

Inter-American cultural relations in foreign language textbooks: The cases of English and French

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Abstract: International English as a foreign language (EFL) and French as a foreign language (FFL) textbooks may be used in EFL and in FFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal for reasons such as those suggested in this paper with cultural content that is specific to the Americas. However, based on previous research findings, one would not expect these textbooks to treat this content in depth. These textbooks may, therefore, need to be supplemented when used in EFL and in FFL programmes that include cultural content that focuses on the Americas, and to this end their content has to be inspected. Consequently, analysing the explicit and implicit presence of inter-American cultural relations, i.e. of the connection and comparison of human activity and the natural environment existing in different American countries, in reading and listening text obtained from a sample of international EFL textbooks and from a sample of international FFL textbooks which are available on markets of different American countries was thought to be an interesting endeavour. The present paper explores several variables that may be useful for this purpose. For example, it compares the frequencies of the texts that reflect inter-American cultural relations and those of the texts reflecting cultural relations of American countries with geographical places which are in other continents. Based on the data of the present study, it could be argued that, as expected, the extent of the presence of inter-American cultural content in the target text obtained from the EFL and FFL textbook samples is not significant. As a result, the present study provides notions to consider when finding out if, and how, international EFL and FFL textbooks that are used in the EFL and FFL programmes in question need to be supplemented where inter-American cultural content is concerned.

Keywords: Inter-American cultural relations, EFL textbooks, FFL textbooks, intercultural competence, instrumental and integrative orientations.

1. Introduction

Textbook researchers have referred to the presence and/or depiction of some American countries and/or of inter-American cultural content in English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks and in English as a second language (ESL) textbooks while analysing international textbooks (Cottle 2009; Varón Páez 2009; Hamiloğlu & Mendi 2010; Gómez Rodríguez 2015), textbooks produced for local markets (Basabe 2009; Lappalainen 2011; Varis 2012; Shah et al. 2014), and both international textbooks and textbooks produced for local markets (Basabe 2006; Mahmood et al. 2012). However, the analysis and quantification of the extent of the presence and description of each American country and/or of inter-American cultural content does not seem to be the main purpose of the literature reviewed. For example, this sometimes refers to these countries and to this content to illustrate and to analyse different concepts. Thus, further research on this issue appears to be necessary in connection with EFL/ESL textbooks used in the Americas. This consideration lies in the belief that the findings of this research may be useful to EFL professionals who conceive EFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal with cultural content that is specific to the Americas. This belief stems from the arguments that follow.

Some of the above-mentioned studies have found that the content of EFL/ESL textbooks may revolve around a small number of countries where English is spoken as a first language. A case in point is Basabe's (2006) analyses of international, locally produced and adapted EFL textbooks that have been used in Argentina. As a result, the need to use EFL/ESL textbooks in which EFL/ESL learners' cultural background plays a central role has been pointed out (Mahmood et al. 2012; Shah et al. 2014).

It could be argued that, geographically speaking, the cultural content of foreign language programmes could be classified into five dimensions: a local dimension, i.e. human activity and the natural environment in foreign language learners' area of residence/origin, a national dimension, i.e. human activity and the natural environment in foreign language learners' country of residence/origin, a regional dimension, i.e. human activity and the natural environment in neighbouring countries of foreign language learners' country of residence/origin, a continental dimension, i.e. human activity and the natural environment in foreign language learners' continent of residence/origin and a world dimension, i.e. human activity and the natural environment throughout the world.

It could also be argued that the content of some EFL programmes aimed at learners living in the Americas would deal with the American dimension of cultural content for various reasons.¹ Two of these reasons are, first, the importance of the acquisition of intercultural competence in the apparent consolidation of globalisation in the Americas, which has crystallised, for example, into trading and political blocs such as Mercosur, Unasur, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Alianza del Pacifico and the Organization of American States, and, second, the fact that knowledge of one's country and the countries of others' is one of the components that are required to acquire this competence (Byram 1997; Byram et al. 2002). Another reason is the possibility of EFL learners being "[...] instrumentally oriented [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) and/or "[...] integratively oriented [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) to learning the English language in American contexts. Finally, school, regional and national curricula could determine this.

In EFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal with the American dimension of cultural content in order that these learners may acquire intercultural competence in the context of American cultural integration, EFL textbooks which look into cultural aspects of American countries and the relation of these cultural aspects to those of the learners' area and country of residence are expected to be used. It is believed that finding these types of EFL textbooks should be feasible if EFL textbooks which were produced in the country where learners live or EFL textbooks which were adapted to this country's market were available. However, if this were not the case or international EFL textbooks were used for any reason (research has shown that these have been used in American countries, e.g. Basabe 2006; Varón Páez 2009; Gómez Rodríguez 2015), there would be a clash between the decision to deal with the American dimension of cultural content of the EFL programmes in question and the actual content of these textbooks. Basically, there are two reasons to believe this. First, since international EFL textbooks are supposed to be sold in different countries and/or continents, their content is expected to include information about human activity and the natural environment existing all over the world. Consequently, they would not treat these two factors in American contexts in depth. Second, based on the findings of some of the above-mentioned studies, these textbooks are not expected to contain detailed information on the relation between cultural aspects of a wide range of American countries. Therefore, if these textbooks were used in the EFL programmes in question, it is supposed that EFL teaching professionals would have to supplement them.

With this end in view, it was thought that data concerning the extent of the presence of cultural relations between American countries in international EFL textbooks which have been brought out by European publishers and which have been available on American markets would come in useful. Nonetheless, since the present issue may concern professionals that deal with teaching other foreign languages in the Americas as well, it was decided to look into the extent of the presence of cultural relations between American countries in a sample of international foreign-language textbooks brought out by European publishers, that are also available on American

1 In this paper, the term *American* makes reference to any feature that belongs to the *Americas*.

markets and that teach a language other than English.²

It was decided, for comparative purposes, that the first language of the learners who study this language could be any of the first languages of the learners who study EFL in the Americas, i.e. it could not be English but it could be French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. In other words, the target international foreign-language textbooks were expected to be aimed at a readership which was similar to the readership of the international EFL textbooks as far as their first language was concerned. Owing to two facts, that speakers of Spanish as a first language comprise the largest group of first language speakers in the Americas and that the largest group of countries whose population has the same first language in the Americas is that of Spanish speaking countries, and owing to the intention that the results of this study be useful to foreign language teaching professionals working in the largest number of countries and with the largest language populations in the Americas, it was decided to select French instead of other major languages, such as Spanish or Portuguese. By comparing the results obtained from the analysis of the EFL textbook sample and of the international French as a foreign language (FFL) one (research has shown that international FFL textbooks have also been used in American countries, e.g. Benatti Rochebois 2010; Pasquale 2013; Klett 2015), this paper means to achieve its two objectives. The first objective is to establish the extent of the presence of inter-American content in reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones. Second, it intends to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in this text. Furthermore, the pedagogical implications of the findings related to these two research objectives will be dealt with.

