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Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
MEXT	Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology
MOFA	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Analysed coursebooks:

C 21	Columbus 21
NC	New Crown
NH	New Horizon
OW	One World
SSH	Sunshine
TE	Total English

1. Introduction

In 2003 the Japanese ministry of Culture and Education (MEXT) released a new revision of the curriculum for primary and secondary foreign language education. Considering that the communication ability of Japanese students is quite poor when it comes to actively speaking a foreign language, various educators who have specialised in examining the English language system in Japan (cf. Kubota 1998 and 2002; Butler and Iino 2005 among others) have stressed that foreign languages (in this case English) should be learned with a communicative approach to enable intercultural interaction in a globalised world. As one of the given objectives in secondary education it is stated that "... deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude towards communication through foreign languages..." should be achieved when teaching English as a foreign language. Furthermore, in regard to teaching cultural elements in the classroom, the following guidelines concerning materials used in class can be found.

> a) Materials that are useful in enhancing the understanding of various ways of seeing and thinking, cultivating a rich sensibility, and enhancing the ability to make impartial judgements.
> b) Materials that are useful in deepening the understanding of ways of life and cultures of Japan and the rest of the world, raising interest in language and culture, and developing a respectful attitude to these elements.
> c) Materials that are useful in deepening international understanding from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community, and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation. (MEXT 2003)

Reading between the lines of the new curriculum, the following assumptions can be made:

First, the Japanese education system has recognized that language cannot be

separated from culture and vice versa, and that it is therefore important, in order to be able to communicate with other speakers of a foreign language, to include the teaching of cultural elements. While the tradition of teaching English with the grammar-translation method is still prevalent in many classrooms, the guidelines at least suggest that communicative language teaching should be performed instead. Together with this, cultural awareness should be raised while communicative activities are acted out.

Second, the curriculum also mentions that besides teaching and learning elements of foreign cultures, there should also be a focus on raising Japanese students' awareness of their native culture. Around the same time when the revised curriculum was made public, another paper called “Developing a strategic plan to cultivate Japanese with English abilities” (2002) was released by MEXT, with its subtitle saying “Plan to improve English and Japanese abilities”. This plan states that not only should intercultural knowledge be fostered, but students are encouraged to cultivate their “Japanese language abilities for appropriate expression and accurate comprehension” (MEXT 2002).

With regard to these objectives, Ryoko Kubota (2002) has drawn the conclusion that hidden in these principles of promoting intercultural communication, is the aim to support nationalistic values by making it possible to “convey Japan's unique traditions and way of life” (18) to other cultures using English as common foreign language. She furthermore claims that instead of creating mutual understanding towards the cultural groups that already exist in Japan, such as Brazilian or other Asian communities, it is only English and the English-speaking environments which are truly valued as foreign culture. This is, according to the author, also reflected in the education system, where mostly Japanese cultural elements or cultural elements from 'prestigious' Western countries are taught and mentioned in the textbooks (Kubota 1998; 2002).

On the contrary, scholars (see e.g. Bredella and Delanoy 1999; Byram 1998; Kramsch 1998) who specialise in the field of intercultural education have agreed that culture can never be fully understood by 'outsiders' (such as researchers, learners...), which poses the question how to fulfil the objective of “accurate comprehension” as stated in the *Action Plan* (MEXT 2002), if that is possible at all. Furthermore they claim that it is essential to first stabilise language students' identities and make them aware of their cultural distinctiveness before they attempt to understand other cultures. Including source culture elements in textbooks can therefore be one step in the process of establishing intercultural competence.

It seems that source culture elements appearing in English textbooks can be seen in twofold ways. Where is the line between, on the one hand, strengthening a learner's cultural identities to raise awareness and tolerance towards other cultural identities and, on the other hand, triggering nationalistic feelings that rather hinder the acceptance of cultural diversity?

Regarding this dichotomy, I will analyse six ministry-approved English textbooks for first year junior high school students as to their cultural content.
Taking into account what Kubota (2002) has claimed, I expect to find a great percentage of elements that refer either to target or source cultures, or features that compare the both of them more than international cultures. Moreover, concerning target culture elements, I assume a bias towards Western English-speaking cultures such as the USA and the UK.

Textbooks are used as the major tool for language teaching by secondary school teachers (see eg. Yamanaka 2006). Even though it depends very much on *how* a teacher uses textbook material in the classroom, the results of this content analysis can give information about what kind of culture is to what extent now possibly being taught to EFL learners.

