

Intercultural Analysis of Grade 12 Compulsory English Textbook: Content Analysis

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Abstract

In the context of globalization and increasing cross-cultural communication, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures has become a fundamental necessity for language learners. English language teaching has, therefore, expanded beyond linguistic capability to include intercultural communicative competence, particularly in ESL and EFL contexts like Nepal. As key academic tools, English textbooks serve as important mediators of cultural knowledge, making the integration of intercultural content a significant area of inquiry. This study aims to explore the representation of cultural content and examine how interculturality is incorporated in the selection and organization of materials in the Grade 12 compulsory English textbook prescribed by the Curriculum Development Centre of Nepal. Employing a qualitative research design, the study adopts content analysis with observation checklist and analysis framework as the primary data collection method and utilizes thematic analysis for data interpretation. The findings indicate that the textbook incorporates international, target, and source cultural elements; however, the representation is not fully balanced. Target culture is more prominently emphasized, while international and source cultures receive comparatively limited attention across themes such as religion, customs, gender, and artistic expressions. The study emphasizes the need for balanced cultural representation to effectively promote learners' intercultural communicative competence and recommends greater curricular flexibility in integrating diverse cultural perspectives.

Key words: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Text-book, EFL context, Source culture, Target culture, international culture.

Introduction

English language teaching-learning in EFL context like in Nepal, textbook is one of the reliable learning materials in education. Text-books carry culture. Culture is the identity of every community. Text-book reflects community's identity, person's identity. Language reflects the culture in the text-book. Language and culture are inseparable. Wise selection and gradation of culturally related learning materials in text-books can certainly enhance learners' language learning. In the present global cultural context, intercultural competence is an essential part of language learning.

Text-book designing is based on curriculum and national objectives set by the nation to produce necessary man-powers. Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) define textbooks as "the core learning medium composed of text and/or images designed to bring about a specific set of educational outcomes; traditionally a printed and bound book including illustrations and instructions for facilitating sequences of learning activities" (p. 15). This definition helps to understand us that the books are the principal medium to achieve the learners' learning achievement. It is commonly available in the form of hard copy, however, at present the soft copy can also be available. Textbooks generally consist of figures, pictures, illustrations and the contents are organized in simple to complex order.

Text-books are not only important for learners but they are also equally essential teaching aids for teacher since they are regularly used in classrooms. They create motivation for learners if they are culturally relevant. Sadker et al. (2009) pen that "students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook" (p. 88). Textbooks are the tool of learning transformation in education that can reach to the mass of people since, as Brugeilles and Cromer (2009) stated, they are "still the cheapest of available media, and they are easy to carry and use" (p. 15). Textbooks are the core materials for teaching, they are mostly used in the classroom by both the teachers and the students. They function as the guideline for the students and teachers in case of any confusion. Both the learners and facilitators may find using the textbooks easier as they are already prepared materials. Similarly, Chung (2000) rightly says that text-books are significant tools in educational process. They help in the socialization process of children. They also convey cultural messages to children on how social relations in their society should be organized. They are the source of information on how different culture and cultural activities are presented in the society.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) highlights that a textbook becomes beneficial if learners, teachers and textbook authors have common cultural values. If they do not have same cultural values, then at least they must be aware with the cultural norms of one another. They further told that text-book can play the role of a facilitator, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a restrictor and an ideology. Cunningsworth (1995) argues that a textbook can be a source of activities, a syllabus for pushing the teaching/learning process towards systematization, and as a scaffold for novice teachers. It becomes easier for teachers to teach smoothly with a culturally relevant textbook. Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks represent the visible heart of any EFL program. Text-books offer maximum advantages for both learners and the facilitators when they are being used in the ESL /EFL classrooms. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) believe that the textbook is an almost universal tool of teaching-learning.