This article is structured as follows. In Section 2, the theoretical background will be presented. Research that has dealt directly or indirectly with the presence and depiction of American countries and/or of inter-American cultural content in EFL and in FFL textbooks will be reviewed in Section 3. Section 4 presents the methodological framework applied in this paper. Section 5 presents the findings of the study in this paper, while Section 6 offers a discussion of the findings.

2. Theoretical background

Based on the issues that concern the present paper, there are four concepts that need to be defined. These are *culture*, *the intercultural*, *intercultural competence* and *inter-American cultural relations*.

In order to define *culture*, a concept that is associated with that of culture in Gaiotti's (2013) study of the intercultural will be adopted: culture is "[...] human activity in the world where we live" (Gaiotti 2013: 12).³ Nonetheless, it could also be added that the natural environment of this world is an important determinant of human activity and, as a result, of culture. An example that illustrates this assertion is the sometimes stereotyped association of features of this environment with one of the products of human activity, American countries, and with aspects of the lifestyle and character of the people who come from or live in them. Another example that reflects this assertion is that the natural environment may influence human activity, and conversely, human activity may mould the natural environment. Therefore, it is thought that knowing about the natural environment of a given American country may help to understand aspects of the culture of this country.

Over the last decades, there have been several instances of human activity which involve different American countries, e.g. the trading and political blocs which were referred to in the introduction, and which seem to reflect growing inter-American cultural integration. This

2 In this paper, international foreign-language textbooks are those that are produced to be sold in two or more countries.

3 "[...] l'action de l'homme dans le monde où nous vivons" (Gaiotti 2013: 12). It should be explained that, in the view adopted in the present study, human activity is not equal to physical activity. Human activity entails the physical and mental dimensions involved in human beings' interaction with the world in which they live.

integration is supposed to require an increasing number of instances of interaction between people coming from or living in different American countries. In this interaction, the *intercultural* would emerge and the need for *intercultural competence* would arise.

According to UNESCO (2013), “Intercultural describes what occurs when members of two or more different cultural groups (of whatever size, at whatever level) interact or influence one another in some fashion, whether in person or through various mediated forms” (UNESCO 2013: 11).⁴ Following Gaiotti’s (2013: 19) definition of the intercultural, what would occur is the “[...] shared construction” (Gaiotti 2013: 19) of this interaction.⁵ It is believed that foreign language learners would need to become *intercultural speakers* (Byram et al. 2002) to construct these interactions successfully as “It is the hope that language learners who thus become ‘intercultural speakers’ will be successful not only in communicating information but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures” (Byram et al. 2002: 7). Following Byram et al.’s (2002) reasoning, foreign language learners would become intercultural speakers if they were interculturally competent. The authors define *intercultural competence* as the “[...] ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality” (Byram et al. 2002: 10), and argue that two of the components of intercultural competence are knowledge and skills (Byram et al. 2002: 11).

Byram (1997) says that, when people from different countries interact, they bring, among other elements, “[...] knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor’s country [...]” (Byram 1997: 35), and Byram et al. (2002) argue that “If it can be anticipated with whom one will interact, then knowledge of that person’s world is useful” (Byram et al. 2002: 12). In addition, Byram (1997) explains that the latter is “[...] usually ‘relational’ [...]” (Byram, 1997: 36) since it is acquired in relation to the former. There is also a relational aspect in skills, as one of the two categories of skills is that “[...] of interpretation and establishing relationships between aspects of the two cultures [...]” (Byram 1997: 33), which Byram et al. (2002) call “[...] *skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating* [...]” (Byram et al. 2002: 12 [italics in original]).

It is thought that *inter-American cultural relations* should be addressed in EFL and in FFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal, geographically speaking, with the American dimension of cultural content for the following four reasons in addition to eventual curricular policies. First, because of the strengthening of American integration alluded to above. Second, because it is believed that dealing with these relations in the programmes in question may contribute to learners’ acquisition of knowledge that is necessary to develop the three types of skills that were cited in the paragraph above and, as a result, to the acquisition of intercultural competence that is supposed to be required in more integrated American countries. Third, the presence of *inter-American cultural relations* in the cultural content of the EFL and of the FFL programmes in question together with the acquisition of the above-mentioned three types of skills in the context of these relations could match learners’ instrumental and integrative orientations (Gardner 2010) to learning the target language. Based on Gardner’s (2010) definition of instrumental orientation, in this study, this would stem from learners’ awareness of the “[...] practical benefits [...]” (Gardner 2010: 17) of being “[...] closer to another language community [...]” (Gardner 2010: 17) living in an American country.⁶ According to Gardner’s (2010) definition of integrative orientation, in this research, this would derive from learners’ “[...] desire, willingness,

4 It should be said that, due to advancements in technology, faster *mediated forms* and, as a result, prompt exchanges of communication are expected to be contributing to growing inter-American integration.

5 “[...] construction commune” (Gaiotti 2013: 19).

6 Even though Gardner (2010) refers to ESL backgrounds (Fernández Orío 2013), it is believed that his concept of instrumental and integrative orientation applies to the context of this paper.

or ability to become psychologically closer to another language community [...]” (Gardner 2010: 17) living in an American country. Fourth, because, as it is explained in a study of teachers’ cultural representations conducted by Lussier et al. (2003), “Owing to its nature, teaching and learning a modern language incarnate the presence of the other’s culture and the contact with otherness [...]” (Lussier et al. 2003: 192).⁷

In the present study, *inter-American cultural relations* may include, firstly, activity involving people coming from and/or living in different American countries and who may act in different social contexts, e.g. communication between speakers, states, enterprises, etc. or activity which not only involves people coming from and/or living in one American country and who may act in different social contexts but which is also related to other American countries. Secondly, they may include features of the natural environment affecting two or more American countries. Finally they may include comparisons and connections of human activity happening in different American countries, of the features of the natural environment existing in different American countries, and of American countries based on features of human activity and of the natural environment.