After briefly introducing frequently used terms (chapter 2), I will turn to some theoretical concepts on intercultural learning and on culture in the context of language learning in general (chapter 3). Chapter 4 will give an outline of the current situation of teaching English in Japan, commenting on the key points regarding culture in the classroom mentioned in the revised national curriculum of 2004. Before turning to the analysis of six EFL junior high school books, a short excursus to two often mentioned Japanese concepts – *nihonjinron,* a discourse on 'Japaneseness,' and *kokusaika*, 'Internationalisation' – will be presented in the context of Japanese identity and intercultural communication in the Japanese classroom. The presentation of the schoolbooks chosen for analysis and the results of my qualitative analysis will be given in chapter 5 and 6.

To begin with I would like to clarify how certain terms that have been defined in various ways are used in this thesis.

2. Terminology

Reading across the literature available for this research, I encountered various definitions and usages of terms such as *cultural elements, intercultural learning, cultural awareness* among others, which will also occur quite frequently in the course of this paper. Hence it is essential to define first how these terms and concepts are understood in the context of this thesis. In this section I will briefly discuss how other authors have used certain terms and clarify what I mean by *intercultural learning, cultural awareness* and *culture*.

As I believe that, in the world of language teaching, it has widely been accepted that language and culture are inseparable[1] and one cannot be taught without the other, I will refrain from reciting various discussions on this matter but will only briefly include some quotes regarding the culture-language-discourse[2] when appropriate. I will rather put my focus on how culture can be included in language teaching and how intercultural learning can take place in an educational setting.

Because the term *culture* lies at the core of each of the above mentioned concepts, I would like to start with a short description of how culture can be defined and what it includes.

2.1. What is culture?

The term *culture* has been defined in many different ways. One of the most commonly used definitions of culture has been provided by Clifford Geertz in his *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) in which he defines culture as a "historically transmitted semiotic network constructed by humans and which allows them to develop, communicate and perpetuate their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about the world" (89).

Similarly Thompson (1990) refers to culture as

> the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their

[1] I am aware that people coming from other fields of studies (e.g. proponents of 'English as a lingua franca') might regard the relationship between language and culture differently such as seeing them as two separate entities.

[2] For extensive reading on the relation of language and culture see Kramsch's *Language and Culture* (1998) or Hinkel's introduction in *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (1999).

> experiences, conceptions and beliefs. (132 quoted in Y. Kachru 1999:77)

Generally, in this paper, the concept of culture is viewed as Eli Hinkel has broadly summarised it in her introduction of *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (1999). She sees culture as something that comprises "social norms, worldviews, beliefs, assumptions, and value systems that affect many, if not all, aspects of second or foreign language use, teaching and learning" (2) as well as something that "define[s] the way a person see[s] his or her place in a society" (1). This, of course, also includes aspects such as gender roles and global issues, as these concepts are culturally shaped as well. Furthermore, culture also involves social matters such as society's attitude towards the physically or mentally challenged or its perspective on (yet) 'unconventional' concepts such as gay marriages.

2.1.1. Culture vs. culture

I would also like to make a distinction between what some scholars call "overt culture" and hidden manifestations. Ashikaga, Fujita and Ikuta (2001) quote Allen and Valette (1972), who introduced the concept of Culture and culture, the former including elements which are part of popular culture (such as arts and music), while the latter refers to how people live or act. Looking at this differentiation in combination with language teaching, Ashikaga et al. have divided culture into what they call "Concrete Culture" (CC) and "Abstract Culture" (AC). The first category comprises "tangible manifestations of a culture such as nation, history, geography and products" (2). It usually can be observed and compared easily. By contrast, Abstract Culture is very closely related to the 'deeper' definition given by Hinkel (1999) discussed in the previous section. It refers to "intangible manifestations […] such as […] thinking patterns" and is "associated with behaviours, perspectives and values" (Ashikaga et al. 2001:3). Ashikaga, Fujita and Ikuta give the use of eye contact or nuances of politeness

as examples of Abstract Culture.

As I would argue that this form of culture is much more important for successful communication because it raises a learner's awareness of how information could be interpreted in other cultures different to the learner's native culture(s), it is essential to include AC-elements already in the language learner classroom.

Regarding my assumption that EFL textbooks in Japan contain much more observable cultural elements (Concrete Culture elements) than references to hidden manifestations, I will also put special emphasis on the above mentioned groups when conducting the analysis.

2.2. Material with cultural content

Intercultural learning is about attempting to understand different cultural behaviours and being aware of the huge diversity of cultural environments surrounding one's world. Materials used in the language classroom can help establishing an attitude that allows students to enter the world of cultural diversity, exploring different habits and learning to tolerate values that differ from their own. FLE textbook content is probably one of the most important facilitators in the process of becoming an interculturally competent learner. Almost all material presented in textbooks can be seen as cultural content – whether pictures, song texts or model dialogues, they all give the learner some cultural input. Nevertheless, it is up to the teacher and the students to recognise the cultural content and constructively work with it during the learning process. (see Cunningsworth 1986:50-59; Cortazzi and Jin 1999). Since images have various functions such as providing further information to a text, motivating students or setting an example, I will mainly put the emphasis of my analysis on visual material presented in the textbooks.