The combination of culture and language have been an issue to be discussed in the recent educational research. Different scholars have different opinions about the culture. Anthropologists define it as 'the way people live' (Chastian, 1988). They discover how people of a particular community are related to particular sets of social values and behaviors. Ethnography gives priority on how the speech system and behavior groups are related to their social structures and beliefs, and cultural studies aim to understand the way that members of a group represent themselves through their cultural products (Corbett, 2003).

Cultural reflection in EFL text-books keeps significant value in learning the language. Language is heavily intertwined with the culture and culture is reflected through language. They are best gained together (Emmitt & Pollock, 1997). Englebert (2004) discusses that teaching a foreign language is also teaching a foreign culture, and it is important to be sensitive to the fact that our learners, our facilitators, our administrators, and, if we live out of our country, our neighbors do not share all of our cultural practices. Regarding the ingrained nature of language and culture, Brown (1994) says: 'A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; they two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.' In the field of teaching and learning, the relationship of language learning and cultural awareness is so close that one can come to conclude that language learning is culture learning. On the part of teacher, language teaching is culture teaching (Gao, 2006). This relationship is so important that culture is referred to as "the fifth dimension of language teaching" (Damen, 1987).

Intercultural competence, the ultimate goal of learning language, cannot be achieved if the textbooks focus solely on the learners' native culture or the target culture. Victor (1999) and Majdzadeh (2002) put forward that the textbooks should contain home, target, and global culture. While learning a language, they learn to think differently, they learn to behave differently, they actually cross linguistic border for communication. It seems that emphasizing on only one culture does not work for language learning. In this way, language learning and learning about target cultures cannot be separated (Valdes, 1986). It is very important to include target culture along with the source culture in the textbooks in order to arise students' awareness of the target culture.

Byram (1997) discusses that intercultural communicative competence is required for better language learning in EFL context. In course of language learning, learners learn the knowledge, skills, attitudes and cultural awareness necessary to communicate interculturally. Intercultural knowledge refers, here, having considerable amount of information about one's own culture (source culture) and the culture of the second language (target culture). Learners need to be aware with the target language and their associated cultures. Along with knowledge of the culture, students need to obtain knowledge and understanding of societal and cultural norms, values and interactions associated with the culture(s) of the second language.

Similarly, Opoku-Amankwa et al., (2011) mentioned that "textbooks should not simply aim at providing a body of knowledge. Rather, they should stimulate the pupils' interest, develop creativity and interactive learning, and create cultural awareness." The activities and contents of the textbooks, must be appropriate for learners. They have to help to achieve national educational goals (Faris, 2014). Culture plays vibrant role in the development of the contents and activities of the textbook because culture-oriented textbooks capacitate the students to promote intercultural communicative competence. Setyono and Widodo (2019) carried out study on an EFL textbook for Indonesian senior high school learners. They found four themes of multicultural values in the textbook: respect for the cultures of various ethnic and religious groups; indigenous people's cultures; conflict-avoidance and peace with all ways of life and nature; and

appreciation of creative cultural products. They further suggested that the implications of this textual study suggest that English plays an increasingly important role as a global lingua franca, multicultural materials from outer and expanding circle countries need to be added to English language teaching (ELT) textbooks.

The discussion made in the above, shows that while designing a good English textbook, the writer should consider a balanced representation of source, target and international cultures. It means that the textbook materials should include culturally relevant content from the target culture, source culture, and international culture as proposed by Cortazzi & Jin (1999). Such cultural representations are aimed at helping students in perceiving and categorizing social contexts they may encounter, highlighting both cultural skills and cultural awareness.

No study has been conducted from cultural perspective at the text-book of Grade 12 Compulsory book yet in Nepal. So, I am interested to analyze our textbooks from intercultural perspectives. This study aimed to investigate the cultural representation presented in the Grade 12 compulsory English textbook in Nepal. To pin point, the objective of the study is to analyze the English text-book of Grade 12 with the lens of Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence model: Attitude, knowledge, Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovering and interaction, Critical cultural awareness. In Nepal, most of the public schools follow the textbooks, written by the Nepali textbook authors. As a result, the EFL learners and the teachers in Nepal share the same cultural values along with textbook authors (but not always). The study focuses on the cultural representation in the Grade 12 textbook. The written texts that contain cultural information were identified by employing content analysis based on Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) three sources of cultural information, and coded under the five categories that is what Byram's (1997) ICC model. This study answered the question of "How are the culture-related contents portrayed in the Grade 12 English textbook?"