It is thought that, because of all the factors involved in inter-American cultural relations, these could be quite complex and, as a result, that they should be divided into different categories to facilitate their analyses. With a view to categorising inter-American cultural relations, the classification of cultural approaches provided by Risager (1998) was adopted. Indeed, three types of inter-American cultural relations could be identified: *intercultural inter-American relations*, *multicultural inter-American relations* and *transcultural inter-American relations*.

In this paper, intercultural inter-American relations may include, firstly, activity involving people coming from and/or living in two American countries and who may act in different social contexts, or activity which not only involves people coming from and/or living in one American country and who may act in different social contexts but which is also related to another American country. Secondly, they may include features of the natural environment affecting two American countries. Finally, they may include comparisons and connections of human activity happening in two American countries, of the features of the natural environment existing in two American countries, and of two American countries based on features of human activity and of the natural environment.

Multicultural inter-American relations may include, firstly, activity involving, people coming from an American country and living in a different American country. Secondly, they may include features of the natural environment of the latter country that affect these people. As for transcultural inter-American relations, they may comprise, firstly, activity involving people coming from and/or living in an American country and who may act in different social contexts and people coming from and/or living in geographical areas existing in the rest of the Americas and who may also act in different social contexts. They may also comprise activity which not only involves people coming from and/or living in one American country and who may act in different social contexts but which is also related to geographical areas existing in the rest of the Americas, and vice versa. Secondly, they may comprise features of the natural environment affecting an American country and geographical areas existing in the rest of the Americas. Finally, they may include comparisons and connections of human activity happening in a given American country and in areas existing in the rest of the Americas, of the features of the natural environment existing in a given American country and in areas existing in the rest of the Americas and comparisons and connections of this country and of these areas based on features of human activity and of the natural environment.

⁷ “De par sa nature, l’enseignement/apprentissage d’une langue vivante incarne la présence de l’autre culture et le contact avec l’altérité [...]” (Lussier et al. 2003: 192).

3. Previous studies

As advanced in the introduction, references to the presence and/or depiction of American countries and/or of inter-American cultural content in EFL textbooks were made from three different perspectives according to the geographical location of the readership at which the scrutinised textbooks were targeted: in the context of international textbooks, of textbooks produced for local markets and of both. A literature review that links the findings of some of these studies to the two research objectives of the present paper will follow.

Within the first group of studies, Varón Páez (2009), for example, uses a system of dichotomies, e.g. essentialism and non-essentialism, *Big C Culture* and *little c culture*, monocultural knowledge and intercultural knowledge, to look into the cultural content of six international EFL textbooks that have been used in Colombia and illustrates these dichotomies with examples of cultural features of geographical places, such as the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. A case in point is the reference to aspects of life in the United States, to Canadian writers, geography and society, and to Caribbean writers to exemplify Pusch & La Brack's (2003) *Big C Culture*, which is "[...] everything that we can see, everything that is visible concerning a society [...]" (Varón Páez 2009: 111),⁸ as against Pusch & La Brack's (2003) *little c culture*, which is defined as "[...] everything that is hidden, what is subjective, that which to be described requires the search for mechanisms which are much more complex than mere sight [...]" (Varón Páez 2009: 112).⁹ In the study of culture as presented in three international EFL textbooks that have also been used in Colombia, Gómez Rodríguez (2015) carries out his research from a similar angle as he also applies a dichotomy, surface culture versus deep culture, to his analyses. The author explains that elements that belong to the former are "[...] the easily observable (Hinkel, 2001) and static elements that represent a nation" (Gómez Rodríguez 2015: 168), whereas deep culture "[...] embraces invisible meanings associated with a region, a group of people, or subcultures that reflect their own particular sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs, and values" (Gómez Rodríguez 2015: 168). The prevalence of surface culture is discussed in the introduction of aspects of the United States (geographical sites, celebrations, history and legends), Brazil (geographical places, celebrations and music), Venezuela (history), Costa Rica (geography), Peru (geography), Argentina (music) and of the Atacama Desert amongst the target textbooks. However, neither Varón Páez (2009) nor Gómez Rodríguez (2015) makes reference to the extent of the presence of American countries or of cultural relations between American countries in EFL textbooks explicitly as these issues seem to be outside the scope of their research objectives. Nevertheless, some of these relations may be assumed to exist based on the authors' findings. For example, there is an instance of transcultural inter-American relation in the target EFL textbooks in Varón Páez' (2009) study. This is the comparison between Canada and a geographical area existing in the rest of the Americas, the Caribbean, based on activity involving people coming from and/or living in these geographical places: famous Canadian and Caribbean writers produce literature written in the English language. In addition, examples of intercultural inter-American relations may be observed in the EFL textbooks analysed by Gómez Rodríguez (2015). One of them is the fact that the United States and Costa Rica may be compared based on their natural environments: both countries are reported to have places that are "Tourist places/geographical sites" (Gómez Rodríguez 2015: 174).

On the other hand, Hamiloğlu & Mendi (2010) study interculturalism in a set of five EFL textbooks and provide some very interesting insights both into the presence of American countries and into cultural relations between them. For example, as for the former, it may be observed that the textbooks under scrutiny refer to Brazil more often than to Jamaica, which would suggest the need for international EFL textbooks to be inspected to determine the extent to which their content deals

8 "[...] todo lo que podemos ver, todo lo visible de una sociedad [...]" (Varón Páez 2009: 111).

9 "[...] todo lo que está oculto, lo subjetivo, lo que para ser descrito exige buscar mecanismos mucho más complejos que la simple vista [...]" (Varón Páez 2009: 112).

with the cultural aspects of specific American countries. As for the latter, it is shown that these textbooks indicate that famous people come from Canada, Brazil and Cuba. Nonetheless, quantification of the presence of all American countries and of inter-American cultural relations is not the main goal of this research and this is reflected in the fact that references to the United States have been omitted. In contrast, Cottle (2009) tackles the presence of two of the following cultural aspects of the Americas (amongst other places) in a corpus of eight international EFL textbooks which have been used in Japan: character ethnicity and character background. Nevertheless, references to individual American countries or to inter-American cultural relations are not made when these two variables are discussed. This is because the textbook characters who spoke with an American English accent were grouped together and so were the characters who spoke with a Latin American accent. Similarly, characters were classified into groups where ethnicity was concerned, e.g. Latin Americans.

