.

Concerning the inclusion of culture in language textbooks, it is firstly necessary to describe the relationship between language and culture. Many theorists believe that language is culturally bound, so language and culture teaching are interrelated and cannot be separated from each other (e.g. Whorf, 1956; Hantrais, 1989; Fishman, 1996; Gupta, 1999, as cited in Jiang, 2010; see also Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1998; Pulverness, 2003; Saluveer 2004; Lund, 2006; Wang, 2006; Risager, 2007). In line with this view, Prodromou (1988) and Alptekin (1993) state that culture can be considered as a tool in teaching language in the textbooks. To them, it is not possible to teach a language without its cultural aspects. They argue that learning a language without its culture may reinforce stereotypical images and also make learners unwilling and de-motivated towards learning a foreign language. All of these authors unanimously believe that fluency in the target language cannot be attainable only with linguistic aspects of the language. Teachers need to develop a cultural understanding of the target language as well. For this reason, the coursebook, as one of the most important elements in many language teaching contexts, needs to represent a true image of the target language culture alongside its linguistic codes (Çakir, 2010). As a result, since coursebooks can act as a kind of "hidden curriculum" which determines the teaching objectives, content, methods, and assessment, they may also convey implicitly or explicitly a set of ingrained "social and cultural" principles. This invisible curriculum can refer to the unconscious "expression of attitudes and values" and can affect the "content and image of the teaching material" (Cunningsworth, 1995: 90; Neuner, 2007). Thus, it can be more influential than the administrated curriculum presented by the educational system of a country. Likewise Risager (1991: 181) states …

> Foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission with the educational system and in the rest of society.

However, one of the controversial issues in the field of foreign language teaching and material design is the question of how culture should be provided in the textbooks. In other words, which culture and what aspects ought to be included in coursebooks? Cortazzi and

Jin (1999: 204-210) identifies three types of cultural knowledge and information that can be presented in English language textbooks:

- *target culture materials* that focus on the culture of English-speaking countries where English is used as a first language;
- *source culture materials* that mirror the learners' local culture;
- *international target culture materials* that include a wide variety of cultures set in English-speaking countries or other countries where English is not a first or second language, but is used as an international language.

According to McKay (2000: 9-10), the most suitable material is based on the international version of the target language, since this necessarily includes a wide range of knowledge from various cultures and countries all around the world using the target language. Two examples of such kinds of textbooks are *One World, Secondary English* by Priesack and Tomscha (1993) and *Panorama* by Potter (1990, as cited in Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Similarly, Kilickaya (2004) adds that these kinds of materials which do not force learners to learn about only one culture may enhance the learners' interest in learning a foreign language. Moreover, it can help them to respect other people with different cultures and backgrounds. He also mentions that the local culture of the learners and the target culture should be incorporated in the textbooks. In contrast, Pulverness (2000) and Alptekin (2002) maintain that some textbooks relate the teaching of English to the students' local culture because of the fact that students require foreign language skills primarily to express themselves and talk about their own culture. In line with this view, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) state that some of these coursebooks are prepared with the intention to make the students more familiar with their own cultural background (e.g. *libro de Ingles* in Venezuela, *Spotlight on English* in Turkey, and *English for Saudi Arabia* in Saudi Arabia).

Considering the fact that culture is a very broad concept, it seems helpful to distinguish between different aspects of it. One of the most famous classifications in this regard is the so-called *big-C culture* and *small-c culture*. The former is not usually difficult to study, as it represents "factual knowledge about the fine arts, such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theater, and film", while the latter consists of a wide variety of dimensions which are interrelated, containing "attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, customs, rituals, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and

discourse organization, the use of time in communication, and the use of physical space and body language" (Chlopek, 2008: 11).

Chlopek (2008: 11) suggests that some of the aspects of the small-c culture, like customs and rituals, are quite palpable and observable, whereas there are some other elements which are "hidden from the eye" and are totally "internalized and subconscious." These factors are often perceived only in contrast with another culture and have an enormous impact on people's attitudes and behaviors. Lack of knowledge of such behaviors may result in misunderstanding and sometimes miscommunication. This happens since these aspects of culture are implicit rules which are formed by a society. She also adds that being aware of such knowledge is a necessity for maintaining successful cross-cultural communication.

In another classification by Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990: 3-4), culture can be distinguished in the following way:

1. The aesthetic: Culture with a capital C: the media, the cinema, music (whether serious or popular) and, above all, literature.