Methodology

As a qualitative researcher I analyzed the text-book data qualitatively on the basis of qualitative content analysis under the perspective of text-book evaluation. Being an English subject teacher of Grade 12, I myself prepared an observation checklist on five criteria of Byram's (1997) ICC model for analyzing the textbook and then I analyzed the data descriptively. Believing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of researcher himself as a "research tool," I analyzed the cultural contents with my own observation connecting with the intercultural theoretical lens. The reason of choosing interpretivism as a paradigm is that my perceptions towards Grade XII Compulsory book cannot be measured only in numerical parameter. In this study, I collected data preparing an observation checklist in the light of Byram's (1997) ICC components and coding table in line with the source culture, target culture and international culture keeping in mind different eight criteria- religions, celebrations, customs and rituals, genders, castes, clothes, food items and arts and literary genres for analyzing the textbook. I analyzed the textbook in terms of different criteria of the text with the help of a checklist and making generalization with my own experience.

Hsieh and Shanno (2005) defined qualitative content analysis as a research tool for subjective interpretation of text data content using a structured classification process of coding and defining themes or patterns. The process of the study: First, the contents were analyzed including reading texts, dialogues, pictures and quotes. Content analysis is employed in this step to obtain and organize information in an organized format to make inferences about the characteristics and context of written and other documented materials. Second, selecting units of analysis from the English text-book. Similarly, I put my own generalizations with help of my own experiences and analyzed the result qualitatively. This study analyzes the overall chapters mentioned in the textbook from intercultural perspective.

The textbook is identified by using Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) three sources of cultural information. They are target culture materials, source culture materials, and international culture materials. The analysis was focused on the cultural contents in line with the Byram's (1997) ICC model. Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) categorization is used to portray the presentation of culture-related contents in the English textbook. The written texts were classified into those sources, and Byram's (1997) ICC model checklist was used in the procedure of the content analysis. The scope of the cultural contents and how it meets the needs of cultural teaching in English language teaching are revealed in this checklist.

The newly published English textbook of Grade 12 is the only one material for this study. This book is published by Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Curriculum Development Center, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal. The book is divided into two sections: Language Development Section and Literature Section. The language development section includes a range of contemporary issue-based local and global thematic twenty texts intended to develop intensive reading skills and foster competence in grammar, vocabulary, speech and writing. The literature section includes genre-based twenty literary texts for both intensive and extensive reading, so as to enable the learners to discern different aspects of the literary texts and practise creative writing. Each text is followed by adequate exercises to foster creativity and critical interpretation in the learners along with interactive skills and sensitivity about the culture and tradition. The English textbook for Grade 12 has been prepared following the spirit of NCF 2076 and Secondary Level Curriculum 2076 (Grade 11 and Grade12). An attempt has also been made to incorporate the emerging needs of learners. The book includes the contents to develop all four language skills blended in the tasks and activities with contextual grammar and related vocabulary. The reason to use this textbook is that it is provided by the Ministry of Education as the main resource in the English language teaching and learning process.

Result and Discussion

The research aimed to examine how interculturality is included into the Compulsory textbook of Grade 12 prescribed by CDC, Nepal. The textbook was analyzed and interpreted using content analysis in the light of Byram's (1997) theoretical framework of ICC components based on the depth study and observation checklist qualitatively. While analyzing the representation of different cultures in the textbook, I have interpreted on the basis of the international, target and source culture in terms of religions, celebrations, customs and rituals, genders, castes, clothes, food items and arts and literary genres included in different lessons, activities and pictures of the textbook.