Within the studies that belong to the second group, those that have analysed EFL textbooks produced for local markets, Lappalainen (2011), for example, examines instances of culture from the United States and of inter-American cultural relations introduced in five Finnish EFL textbooks. To illustrate the former, descriptions of festivals may be cited, whereas to refer to the latter, references to Mexican immigrants' life in the United States or to the growth of the population from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba in the same country may be mentioned. However, no references to culture of other American English speaking countries are made, and, consequently, inter-American cultural relations always revolve around the United States. Varis (2012), in contrast, looks into references to the culture of the United States and of Canada in one Finnish foreign language textbook. However, the author finds out that there is only one text that refers to Canada as compared to eleven that deal with the United States. As a consequence, issues that entail American foreign-culture features, e.g. politics and national symbols, and inter-American ones, e.g. a Mexican immigrant family, centre on the United States as in Lappalainen's (2011) study. In order to get more background on the objectives of the present paper, it was thought that it was necessary to read research on the cultural content of EFL textbooks produced for local American markets as these textbooks are expected to give EFL learners more detailed information concerning the country or countries belonging in these markets and inter-American cultural relations involving them.

Basabe's analyses belong in the second and in the third groups that have been defined in this paper since they deal with EFL textbooks produced for South American markets (Basabe 2009) and with both international EFL textbooks and EFL textbooks produced for South American markets (Basabe 2006). In the latter study, the author compares the representation of cultural aspects of English speaking countries in international EFL textbooks produced in the United Kingdom, in EFL textbooks produced in Argentina and in EFL textbooks used in Argentina but adapted from British and Mexican ones. In addition, he quantifies how many texts treat target culture, source culture and international culture as well as relationships between them. However, the texts that deal with target culture encompass that of different English speaking countries, even though it is pointed out that references to culture in the United Kingdom and in the United States are the most frequent ones, whereas references to that in Canada are sporadic. As a result, examples of references that concern the United States and that sometimes involve inter-American cultural relations are discussed in the research while those that address Canada are not. In the former study, Basabe (2009) looks into relationships between target culture, source culture and international culture while addressing the representation of Argentina, Chile and Latin America in two books produced for local markets: an EFL textbook and activity book adapted for the Argentinian market and an EFL textbook modified for the Chilean one. The author discusses instances of inter-American cultural relations. In addition, as in the previous study, aspects of culture of the United States which are treated in the textbooks are discussed.

Based on the literature review, it was thought that a quantitative study that dealt with the

presence of inter-American cultural relations involving any American country in a set of comparable international EFL textbooks that are available on markets of different American countries would be an interesting contribution to this research area. Indeed, this type of study would analyse the extent to which these textbooks provide information related to the American dimension of the cultural content of EFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas as far as inter-American cultural relations are concerned. As a result, it would also look into their contribution to the acquisition of knowledge that is required, as discussed in the previous section, to develop skills that are needed to acquire intercultural competence (Byram et al. 2002) in American contexts. Furthermore, this study would also indicate whether there are examples of situations in which the English language is used to establish inter-American cultural relations in the target textbooks. It is supposed that these examples would be useful to American EFL learners who are “[...] instrumentally oriented [...]” (Gardner 2010: 17) and/or “[...] integratively oriented [...]” (Gardner 2010: 17) to learning the English language as they could show the extent to which being a user of English may effect these learners’ orientations. Moreover, it was decided to take a step further and to deal with the same issue in a set of international textbooks that teach another foreign language.

Interest in knowing whether the above-mentioned notions may apply to FFL learning as well stems from the reasons that were referred to in the introduction, from the fact that FFL is also widely learnt in the Americas and from the finding that international EFL and FFL textbooks that have been brought out by European publishers appear to be ubiquitous in some American markets and seem to be comparable in their aims and format. As for their aims, the websites of the textbooks that have been selected and that will be introduced in the next section, for example, show that they foster communicative competence, which is reflected in the use of tasks and/or in the development of skills. As for their format, division into topic based sections, such as units or lessons, and into subsections which focus on the development of specific language skills in context witnesses to the communicative orientation of the selected textbooks. What is more, none of the studies that have tackled cultural content and/or the approach to teaching this content in FFL textbooks and that have been reviewed for this paper have focused only on the examination of the presence of cultural elements that belong to American countries and/or of inter-American cultural relations in these textbooks (Debenat 2005; Bouguerra 2008; Clouet & Sánchez 2008; Dervin & Keihäs 2008; Kridech 2008; Benatti Rochebois 2010; Boudjadi 2012; Gaiotti 2013; Pasquale 2013; Klett 2015). As a result, herein also lies the importance of the findings of this paper. Nonetheless, it was decided to discuss references to the presence and depiction of American countries and/or of inter-American cultural content in FFL textbooks as it was done in relation to the EFL ones.

As regards research focusing only on FFL textbooks produced for local markets, Debenat (2005) analyses teaching of culture in a Chinese FFL textbook. The description of the topics of the texts which were written in French in a section devoted to civilisation shows that the only reference to an American country consists in a person from the United States who is in China. As in the textbook inspected by Debenat (2005), the presence of cultural features of American countries seems to be scarce in eight FFL textbooks edited in Finland and analysed by Dervin & Keihäs (2008). This is because, in the authors’ examination of the way in which aspects of “[...] former French colonies, French-speaking countries and immigrants in France” (Dervin & Keihäs 2008: 57)¹⁰ are dealt with in these textbooks, no American features are discussed except for some references to the Antilles and to Canada.

In relation to research that belongs to the group of studies that have referred to the presence and depiction of American countries and/or of inter-American cultural content in international FFL textbooks and in FFL textbooks produced for local markets, Clouet & Sánchez’ (2008) analyses of

10 “[...] anciennes colonies françaises, des pays francophones et des immigrants en France” (Dervin & Keihäs 2008: 57).

the sociocultural content of two international FFL textbooks produced in France and of five FFL textbooks produced and used in Spain may be cited. The authors find out that “[...] the analysed books generally reflect the aspects of only one language and of only one country: France [...]” (Clouet & Sánchez 2008: 94).¹¹ As a consequence, few references to the Americas are discussed. These are about Canada and the Caribbean in the textbooks produced in Spain, e.g. a map of Canada, a film festival in Canada and an instance of transcultural inter-American relation. This instance consists in the comparison of Canada and the Caribbean based on activity involving people coming from and/or living in these geographical places: in both places they have built French-speaking cities. As for the international textbooks, only aspects of Canada, e.g. its writers, are discussed as far as the Americas are concerned.

The little information about the presence of inter-American cultural relations involving any American country in international FFL textbooks in the literature reviewed adds to the reasons why a quantitative study of this subject should be an interesting contribution to this research area. Indeed, the research interests of the present study led to the following two research objectives, as advanced in the introduction.