2. The sociological: Culture with a small c: the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions.

3. The semantic: The conceptual system embodied in the language. Many semantic areas (e.g. food, clothes, institutions) are culturally distinctive because they relate to a particular way of life.

4. The pragmatic (or sociolinguistic): The background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication.

Regarding various aspects of culture and their presentation in language textbooks, Lange (2003: 347) says …

> There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the textbook is the curriculum for the language and culture classroom. The literature review has established that in the classroom setting culture learning is largely assumed to be the accumulation of facts (food, dress, holidays, etc.) about a specific culture.

Aside from the factors mentioned above, which influence textbook development, in today's world, where cultural confrontations and meetings can be important parts of our communi-

cations, especially in international conferences, trades, and exchanges, the ability to under-stand and value different cultural perspectives seems necessary. As is generally accepted, globalization influences societies in all areas: political, economic, cultural and educational. These global changes in societies force people to build up new skills, new experiences, new knowledge and educational systems since they need to establish socio-cultural encounters with others from different cultural backgrounds (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009). In this situa-tion, in order to communicate and interact at an international level, people need to learn at least a foreign language as a common medium. Nowadays, this common language is mostly English which is spoken by many people in the world. Thus, foreign language teaching, espe-cially ELT, plays an important role in promoting people's skills and knowledge in order to cope with international communications and contacts, and to communicate with people from different cultures. In other words, alongside developing linguistic knowledge, one of the main aims of foreign language teaching is to equip the learners with cultural and inter-cultural skills because as Byram and Fleming (1998: 2) say, "learning a language as it is spo-ken by a particular group is learning the shared meanings, values and practices of that group as they are embodied in the language." In this sense, textbooks and teachers, as the central elements in every educational system, will undoubtedly play a key role in this regard (see also Lund, 2006; Edward & Usher, 2008; Rico, 2012).

Within this framework, practitioners should prepare their students to live and communi-cate cross-culturally in a global society (Mansilla & Gardner, 2007). To do so, modern lan-guage education tries to focus on a new methodology or approach called intercultural lan-guage learning through which learners can be interculturally fluent. Intercultural language learning emphasizes the inseparability of language and culture and preparation of language learners for intercultural communication in an "increasingly multicultural world" (Ho, 2009: 63). Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is discussed by Byram (1997), is based on the purposes of this approach, and alongside linguistic competence will help learners to become cross-culturally proficient. In other words, teaching from an intercultural viewpoint involves learners in analyzing "their own culturally-shaped worldview and behav-iors" alongside understanding the attitudes of people from other cultures to communicate successfully" (Ho, 2009: 63). Put differently, "successful communication might not be viewed as efficiency of information exchange" (Byram, 1997: 3), but rather as an ability to value others and create and maintain the relationships (Rico, 2012). Therefore, ICC helps

people to become interculturally as well as linguistically competent (Ho, 2009: 63). In this sense, ICC is described based on three main domains of ability: "1) the ability to develop and maintain relationships, 2) the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion, and 3) the ability to attain compliance and obtain cooperation with others" (Fantini, 2000: 27).

Having discussed the concept of culture, its important place in language teaching, and its inclusion in textbooks as one of the crucial factors in language programs, it can be concluded that …

> [Textbooks] should be designed in such a way that [they make] foreign language learner [familiar with] different aspects of the target language from linguistics to culture. … Finally, and most importantly, […] the teacher must keep in mind that it is not enough to be only linguistically competent, but to be able to use and understand the language appropriately… (Çakir, 2010: 188).

Furthermore, according to Sercu (2000: 248) based on what Ausubel (1977) and Ausubel et al. (1978, as cited in Sercu, 2000) claim, materials and textbooks can encourage language learning when they are significantly connected to the students' "existing schemata," and help them relate the new contents to what they already know. Thus, by making this connection, they are firstly able to analyze their own background and cultural identity and secondly to understand other people's perceptions in order to communicate successfully.