Thematic Analysis of Grade 12 Book from Intercultural Perspectives

As a researcher and subject teacher of Grade 12 compulsory English, I made depth observation through each and every lesson. This book has only 40 units. It has two sections: Language Development section and Literature section. The language development section consists of contemporary issue-based local and global thematic 20 texts intended to develop intensive reading skills and promote competence in grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, writing. At the end of each unit (from language development section), project work makes learners aware on their holistic development. The literature section includes genre-based 20 literary texts for both intensive and extensive reading, so as to enable the learners to discern different aspects of the literary texts and practice creative writing. Each text is followed by adequate exercises to foster creativity and critical interpretation in the learners along with interactive skills and sensitivity about the culture and tradition.

The English textbook for Grade 12 has been prepared adopting the spirit of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2018 and Secondary Level Curriculum 2078 (Grade 11 and Grade 12). NCF highlights the enhancement of skill oriented, life skill based, employment-driven and value-based school education. This book is prepared to meet its curriculum standards. An attempt has also been made to incorporate the emerging needs of learners. The book includes the contents to develop all four language skills blended in the tasks and activities with contextual grammar and related vocabulary. All components of each lesson in the text-book are equally important and they have the specific aim of presentation so as to fulfill the learning outcomes stated in the curriculum. It would have been better if glossary with pronunciation (phonemic transcription) had given in the text-book. Teacher and learners could consult in confusion related with pronunciation. Anyway, this book is based on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) or Content Based Instruction (CBI) approach. It is based on integrated approach of language learning: language skills, literature, grammar, diversity, ethnicity. It seems that this textbook is to develop intercultural competency among the teachers and students.

While talking about the physical aspects of the textbook, it has loose binding. Due to its poor-quality binding, papers are likely to come out soon. The quality of the papers is low medium. The layout of the book is not so attractive and colourful. The front cover- page of the book is filled with main components (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar, Short Stories, Poems, Essays, One Act Play) of English language learning. There is very short and sweet information about Corona virus disease (COVID-19), its symptoms and precautions with clear pictures is given in Nepali language in inside of the front cover-page and inside of the back cover page of the book. There is a picture in the layout of the textbook in which a boy and a girl are reading the book which has made the book look attractive. The price of the book is not mentioned. Overall, the textbook can be said to be appropriate in terms language skills and aspects.

In a multilingual global context, it is expected that the textbook which is prescribed for Grade 12 should be suitable from language learning and global culture perspectives. It seems better if text-book represents source, target and international culture in a balanced way. It seems a bit lacking on the part of proper balance in terms of global culture. But authors have tried their best to prepare the best book culturally relevant materials.

Inclusion of Cultural Contents in the Textbook

The textbook contains a blend of literary texts including a range of contemporary issue-based local and global thematic texts and academic writing representing from diverse cultural contexts offering opportunities for intercultural learning. The analysis found that the textbook comprises a combination of local, target, and international cultural contents with diverse themes such as Critical Thinking, Family, Technology, Education, Human Rights and the Age of Inequality and Migration and Diaspora. However, it reveals that there is unequal emphasis on target (western) cultures with inadequate representation of source (Nepalese) culture and non-western international culture. It shows that out of 40 texts 23 texts belong to the writers from English speaking countries whereas 12 texts belong to the writers from out of English-speaking countries and 5 writers are Nepalese writers. Emphasis on only target culture may limit opportunities for learner to involve with a wider variety of cultural perspectives.

Target Culture

Reading lessons mainly represent western contexts with minimum addition of local or diverse intercultural cultures. For instance, "*A Respectable Woman*" by Kate Chopin (USA) and "*Neighbors*" by Tim Winton (Australia), "*A Day*" by Emily Dickinson (USA), "*I Was My Own Route*" by Julia de Burgos (USA) which explore themes of gender roles, cultural proximity, immortality and identity with emancipation, respectively; highlighting western cultural norms and values.