The first objective is to establish the extent of the presence of inter-American content in reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones. Second, it intends to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in this text. In addition, the pedagogical implications deriving from the findings related to these two research objectives will be discussed.

4. Methodology

Three international EFL textbook series written by European publishers and three FFL ones also written by European publishers which are available on American markets were randomly selected from EFL and FFL textbook series that shared the following features. They had to be European and they had to have been on the market since 2000. It was thought that these two parameters would increase the chances of selecting, firstly, textbook series that followed similar approaches to teaching EFL and FFL and, secondly, textbook series that had a strong presence on the market. Indeed, as for the latter, it was found that some of the textbook series in question were available in American book stores and, based on some of the studies already discussed, that they had been used in several American educational institutions. Regarding their approaches to teaching EFL and FFL, as explained in the section above, it was observed that these series seemed to have an important communicative component, which showed in the way tasks were organised, and that they aimed to develop learners’ listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. However, not all the textbook series taught all the levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and, owing to this, only the textbooks that dealt with the levels that were taught across all the selected series were to be examined. It was found that A1, A2 and B1 levels were taught in all the target series. The selected EFL textbooks are *New Cutting Edge Elementary*, *New Cutting Edge Pre-Intermediate*, *New Cutting Edge Intermediate*, *New Inside Out Elementary*, *New Inside Out Pre-Intermediate*, *New Inside Out Intermediate* and the fourth edition of *New Headway Elementary*, *New Headway Pre-Intermediate* and *New Headway Intermediate*. The selected FFL textbooks are *Le nouveau taxi! 1*, *Le nouveau taxi! 2*, *Le nouveau taxi! 3*, *Tout va bien! 1*, *Tout va bien! 2*, *Tout va bien! 3*, *Forum Méthode de français 1*, *Forum Méthode de français 2* and *Forum Méthode de français 3*. Therefore, the findings of this paper result from the analyses of a total of eighteen textbooks.

¹¹ “[...] les ouvrages analysés ne reflètent généralement l’aspect que d’une seule langue et d’un seul pays: la France [...]” (Clouet & Sánchez 2008: 94).

As regards the selection of the texts from which data was to be collected, the following criteria were adopted. First, they had to be accessible in the body of the students' textbooks as these were expected to be used the most often in EFL and FFL courses as compared to other components of the textbook series, such as activity books and handouts. Second, it was decided to analyse both reading and listening text that was available in written form. Third, this text appeared to provide information that was in context and that was required mostly to do further activities as these types of texts were assumed to centre on comprehension mainly rather than on form or accuracy. For example, a text written for learners to circle suitable grammar forms or for learners to correct spelling mistakes would not be analysed. Fourth, they had to contain words that referred to American geographical places and to American geographical origins. It has to be clarified that only words that referred to administrative divisions in contemporary countries, e.g. names of provinces, states, cities, etc., were searched for as these were expected to occur in both textbook samples and, as a result, to make results comparable. Finally, texts of different lengths were considered: from one-sentence slogans, for example, to long articles. Consequently, a wide range of text types was included in the analyses.

In order to attain the first objective, i.e. to establish the extent of the presence of inter-American content in reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones, instances of inter-American cultural relations were identified in this text and the number of texts in which these instances appeared per country was calculated. As explained in the literature review, with a view to categorising inter-American cultural relations, Risager's (1998) classification of cultural approaches was adopted, and three types of inter-American cultural relations were searched for: intercultural inter-American relations, multicultural inter-American relations and transcultural inter-American relations. Byram et al. (2002) assert that "Textbooks can be written in an intercultural and critical perspective or in a way that suggests that the materials are authoritative" (Byram et al. 2002: 23). It is believed that, in EFL and FFL language textbooks which are written in the former way, instances of the three types of inter-American cultural relations would tend to be presented implicitly and, as a result, learners would be encouraged to discover and to interpret these relations. In contrast, in EFL and FFL language textbooks which are written in the latter way, the three kinds of inter-American cultural relations would tend to be presented explicitly and, consequently, there would not be much room for learners to discover them or to interpret them. Instances of both ways of presenting inter-American cultural relations that the author of this paper has identified were considered in this study. For example, it has been found that there are nine texts in the EFL sample that contain inter-American cultural relations involving Mexico. Mexico participates in intercultural inter-American relations in eight of these texts and, in seven of them, Mexico is related to the USA, in three of them, it is related to Brazil, in two of them, to Argentina and, in one of them, to Canada.

Furthermore, the number of texts that contained intercultural, multicultural and transcultural relations of American countries with non-American geographical places was also reckoned for comparative purposes. For example, as explained, Mexico participates in intercultural inter-American relations in eight texts in the EFL sample, whereas it is involved in intercultural relations with non-American countries in twelve. A case in point is the comparison of the size of the population of Mexico City with the size of the population of the largest cities in China, India and Japan in one of the texts of *New Headway Elementary*.

As regards the steps for the accomplishment of the second objective, i.e. to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in the text sample obtained from the target textbooks, each instance of intercultural inter-American relation, multicultural inter-American relation and transcultural inter-American relation was inspected and the number of texts in which this happened was worked out.

Before moving onto the presentation of the results of this study in the next section, the limitations of this paper will be addressed. Owing to the fact that, as explained above, only the texts appearing in the body of the students' textbooks were included in the analyses, texts which may contain information that could be relevant to this research but which are present in other components of the textbook series were omitted. Moreover, as clarified above, since this research looked into the content of those texts that appeared mainly to be used to do further activities in context, other texts that might also introduce content that could be connected with the aims of this paper were left out. Finally, even though the number of the target texts that were found to contain inter-American cultural relations in each textbook series and the number of these texts that refer to individual American countries will be provided to show the distribution of the texts in question across the textbook series and, consequently, to have a more complete panorama of the research data, it is to be noted that the intention of the present study is to find out trends within the scope of its research objectives and not to discuss the content of any of the textbooks or textbook series in particular.

5. Findings

5.1. Background information

The number of the target texts where inter-American cultural relations were observed in each textbook series is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the number of these texts containing references to each American country in each textbook series.