1.1. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

During the last decades, the number of studies conducted to investigate the impact of cultural content in language textbooks on fostering the acquisition of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which helps learner to behave and act both linguistically and culturally in an appropriate way when dealing with people from other cultures and countries (Savignon, 1997), has not been great in the international context (e.g. Byram, 1989; Sercu, 2000; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001; Sercu, et al., 2005; Lázár et al., 2007; Äijälä, 2009). As a result, the focus of most studies in the field of textbook evaluation is on the linguistic appropriateness of the coursebooks, and this has led to the development of various evaluation checklists in terms of linguistic elements (e.g. Daoud & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Williams, 1983; Cunningsworth, 1984; Matthews, 1985; Grant, 1987; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991;

Cunningsworth, 1995; Ur, 1996; Robert, 1996; Peacock, 1997; Kieweg, 1999; Richards, 2001; Garinger, 2002; McGrath, 2002; Ansary & Babaii, 2002; McDonough & Shaw, 2003; Litz, 2005; Littlejohn, 2011; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem, & Hajimohammadi , 2011).

Language materials, especially textbooks, offer different perspectives on language, communication, and culture. For example, some of them foster the idea that learning a language is associated with the mastery of grammar, vocabulary, expressions needed for daily communication, and communicative skills (e.g. *Spring* and *English Net* in Turkey and *English Book 1, 2, 3* in Iran). In this sense, learners become good communicators when they are able to exchange information and express themselves. Others focus on giving factual information about the products of a country in order to teach culture and sometimes under-represent the concept of culture and refer to it in the form of touristic images (e.g. *New Senior English for China series*). Moreover, there are some textbooks that deal merely with one specific culture, particularly the target culture, thereby failing to refer to the native culture of the students and provoking a sense of cultural imposition (e.g. *Grow with English* in Indonesia and *Think it Over* in Algeria). Because of the important role of English as an international language in the world, however, students need to acquire skills in order to prepare themselves to negotiate meaning with people from different cultures and mediate between their own and other cultures. Given their important role in language classes, textbooks should therefore focus not only on the culture of Britain or the USA, but rather help the learners to become familiar with their own and other cultures including various English-speaking cultures, and even the culture of countries where English is spoken as a second or foreign language. In this way, textbooks can provide the students with a multifaceted image of different countries which can help raise their awareness of cultural diversity and differences in the world.

Nevertheless, apart from the problems mentioned previously, there are some other drawbacks regarding these issues in language textbooks which have been discussed by many authors (Byram, 1989; Risager, 1991; Pohjanen, 2007; Baker, 2011; Yuen, 2011; Rico, 2012; Lindström, 2012). For instance, in many countries, textbooks offer only insights into the native culture of the students because the aim of foreign language teaching in these countries is to prepare the students to express themselves and talk about their own culture in English or other languages (*English Book 1, 2, 3* in Iran, *El libro de Ingles* in Venezuela, *English for Saudi Arabia* in Saudi Arabia, and *Spotlight in English* and *A Modern English*

Course for Turks in Turkey). Furthermore, some textbooks present a shallow and superficial image of cultures, stressing stereotypical images and overgeneralizing about different cultures (e.g. *Mainstream* and *Fresh English* in Japan). However, many scholars argue that in this globalized world textbooks should try to represent a true picture of the cultures, reduce stereotypes, and promote learners' intercultural communicative competence in terms of "sensitivity, tolerability, and flexibility towards cultural diversities" (Xiao, 2010: 2).

Alongside these issues, due to the important influence of learners' beliefs on their language learning, which can cause positive or negative attitudes towards learning a language and its culture (Paige et. al, 2000), the content of the textbooks as one of the most significant teaching materials and transmitter of cultural values in the classroom should be designed in a way that enhances positive attitudes and motivation since textbooks can affect the way the learners think and act in the process of learning a foreign language.

This study has been motivated by the significance of accommodating the concept of ICC in English textbooks, the lack of comparative studies in international contexts (e.g. Byram & Risager, 1999; Sercu et al., 2005; Rimani Nikou & Soleimani, 2012) of the analysis of language textbooks regarding cultural and intercultural aspects, the importance of teaching English as an International language, and finally the researcher's interest in cultural and intercultural teaching and material development. The primary purpose of this work is to evaluate English textbooks regarding the incorporation of ICC at the upper-secondary school level of three European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden) and one Asian country (Iran) where English is taught as a foreign language (see Sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, & 3.1.5 for the discussion about the selection of these countries). In other words, the main focus of the present research is to investigate the cultural and intercultural aspects presented in the English textbooks of the four aforementioned countries. The secondary aim is to explore teachers' and learners' opinions about their English textbooks both from linguistic and intercultural viewpoints in these countries. In this way, the beliefs of teachers and students as the actual users of the textbooks are presented alongside the textual analysis by the researcher.