International Non-western Culture

International non-western culture seems fewer materials than that of target cultural contexts. For example, "*I am Sorry- The Hardest Three Words to Say*" by Desmond Tutu (South Africa), "*Migration and Diaspora*" by Michel S. Laguerra, "*My Old Home*" by Lu Xun (China), "*Humility*" by Yuval Noah Harari (Jerusalem) which raise the global theme of human rights, migration with diaspora, Chinese culture and virtue of humility, respectively; but such examples are comparatively less than target culture.

Home Culture

Minimal representation with few lessons directly rooted in Nepalese cultural contexts like "*The Bull*" by Bhimnidhi Tiwari and "*The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun*" by Shankar Lamichhane, "*Soft Strom*" by Abhi Subedi and "*A Journey Back in Time*" by Ananda P. Shrestha and "*On Walking*" by Sristi Bhattarai which offer insights into Nepalese tradition and identity.

Such an imbalance may restrict students' exposure to the wider cultural world views that is essential to foster intercultural communicative competence. According to Byram (1997), ICC requires not only exposure to multiple cultures but also the ability to interpret, relate, and critically engage with them. The textbook's content does not fully support this integrative approach although textbook has exercises related to "Reference to the context" and "Reference beyond the text" in literature section only. This finding agrees previous research (Ghasemi & Pasand, 2018; Hillard, 2014) that EFL/ESL textbooks entertain western contents, minimizing non-

westerns and home materials. Minimal inclusion of local and non-western perspective can hamper students' intercultural communicative competence as they may get less opportunity to confirm their own identities while engaging internationally.

Presentation of Cultural Elements

The way of presenting cultural contents meaningfully can influence learners' ability to enhance intercultural communicative competence. In the textbook, cultural contents are mainly presented through readings passages, thematic lessons, literary texts and some exercises like- 'Reference to the Context', 'Reference beyond the text', 'Project work'. However, the pedagogical approaches applied to treat these lessons are often informational and linguistic, rather than much reflective to foster intercultural understanding. Main reflections include:

Contextualization

Cultural perspectives are generally presented without sufficient brainstorming and follow-up activities. For instance, the story "Neighbors" by Tim Winton, an Australian writer, discusses on multicultural pressure and acceptance, but given exercises do not encourage learners strongly to reflect on multicultural aspects in relation to their experiences. Every unit contains reading passages followed by exercises expected to develop language skills rather than intercultural understanding.

Interactive Activities

There are fewer interactive opportunities are provided to encourage learners to reflect on and compare cultural norms and values. For example, the text "Family" deals with changing family structures in different countries, but lacks the activities that can assist learners to analyze these changes critically.

Critical Thinking

Limited chances are given for learners to analyze and question cultural conventions. For example, the essay "Human Rights and the Age of Inequality" by Samuel Moyn, an American writer; presents a global view on human rights but lacks follow-up activities that can connect global themes with Nepalese and SAARC countries' societal issues, missing an opportunity to foster critical cultural awareness, a vital element of ICC (Byram, 1997).

Kramsch (1988, 1993) says that teaching and learning culture is a dynamic process of meaning making, not just as a gathering of facts. Yet, the textbook provides learners minimum opportunity to examine meaning and interpretation of the texts through interaction, reflection and comparison in cross-cultural contexts.

Cultural Contents and Intercultural Competence Development

In the textbook, there are some texts like- Family, Neighbors, The Bull; that raise diverse cultural issues significantly, but selection of reading texts, design of tasks and learning activities do not align with the goal of enhancing intercultural communicative competence. The majority of exercises are focused on language acquisition (grammar, vocabulary, comprehension) with minimal emphasis on skills of cultural interpretation, comparison, or dialogue. The following observations were found:

Fewer Reflective Tasks

Activities and exercises do not encourage strongly to relate texts to their own experiences or values with the global trends in terms of cultural experiences. For example, in the poem entitled "*I Was My Own Route*" by Julia de Burgos highlights on female identity and emancipation from male domination, yet no exercises stimulate learners to reflect their own social roles or gender identities to raise voice against patriarchal society.