Table 1: Number of target texts containing inter-American cultural relations in each textbook series

EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
EFLA	EFLB	EFLC	FFLA	FFLB	FFLC
15	7	19	5	7	5

Table 2: Target texts containing inter-American cultural relations and references to each American country in each textbook series

Country	EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
	EFLA	EFLB	EFLC	FFLA	FFLB	FFLC
Argentina	1	4	8			
Bahamas		1				
Barbados	1					
Bolivia	1		1			
Brazil	3	3	9	2		1
Canada	6		5	1	6	3
Chile		2	2			
Colombia	2					1
Cuba			1	2		
Ecuador		1		1		
Haiti					1	
Mexico	3	1	5			
Peru	3	1	2	1		
USA	11	3	16	3	3	3
Uruguay	1					
Venezuela			1			1

The rest of the results of this paper will be presented by objectives: to establish the extent of the presence of inter-American content in reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones firstly, and to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in this text secondly.

5.2. Objective 1

As stated above, the first objective is to establish the extent of the presence of inter-American content in reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones.

Table 3 shows the total number of target texts that contain inter-American cultural relations and references to each American country in all the EFL textbooks and in all the FFL ones.

Table 3: Number of target texts containing inter-American cultural relations and references to each American country in all the EFL textbooks and in all the FFL ones

EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Country	Number of texts	Country	Number of texts
USA	30	Canada	10
Brazil	15	USA	9
Argentina	13	Brazil	3
Canada	11	Cuba	2
Mexico	9	Colombia	1
Peru	6	Ecuador	1
Chile	4	Haiti	1
Bolivia	2	Peru	1
Colombia	2	Venezuela	1
Bahamas	1		
Barbados	1		
Cuba	1		
Ecuador	1		
Uruguay	1		
Venezuela	1		
Total	41	Total	17

However, as explained in the methodology section, three types of inter-American cultural relations have been searched for. In the FFL textbooks, for example, whereas 10 texts carry inter-American cultural relations in which Canada takes part, seven of them include intercultural inter-American relations, three of them convey transcultural inter-American relations but none of them present multicultural inter-American relations involving this country. As for the EFL textbooks, for example, whereas 30 texts carry inter-American cultural relations in which the USA takes part, 28 of them include intercultural inter-American relations, five of them convey transcultural inter-American relations and one of them presents multicultural inter-American relations involving this country. At this point, it should be noted that some of the target texts contain more than one type of inter-American cultural relation. Therefore, if a target text contains, for example, one or more instances of intercultural inter-American relations involving Argentina and one or more instances of transcultural inter-American relations engaging Argentina, this text is then counted twice in Table 4

(see page 14) as a text in TRAP intercultural Argentina and as a text in TRAP transcultural Argentina. In addition, if one of the instances of intercultural relations in a text refers, for instance, to the USA and to Mexico, and another instance of intercultural relations in the same text refers, for example, to the USA and to Brazil, this text is counted as follows in Table 4: as a text in TRAP intercultural USA, as a text in TRAP intercultural Brazil and as a text in TRAP intercultural Mexico.

Table 4 (see page 14) presents the number of target texts in which American countries participate in intercultural inter-American relations, multicultural inter-American relations and transcultural inter-American relations. Moreover, it compares these frequencies with the number of target texts in which American countries are involved in intercultural, multicultural and transcultural relations with non-American places. Canada, for instance, establishes intercultural relations with non-American countries in 32 texts in the FFL textbooks as compared to the above-mentioned seven texts. In the EFL textbooks, the USA, for example, establishes intercultural relations with non-American countries in 107 texts as compared to the above-mentioned 28 texts. Table 4 reports only those frequencies that are equal to or higher than three at least in one of the two types of relations: inter-American cultural relations and cultural relations of American countries with non-American places.

In order to obtain a more complete description of inter-American cultural relations, it was thought that figures showing the countries participating in instances of inter-American cultural relation in three or more texts also needed to be presented in this section. For example, as explained above, Canada is involved in intercultural inter-American relations in seven texts in the FFL textbooks. Nevertheless, in all of these texts, Canada is related to the USA. Table 5 (see page 15) shows which pairs are involved in each type of inter-American cultural relation in three or more texts. It has to be pointed out that those administrative divisions that exist in the Americas and that belong to countries that are in other continents have not been considered in the data, e.g. French Guiana, Bermuda, Guadeloupe, etc.

Two points regarding Table 5 need to be clarified. The first one is that there are no figures that refer to multicultural inter-American relations because no instances of these types of relations were found in the target texts belonging to the FFL textbooks and because the frequency of either of the pairs that was observed in the target texts that were obtained from the EFL textbooks is one. The second point is that the terms North America, South America and Latin America do not reflect any kind of country grouping belonging in this research but that they are the ones that are used in the texts under scrutiny.

5.3. *Objective 2*

As stated above, the second objective is to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in the target text. As for this objective, there is only one text in which there is a situation in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language in the EFL textbooks. This situation is an instance of intercultural inter-American relation which consists in a conversation involving a person coming from the USA and another person coming from Mexico.

Table 4: Number of target texts that contain inter-American cultural relations (TRAP*) and cultural relations of American countries with non-American places (TRNAP**)

Intercultural relations					
EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Countries	TRAP	TRNAP	Countries	TRAP	TRNAP
USA	28	107	USA	9	52
Brazil	14	15	Canada	7	32
Canada	11	13	Brazil	3	7
Argentina	11	12	Cuba	2	3
Mexico	8	12			
Peru	6	5			
Chile	4	2			
Barbados	1	4			
Colombia	2	3			
Bolivia	1	3			
Multicultural relations					
EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Countries	TRAP	TRNAP	Countries	TRAP	TRNAP
USA	1	22	Canada		4
Canada	2	3	USA		3
Transcultural relations					
EFL textbooks			FFL textbooks		
Countries	TRAP	TRNAP	Countries	TRAP	TRNAP
USA	5	63	USA		28
Brazil	4	11	Canada	3	17
Argentina	7	7	Brazil		3
Canada	1	11			
Mexico	2	10			
Peru	2	4			
Chile	3	1			
Colombia		3			

*Texts containing relations with American places)

**TRNAP (Texts containing relations with non-American places)

Table 5: Pairs participating in inter-American cultural relations

Intercultural relations			
EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Countries	Texts	Countries	Texts
Canada - USA	11	Canada - USA	7
Brazil - USA	10		
Mexico - USA	7		
Argentina - USA	7		
Argentina - Brazil	5		
Argentina - Chile	4		
Argentina - Canada	3		
Brazil - Peru	3		
Brazil - Mexico	3		
Brazil - Canada	3		
Peru - USA	3		
Transcultural Relations			
EFL textbooks		FFL textbooks	
Countries	Texts	Countries	Texts
Argentina - NA*/SA**/LA***	7		
USA - NA/SA	5		
Brazil - NA/SA	4		
Chile - SA	3		