2.3. (Inter)cultural learning

The term *intercultural education* can nowadays often be found in texts about educational standards, curricula or simply pamphlets of language schools promoting a contemporary way of teaching. Often expressed in the same context are the terms *interculturality, interculturalism, intercultural education* and *multicultural education.* While some authors use these terms interchangeably, I regard only the former two as expressing the same meaning, whereas I would like to make a distinction between the latter two as described in the *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural education* published in 2006. These have been designed for the understanding of the connection between culture, education and language and how these bonds again are relevant for the notion of intercultural education. According to the UNESCO, interculturality is defined as

> a dynamic concept [which] refers to evolving relations between cultural groups. It has been defined as the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect. (17)

Furthermore, multicultural education and intercultural education are distinguished as follows:

> [...] Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures. Intercultural Education aims to go beyond *passive coexistence* [emphasis added], to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups. (18)

Clearly, intercultural education requires much more reflection and active participation in the learning process, which is why it is important to distinguish

between the above discussed terms.

Very closely related to this concept is the term *cultural awareness,* which, as Cortazzi and Jin (1999) put it, is the knowledge that other cultural groups might not share the same codes, manners and behaviours and the attempt “to understand their reasons for their actions and beliefs” (217). In this sense, *cultural awareness* is a side product of *intercultural education.* Bredella and Delanoy (1999) state in this context that

> [...] [e]in interkulturell ausgerichteter Fremdsprachenunterrricht […] lenkt den Blick […] darauf, daß wir beim Fremdsprachenlehren und -lernen darauf Rücksicht nehmen müssen, daß die Lernenden die Sprache und Kultur aus ihrer eigenen Perspektive wahrnehmen und daß es daher darauf ankommt, diese Differenz […] ins Bewußtsein zu heben. (11)

and stress that intercultural education includes

> [...] ein Bemühen um ein zunehmend differenziertes Selbst- und Fremdverstehen, [sowie] eine[...] tolerante Grundhaltung gegenüber anders denkenden Menschen […] (13).

Bredella and Delanoy also warn that cultures must not be essentialised and that is has to be acknowledged that people belong to more than one culture (15). In other words, we cannot systematically align one culture to one person but have to consider various cultural backgrounds that shape an individual's identity. Therefore we can never speak of a person's background culture in the singular form but must always refer to cultures.

Within this context I should mention another notion, namely *transculturality*. Introduced by cultural theorists in favour of cultural hybridity, transculturality is frequently opposed to interculturality, which is often seen as obsolete concept in the world of contemporary cultural theory. Frank Schulze-Engler (2002), proponent of the transcultural approach, points out that notions regarding

cultures as homogeneous and monolithic (such as interculturality) cannot be considered valid any longer. In a world with constantly changing boundaries and a both, conscious and unconscious cultural exchange through globalisation processes, any territorialising concepts limiting one culture to one place should be avoided and replaced by the transcultural approach, which accepts the already existing interconnectedness between various cultures (65-70).

While I would like to keep these concepts in mind when analysing schoolbook content, I will still refer to intercultural learning in the further course of this thesis. Since I do not view cultures as static and take into account that multiple cultures may co-exist, I still consider the term *interculturality* as valid.
Moreover, I agree with Werner Delanoy (2006) who, in his article "Transculturality and (Inter-)cultural Learning in the EFL Classroom" also discussing Schulze-Engler's criticism on interculturality, regards

> [...] territories as historically grown, discursively constructed, culturally heterogeneous and politically contested entities, which are implicated in further reaching networks and open to change (241).

Especially in the case of Japan, which has long had the image of a culturally homogeneous nation[3] (cf. Kubota 2002; Tsuneyoshi 2004 among others) and has often defined its 'Japaneseness' via its boundaries as an island state, trans- and intercultural viewpoints will be of great interest when discussing the (quite essentialist) concept of *nihonjinron* (see chapter 4).

Having defined frequently used terms, I will now turn to concepts of how culture can be presented in the classroom and how it is part of language learning.

[3] See section 4.3.

3. Culture and (English) language teaching

We live in an age in which it is agreed that language learning is about enabling people to actively communicate in another language instead of just studying grammatical rules. At the same time, it is an acknowledged fact (in the field of cultural studies) that communication, in whichever way, is always culturally biased and context-bound. Hence the necessity of including cultural elements for developing intercultural competence is inevitable for language education. By now most of the national school curricula which have been recently updated have included objectives on intercultural learning and understanding. However, Claire Kramsch (1993) states that “culture in language teaching is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background […]” (1). Rather than seeing learning about culture as an add-on, we should regard intercultural competence as something that helps realising how culture has always been part of language learning. It is about raising awareness of how culture shapes understanding and communication and overcoming cultural barriers by critically reflecting on the familiar and the different.