In order to achieve the aims of this study, the following research questions are posed:

Research Questions

- How do the English textbooks analyzed in the present study deal with the concept of intercultural communicative competence?

- Which aspects of the target/other culture(s)[3]—big-C and small-c—are stressed in the English textbooks analyzed in the present study?

- What are the probable difficulties of EFL teachers in terms of intercultural matters in their textbooks? What do they do to solve these problems?

- How do the English textbooks analyzed in the present study help learners to grasp the differences and similarities between the target culture(s) and the students' native culture?

- How are the linguistic elements (e.g. skills, vocabulary, grammar, etc.) presented in the English textbooks analyzed in this study?

1.2. Scope of the Study

The participants of this study are EFL teachers and learners who are teaching and studying English at upper-secondary school level in Germany, Iran, the Netherlands, and Sweden. In order to compare the results in these countries, upper-secondary school was selected since the educational systems of these countries are more or less the same at this level[4]. Moreover, regarding the main focus of this study, which is the analysis and evaluation of English textbooks, only the textbooks which are used in the first grade of the upper-secondary school were selected. This decision was made for two reasons:

1. Teachers do not use textbooks so often in the two last grades at the upper-secondary school level in the three aforementioned European countries.

2. In this way, the researcher could narrow the scope of the research in order to manage the data obtained in a more accurate way.

The next issue is related to Germany. Because of the fact that every federal state in this country has its own curriculum, and as a result its own textbooks, the focus of this research

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[3] For pragmatic and methodological reasons, "target culture(s)" in this study means British and/or US-American cultures, where British culture refers to the culture of English people in England. In this way, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish cultures are excluded and treated as other cultures in order to specify the scope of the research in terms of target cultures in textbooks. Since "English culture" is a very general term, to avoid misunderstandings, the phrase "British culture" in the questionniares refers to the "English culture" only. Furthermore, "other cultures" means the cultures of countries other than England and America (US).

[4] See Chapter 3

was limited to one state, Bavaria. In this way, the data obtained from Germany could be presented and interpreted in a consistent way since different curricula and textbooks might result in various interpretations. Moreover, the textbook analyzed in this research (*Green Line New 6*) is among the leading ones used by the schools participating in this study. Concerning the textbook in Iran, it should be mentioned that *English Book 1* is the only textbook provided by the Ministry of Education for teaching English in the first grade of upper-secondary school level in the old educational system (see Section 3.1.5).

Given the focus of this study, the development of ICC is taken much more into consideration than the linguistic aspects, both in the analysis of the textbooks and the design of the questionnaires used in this work. In other words, the analysis of the textbooks and investigation of the participants' ideas about their coursebooks from the linguistic point of view are presented as a minor focus. In addition, the evaluative criteria used in this study consider some particular aspects (see Appendix A) through which a textbook can be analyzed, and the conclusions are consequently relevant to the criteria applied.

Finally, in order to narrow down the scope of the research, the variable of sex in the sample of this study is controlled, and gender differences are not considered in presenting the results.

1.3. Limitations of the Study

Regarding the limitation of this study, it should be mentioned that in the Netherlands and Sweden, teachers are free to work with or without a fixed textbook at all levels and can choose from a variety of available textbooks. Since the focus of this study is on the analysis and evaluation of English textbooks, this issue has affected the number of participants, especially teachers. As a result, finding participants who worked with the same textbooks in the specified time of data collection was challenging, and led to having fewer subjects, especially teachers, in these two countries in comparison to the other two. Moreover, some Dutch teachers were not particularly willing to take part in such studies because of their workload and shortage of time.

The other important fact related to this issue concerns textbook selection in these two countries. In order to run a logical comparison, those coursebooks (*Progress Gold A* in Sweden and *New Interface HAVO 4* in the Netherlands) which were used by the schools and

teachers participating in this study are analyzed. However, it should be noted that the textbooks analyzed are also among the leading ones in these counties.