*North America

**South America

***Latin America

6. Discussion

The data introduced in Table 1 shows that there are more target texts containing inter-American cultural relations in each EFL textbook series than in each FFL textbook series except for EFLB and FFLB, where frequencies are the same: $n = 7$. Table 3 adds that there are 41 target texts containing inter-American cultural relations in all the EFL textbooks and 17 in all the FFL ones. This would indicate that the extent of the presence of inter-American content in the target international EFL textbook series would be larger than the extent of the presence of inter-American content in the target international FFL ones as far as the number of target texts in which instances of inter-American cultural relations have been observed is concerned. Differences in the extent of the presence of inter-American content between the EFL textbook series and the FFL ones may also be noticed when looking at the figures showing the range of countries to which the target texts that contain inter-American cultural relations refer to. Table 3 shows that there are references to more American countries in all the EFL textbooks ($n = 15$) than in all the FFL ones ($n = 9$). Moreover, Table 2 indicates that there are texts containing inter-American cultural relations and references to any of eight countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru, the USA) in two or three of the EFL textbook series and that there are texts containing inter-American cultural relations and references to any of three countries (Brazil, Canada, the USA) in two or three of the FFL textbook series. However, considering all the data regarding the first objective and presented in the section above, it could be argued that the extent of the presence of inter-American content in the reading and listening text obtained from both the target international EFL textbook series and the FFL ones is not significant for several reasons.

For one thing, Table 3 reveals not only that there are references to a limited number of American countries, but also that few of these countries have relatively high frequencies. Indeed, six American countries, i.e. the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Mexico and Peru (in this order), participate in inter-American cultural relations in 5 or more texts out of 15 American countries in the EFL textbooks, whereas only Canada and the USA do so out of nine in the FFL ones. In addition, it is to be pointed out that there is a wide gap between the frequency of the USA ($n = 30$) and that of the second most frequent country, Brazil, ($n = 15$) in the EFL textbooks and between the frequencies of Canada and of the USA ($n = 10$ and $n = 9$ respectively) and that of the next most frequent country, Brazil, ($n = 3$) in the FFL textbooks. The concentration of a small number of countries in inter-American cultural relations is also visible in the pairs that compose them. Indeed, Table 5 adds that Canada - USA, Brazil - USA, Mexico - USA, Argentina - USA and Argentina - Brazil are the five intercultural pairs that occur in five or more texts in the EFL textbooks, while Canada - USA is the only one in the FFL ones. It is interesting to mention that the countries that make up these pairs are the largest American countries, had the largest gross domestic products in the Americas in 2014 and are projected to be amongst the countries with the largest populations in the same geographical place.¹² It is believed that some of these factors may have a bearing on the influence of these countries on the historical, geographical, political, cultural, social and economic dimensions of the present globalised world. It is also believed that the significance of the participation of these countries in these spheres would, consequently, have an effect on their relatively prominent presence in the cultural content of international EFL and FFL textbooks. What is more, this relative prominence seems to result in a situation that is similar to the one that was mentioned in the introduction. In that section, it was explained that, in some of the cited studies, it had been observed that the content of EFL/ESL textbooks could centre on a small number of countries where English is spoken as a first language. The data that has just been discussed indicates that the selection of few countries in textbook content may also be present in the contribution of textbooks to the continental dimension of foreign language programmes which has been defined in this paper. However, it is thought that excluding the country where American learners come from or live in from the inter-American cultural content of EFL and of FFL programmes that deal with the American dimension of cultural content would not contribute to these learners' acquisition of extensive knowledge of relations between "[...] social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country [...]" (Byram et al. 2002: 12). Furthermore, it has to be pointed out that this knowledge is required to develop these learners' "[...] *skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating* [...]" (Byram et al. 2002: 12 [italics in original]) in American contexts and, at the same time, to acquire intercultural competence (Byram's 1997; Byram et al. 2002) in the same context.

Another reason why it could be argued that the extent of the presence of inter-American content in the reading and listening text obtained from both the target international EFL textbooks and the FFL ones is not significant is the fact that, as shown in Table 5, there are pairs of intercultural and transcultural relations with frequencies equal to or higher than three in the EFL textbooks but only pairs of the former in the FFL textbooks, whereas there are no pairs of multicultural relations with these frequencies in either sample. A reason for the absence of pairs of multicultural relations in three or more texts could be the fact that the target textbooks have been produced by European publishers and, consequently, that they are expected to contain texts which refer to aspects of the life of foreign students and/or of immigrants, for example, in European English and French speaking countries. Furthermore, regarding transcultural relations, the target textbooks would also be expected to involve European English and French speaking countries. However, as explained above, one of the reasons for dealing with the American dimension of the

12 This information was obtained from the World Statistics Pocketbook 2016 edition (United Nations 2016).

cultural content of EFL programmes aimed at learners living in the Americas and, at this stage, of similar FFL programmes as well, lies in the possibility of these learners' being "[...] instrumentally oriented [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) and/or "[...] integratively oriented [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) to learning EFL and FFL owing to the "[...] practical benefits [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) of being "[...] closer to another language community [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) living in an American country and to learners' "[...] desire, willingness, or ability to become psychologically closer to another language community [...]" (Gardner 2010: 17) living in an American country as well. Therefore, it is supposed that providing real examples of multicultural inter-American relations and of transcultural inter-American relations could be useful for these instrumentally and integratively oriented learners' interests when these learners learn EFL and FFL. Indeed, real examples of multicultural inter-American relations would deal not only with the practical benefits of being an English or French speaker while living in an American English or French speaking country, but also with the process of becoming a member of its communities. As regards real examples of transcultural inter-American relations, they would deal with the benefits of being an English or French speaker in the Americas in general, e.g. the possibility of getting a job in English or French multinational companies operating throughout the Americas.