Less Engagement with Local Cultures

The text like "*The Bull*" has solid cultural tone in Nepal, but students are not encouraged to reflect on its relevance to modern Nepalese society in reference to the republic system of Nepal.

Dialogic Opportunities

There is little inspiration for learners to engage and involve in discussions, interviews, debates, or role plays on global theme of tolerance, empathy, humanity and peace and harmony that can create cultural dilemmas, differences, or misunderstandings to become a global learner having intercultural communicative competence.

Sercu (2005) highlights that without obvious intercultural objectives and supportive teacher mediation, language education hazards being insincere in its cultural perspectives. The textbook's construction does not seem to support teachers in employing an intercultural method, and minimal teacher guidance or supplementary resources are provided. Therefore, the textbook's existing approach may not adequately prepare learners with the skills and attitudes required for effective intercultural communication.

Key Findings through the Lens of Byram's (1997) Theoretical Framework

The way in which cultural components are presented significantly in the textbook can support to foster intercultural communicative competence.

Attitudes

The textbook has minimum opportunities to foster attitudes of openness and curiosity towards other cultures as there is the majority of western materials in the textbook that may restrict to welcome other cultures. Activities are mainly focused on language skills, with minimal emphasis on encouraging learners to question cultural conventions or praise cultural diversity.

Knowledge

In the textbook, the lessons offer factual information about multiple cultures, they often lack deepness in exploring cultural practices, opinions, and ethics. This surface treatment can limit learners' ability to grasp wider cultural knowledge.

Skills of Interpreting and Relating

The exercises and tasks are not sufficient enough for learners to interpret and reflect cultural meanings or relate them to their own experiences. For instance, after reading the story entitled "*A Respectable Woman*" by Kate Chopin, learners are not encouraged to compare the social norms described in the story with those in neighboring countries and Nepalese society.

Skills of Discovery and Interaction

The textbook has minimum opportunities for learners in the tasks and activities that require them to search for new cultural information or engage in intercultural interactions. Integrating activities such as interviews, panel discussion, group discussion, interaction with individuals from different cultural backgrounds could boost these competences.

Critical Cultural Awareness

There is a necessity of activities and tasks to be included in the textbook that encourage critical assessment of cultural practices and perceptions. Encouraging students to evaluate and critique cultural norms, both their own and others', is crucial for fostering critical cultural awareness.

The current Grade 12 textbook moderately meets these criteria. While it offers multicultural texts, it does not sufficiently enhance reflection, comparison, interaction with cultural expert and dialogue. Kramsch's (1988) call for dealing language and culture as combined processes is not fully realized. Similarly, Sercu (2005) argues about teacher preparedness and resource limitations highlight broader systemic issues in intercultural language education in Nepal.

Role of Cultural Contents in Fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence

The current pattern of cultural contents in the textbook provides inadequate support for the development of ICC. The following observations were made:

Integration of Cultural Content

The inclusion of multicultural texts provides a foundation for intercultural learning. However, without clear pedagogical techniques to engage with these texts critically and reflectively, the possibility for enhancing ICC remains underutilized.

Pedagogical Implications

To develop ICC effectively and efficiently, the textbook should integrate activities that align with Byram's (1997) framework of ICC; attitude, knowledge, Skills of Interpreting and Relating, Skills of Discovery and Interaction and Critical Cultural Awareness. This incorporates of tasks and activities that encourage learners to critique cultural differences, reflect on their own cultural identities, and involve in intercultural communication.

The Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook comprises a variety of texts with the potential to promote intercultural learning. However, the current presentation and supplementary activities may not sufficiently assist the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence as outlined by Byram (1997). The textbook can better prepare learners to navigate and appreciate cultural diversity in an increasingly interconnected world, by incorporating reflective, critical, and interactive pedagogical strategies.