1.4. Framework of the Thesis

This work consists of five chapters. The first chapter or introduction was concerned with giving a short review of the importance of textbooks in language programs, the role of culture in foreign language teaching, especially the textbook, and the focus and objectives of this study. The next chapter reviews the literature on textbooks and their role in the classroom, different methods of textbook evaluation and analysis, culture, the relationship between language and culture, the emergence of ICC, the status of culture in the textbooks, and finally some studies in this regard. Chapter three outlines the methodology used to collect the data and run the textbook analysis, presenting a thorough view of the participants, the instruments, and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. The results are presented in chapter four, and finally, chapter five will analyze and summarize the findings and include suggestions for future improvements.

As mentioned above, the following chapter offers a comprehensive review of the concept of textbook, material evaluation and analysis, culture and ICC in language teaching and material design.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Language should 'unlock the door' to the culture.

Michael Byram (1991)[5]

This chapter is dedicated to a review of the literature related to the main foci of this study. The first part is concerned with the concept of the textbook, its roles in the classroom, different views toward it, and principles of material development and textbooks evaluation and analysis. The second section deals with the notion of culture, the relationship between language and culture, the history of teaching culture and its significance, the development of ICC, and three models in this regard. At the end of this chapter, various studies on textbook evaluation in terms of cultural points of view are presented.

2.1. Textbooks

As mentioned before, materials refer to "anything which is used to help language learners to learn. [they] can be in the form, for example, of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-ROM, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language being learned" (Tomlinson, 2011: xiii-xiv). Among them, textbooks are key elements in some language programs. In these situations, they provide the basis for both the language input received by the learners and the language practice taking place in the classroom. Textbooks are designed to contribute to "the content of the lesson, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in;" as a result, language learning process is sometimes linked closely to the broad use of textbooks in different contexts (Richards, 2012: 1). In this sense, according to Koenig (2010: 178), "die zentrale Bedeutung des Lehrwerks[6] als stabilisierender

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[5] source: Teaching culture and language: Towards an integrated model
[6] According to Thaler (2012, see Section 2.1.1), the terms "Lehrbuch (textbook)" and "Lehrwerk (course)" are defined differently in the German context, where "Lehrbuch" is considered as a part of "Lehrwerk" which includes all materials used in language classroom.

Faktor, Planungsgrundlage und Leitmedium im Fremdsprachenunterricht ist dabei unbestritten.[7]"

Before discussing the various roles of the textbook in language learning, a short overview of different definitions of the textbook will be presented in the following part.

2.1.1. Definition

There are different definitions regarding the concept of textbook. Generally speaking, according to the Merriam Webster online dictionary (2014), a textbook is "a book used in the study of a subject as: (a) one containing a presentation of the principles of a subject and (b) a literary work relevant to the study of a subject." Likewise, a textbook is defined as "a book that teaches a particular subject and that is used especially in schools and colleges" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2013). Moreover, a textbook "is a book containing facts about a particular subject that is used by people studying that subject" (Collins American English Dictionary, 2014).

In another definition by Doff and Giesler (2012: 88), textbooks and teaching materials are indirect resources which are at the same time significant scientific, political, and educational media since …

> [Schulbücher] definieren nicht nur „legitimes Wissen" und wünschenswerte Kompetenzen, sondern vermitteln auch staatlich bzw. gesellschaftlich gewünschte Identitätsangebote. Sie sind deshalb immer auch ein Politikum und verweisen auf die Kontexte, in denen sie hergestellt, genutzt und verhandelt werden. Schulbücher können ethnische, kulturelle, religiöse oder politische Konflikte auflösen oder abbilden, zugleich aber auch als Instrument der Konfliktbewältigung und Verständigung dienen (GEI, 2010, see also Depaepe & Simon, 2002: 10, as cited in Doff & Giesler, 2012: 88)[8].

As McGrath (2013) suggests, a textbook is a book which is produced by a publisher, the Ministry of Education in each country or a large organization, such as a university language center, and it is usually supplemented by the learners' workbook, teachers' guide, audio or video materials, and visual aids. Similarly, Fredriksson and Olsson (2006: 10) argue …

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[7] The central importance of the course as stabilizing factor, basis for planning, and main medium in foreign language teaching is undisputed. (My own translation)

[8] [Textbooks] not only define "legitimate knowledge" and desirable competences but also provide a range of nationally and socially desired identities. They are, therefore, always a political issue and reference the contexts in which they are produced, used, and discussed. Textbooks can resolve or depict ethnic, cultural, religious or political conflicts; at the same time, however, they may also serve as an instrument of conflict resolution and understanding. (My own translation)