Finally, it has been decided to compare the extent of the presence of inter-American cultural relations with that of the presence of relations of American countries with non-American places (see Table 4) using a non-parametric test as the total frequencies of TRAP and of TRNAP in the EFL sample and in the FFL one proved not to be normally distributed. The Mann-Whitney Test indicates that, in the EFL sample, the values of TRNAP are significantly higher than those of TRAP ($p \leq .05$), and so are the values of TRNAP as compared to those of TRAP in the FFL sample ($p \leq .01$). These results suggest that there is a significant trend in the targeted EFL and FFL textbook samples to portray American countries in relation with non-American places rather than with American ones. By looking at Table 4, it may be observed that this is noticeable, for example, in the intercultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 28; TRNAP = 107), in the multicultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 1; TRNAP = 22) and in the transcultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 5; TRNAP = 63), Brazil (TRAP = 4; TRNAP = 11), Canada (TRAP = 1; TRNAP = 11) and Mexico (TRAP = 2; TRNAP = 10) in the EFL textbooks. The same applies, for example, to the intercultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 9; TRNAP = 52), Canada (TRAP = 7; TRNAP = 32), Brazil (TRAP = 3; TRNAP = 7), to the multicultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 0; TRNAP = 3), Canada (TRAP = 0; TRNAP = 4) and to the transcultural relations of the USA (TRAP = 0; TRNAP = 28) and of Canada (TRAP = 3; TRNAP = 17) in the FFL textbooks. There are several reasons that could explain these differences. One of them is that the target textbooks are international and, because of this, that they are expected to address relations of human activity and of the natural environment existing not only in American countries but also in geographical places throughout the world. In addition, since these textbooks have been published by European publishers, they are also expected to contain an important number of instances of intercultural, multicultural and transcultural relations revolving around European countries. Some of these instances are supposed to involve European countries and their overseas territories and European countries and their former colonial territories. The latter could perhaps explain the big differences between TRAP and TRNAP in the figures referring to Canada and to the USA.

Based on the findings discussed above, the following pedagogical implication will be put forward. When willing to use international EFL and FFL textbooks to teach EFL and FFL in programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal with the American dimension of cultural content, EFL and FFL teaching professionals would need to analyse, first, the amount of inter-American cultural content in these textbooks, second, the types of this content and, third, its complexity. As explained in the introduction, some of the reasons for dealing with this dimension in these programs were globalisation in the Americas, the content of curricula, the

acquisition of knowledge that is needed to develop intercultural competence and the need to cater for learners' instrumental and integrative orientations. It is believed that examining, firstly, the amount of inter-American cultural content of the textbooks in question would make it possible to see whether these textbooks have sufficient content to address issues concerning these reasons, or if they need to be carefully supplemented. Inspecting, secondly, the types of inter-American cultural content in the same textbooks would indicate which types of inter-American cultural relations would need to be added in case these textbooks needed to be supplemented: whether intercultural, multicultural, transcultural or more than one of them. Finally, analysing the complexity of this content would provide, firstly, information about the intensity of its presence in listening and reading texts. Indeed, as explained in the findings section, some of the texts under scrutiny may contain more than one type of inter-American cultural relation. Secondly, it would make it possible to identify which countries participate in the three types of inter-American cultural relations. This identification is considered to be important owing to the following reason.

When considering the need to supplement international EFL and FFL textbooks which are used in the EFL and the FFL programmes in question, it would be necessary to find out whether the learners' country of residence is involved in inter-American cultural relations. One of the reasons for this was presented in the second paragraph of this section. Another reason stems from Byram's (1997) *relational* aspect of knowledge of an interlocutor's country that was cited in the theoretical background and from the belief that knowledge of someone else's country would be relational even outside a communicative situation. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if this relational aspect of knowledge is present in instances of intercultural inter-American relations, multicultural inter-American relations and transcultural inter-American relations involving the learners' country of residence. An example of intercultural inter-American relations containing this relational element in an EFL context could be the comparison of recipes of popular food in the learners' country of residence with those of popular food in the USA, whereas in an FFL context this comparison could involve recipes of popular food in Haiti instead. An instance of multicultural inter-American relations including this relational element could consist in the comparison between the everyday life of people coming from the learners' country of residence in Ontario, Canada, in an EFL context or in Québec, Canada, in an FFL context and the learners' everyday life in their country of residence. An example of transcultural inter-American relations considering this relational element could involve the performance of the athletes coming from the learners' country of residence in the Pan American games that have recently taken place in Toronto in an EFL context or the comparison of cultural activities conducted in French in the learners' country of residence and in the rest of the Americas in an FFL context.

In relation to the second objective of this research, to observe whether there are examples of situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language or the French language in the target text, as shown in the findings section, there is one target text in which this happens in the EFL textbooks but none in the FFL textbooks. Nonetheless, it is considered that the inclusion of these situations in EFL and FFL programmes which deal with the American dimension of cultural content would be very useful as they would illustrate some of the reasons why this dimension could be included in these programmes: globalisation in the Americas, learners' instrumental and integrative orientation to learn the target language and the acquisition of intercultural competence. It could be argued, therefore, that the finding of the second objective reinforces the above-mentioned pedagogical implication: that EFL and FFL teaching professionals would need to analyse the amount, types and complexity of inter-American cultural content in international EFL and FFL textbooks when using these textbooks in EFL and in FFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal with the American dimension of cultural content with a view to finding out if, and how, these textbooks need to be supplemented.

7. Conclusion

This study concludes that the extent of the presence of inter-American content in the reading and listening text obtained from the target international EFL textbooks and from the FFL ones is not significant owing to the following reasons. First, some American countries are not present in these relations, some are but in fewer than five texts, and six American countries participate in inter-American cultural relations in five or more texts. Second, uneven distributions also apply to the types of inter-American cultural relations that occur in the texts under scrutiny: the number of texts that contain instances of multicultural inter-American relations is lower than the number of texts that have instances that reflect intercultural and transcultural ones. Third, the frequencies of the texts that contain inter-American cultural relations per country have proved to be statistically low in comparison with the frequencies of the texts that express relations involving American countries and non-American places per country. This paper has also revealed that one target text contains a situation in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the English language in the EFL textbooks but no texts contain situations in which subjects coming from or living in different American countries communicate using the French language in the FFL textbooks.

Considering all these findings, it was suggested that EFL and FFL teaching professionals analyse the amount, types and complexity of inter-American cultural content in international EFL and FFL textbooks when choosing to use these textbooks in EFL and in FFL programmes which are aimed at learners living in the Americas and which deal with the American dimension of cultural content to find out if, and how, these textbooks need to be supplemented.

As regards further research possibilities, the following will be suggested. It would be interesting to analyse the amount of inter-American cultural content in American EFL and FFL textbooks and in international textbooks and textbooks produced for local markets which are used to teach other foreign languages in the Americas. Indeed, it should be expected that comparing the findings of these studies with those of this paper would provide useful data to be considered in the process of conceiving foreign language teaching programmes that deal with the American dimension of cultural content.

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