Conclusion

This study explores various cultural representation in grade 12 English textbook. Through the lens of Byram's (1997) ICC components combining with the checklist and Analysis Framework highlighting on religions, celebrations, customs and rituals, genders, castes, clothes, food items

and arts and literary genres represented in the text from different culture, cultural perspectives have been observed. This study was guided by three objectives, i. e. to explore the representation of source, target and international culture integrated in Grade XII Compulsory textbook; to investigate the cultural contents of the textbook with respect to its usefulness for enhancing learners' intercultural communicative competence and to suggest pedagogical implications for English language teaching in multicultural context.

It was found that that the textbook includes a moderate level of cultural contents, with an imbalance representation emphasizing on target culture over international culture material and source cultural materials. Majority of the lessons belong to target cultural contexts but there is linkage among international, target and source culture materials through the exercises and tasks. Text like- 'Humility', 'Migration and Diaspora', Human Rights', 'War and Peace', 'Land of Plenty' 'Family' 'A Story of My Childhood' highlight global values of humanity, gender equality, empathy, tolerance, family bond, ecology and environment, religious tolerance and so on which are globally accepted. Similarly, texts such as 'The Treasure in the Forest', 'Respectable Woman' 'A Day', 'Every Morning I Wake' 'On Libraries' 'Power and Politics' highlights western literary tradition and values of the English-speaking countries as target cultural material. Similarly, texts like- 'A Journey Back in Time', 'The Half-Closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun' 'Bull' highlight rural Nepalese life, stressing themes of hard work, appreciation for indigenous traditions, cultural identity, morality, and family values, which help learners connect with their local cultural heritage as a source culture material. Similarly, texts like – 'On Walking', 'A Life of Sound and Silence' highlight the local and global theme of health and music. However, global cultural and source cultural representation are limited compared to the target cultural materials, i. e. Western literary traditions. These inclusions expose learners to cultural diversity, though they often lack explicit exploration of underlying cultural values or proportional elements.

Cultural contents in the textbook are mentioned through stories, poems, essays, one -act play and informational texts, often emphasizing shared human experiences like environmental protection or social justice. For instance, the essay 'Marriage as a Social Institution' highlights universal themes of marriage and its advantages. However, pedagogical approaches largely focus on language comprehension, with limited activities encouraging deeper intercultural engagement. Exercises typically comprise summarizing, analyzing, or answering factual questions about the texts, rather than prompting students to reflect on or compare cultural norms and practices across different societies.

In spite of having these limitations, the cultural contents contribute to enhancing intercultural competence by encouraging empathy, respect, and tolerance. Texts such as 'A Respectable Woman' and 'Neighbours' explore universal human emotions and relationships, multiculturalism, fostering learners' ability to relate to diverse perspectives. However, opportunities for practical application of intercultural skills, such as through role-playing, debates, or comparative analyses, are underutilized and focus is only passing the examination. This limits learners' ability to critically think cultural differences or navigate intercultural interactions in global scenarios.

Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook incorporates cultural content that enhances foundational cultural awareness and appreciation for local traditions, but it falls short of fully developing learners' intercultural communicative competence as its current structure, content balance, and pedagogical orientation do not sufficiently support the development of intercultural communicative competence. As Nepal becomes increasingly interconnected with the global community, equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to navigate cultural diversity is not just desirable but necessary. Reviewing the textbook with obvious intercultural aims in mind supported by theory and practice and incorporating global cultural materials, designing reflective and comparative tasks, and adopting interactive pedagogical approaches may significantly boost its effectiveness in preparing students for a multicultural world. In addition, the study also revealed that the textbook is not fully reasonable in terms of the equal representation of gender in the text and images. Similarly, there is less representation of minority and marginalized language communities in their authorship.

Over all, the English textbook for grade 12 fosters empathy, tolerance, and an understanding of common human values, all of which moderately improve intercultural communicative ability. However, its potential is restricted by its lack of sufficient intercultural materials and activities, underrepresentation of marginalized groups inside Nepal, and insufficient representation of global cultural variety. The textbook should incorporate exercises and culturally relevant materials that foster critical thinking, comparative analysis, and effective cross-cultural communication skills in addition to a greater range of cultural viewpoints in order to better conform to ICC standards.

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