Meyer (1991) defines intercultural competence as “the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures.” (Meyer 173 quoted in Cortazzi and Jin 1999:198). Given that the generation of Japanese children now receiving foreign language education as part of their school education will prospectively be dealing with international societies more than ever, developing intercultural communication skills in the classroom comes to be more and more necessary. However, it is not only the students who have to become aware of different cultures but also the teachers who have to be open for on-going reflections about the dynamics of cultural processes and make judgements of what is relevant for teaching (Cortazzi and Jin 1999:198).

Although I have clarified what is meant by the term *intercultural education*, the way *how* interculturality is achieved in the classroom and what processes are necessary for students to gain intercultural competence still need discussing clarification.
To do so, I would like to introduce Valencia and Medina's model on developing critical intercultural competence in the following section.

3.1. A framework for critical intercultural competence

In order to show how to attain interculturality, Valencia and Medina (2009) present a model for “critical intercultural competence”. The authors stress that “students should take a critical position, which [can]not only be based on the judgement about the target culture but also on the analysis and understanding of their own culture” (153). In fact, as many other scholars agree, learning as such is always influenced by one's cultural backgrounds. Previous experiences, habits and attitudes take part in the process of acquiring and mastering a new language (see Byram 1989; Kramsch 1993; Hinkel 1999).

While it is often assumed that learning about other cultures and attempting to understand them is what constitutes an interculturally competent person, the fact that one first has to become aware of one's cultural identity (or identities) and cultural products, the “Myness” (11), is frequently overlooked. Valencia and Medina (2009) state that “people hardly ever have the chance to examine the influence of their own cultural background […]” and that “cultural representations [are] the product of [one's] own native culture” (154). Likewise Claire Kramsch claimed already in 1993 that “understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation with one's own” and should include “a reflection both on the target and on the native cultures” (205). Hence she expresses the need for the establishment of a “sphere of interculturality”. Similarly Bredella (1999) refers to his concept of taking up an “inner- and

outerperspective" (111) and to compare these perspectives in order to understand cultural differences.

This is what Valencia and Medina (2009) attempted to do in their collaborative project on cultural education in the EFL classroom. Step by step students were introduced to various aspects of culture and were asked to think about their cultural identities. Special attention was given to how cultural images were constructed and how the student's identities influenced the perception of other cultures, beliefs and presuppositions. In order to evaluate other cultures critically, it is essential to do the same with one's native culture(s) and to define the concept of cultural belonging. During this process, students became aware that their feeling of identity was closely related to their "spheres of knowledge in which the frameworks of assumptions, ideas and beliefs […] lie at the core" (Ramirez 2007 quoted in Valencia and Medina 2009:161). Culture, society and the individual, the "socio-cultural subject", can be seen as different spheres, interacting with each other and constantly changing and "making up new understandings", constituting the cultural self. After critically reflecting on one's view of the world, slowly engaging in a dialogue with other cultural practices leads to critical intercultural awareness (161-164).

To achieve this competence, Valencia and Medina suggest a three-stage process.
First the target culture is viewed and evaluated from the learner's native cultural perspective. Here, the learner is made aware that this view is "fragmented and biased" (162) and that cultural knowledge influences her[4] observations. This stage is followed by a phase in which the learner

> adopts to a certain extent the ways of thinking and the behavioral patterns of the target culture and uses these to judge and think of

[4] I have tried to keep language as gender-neutral as possible. However, in cases which require gender-specific vocabulary (such as pronouns) I have decided to use female expressions representative for both, males and females.

> his/her natal culture; s/he intends to “unanchor” aspects of his/her culture of origin. (162)

In the final stage “Myness” and “Otherness” (10) are both reflected and, in a way, contribute the same amount to, what in the end is called, an intercultural point of view (see Figure 1 below).

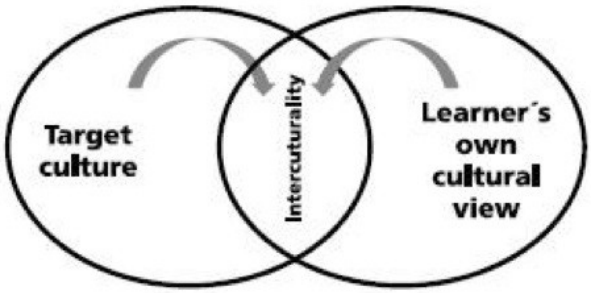


Figure 1: An intercultural view of culture (Valencia and Medina 2009:162)

It takes more than just a simple interpretation of target cultures and confirming or abandoning mere stereotypes from just one point of view. Additionally the source cultures also have to be critically questioned.

Valencia and Medina express it quite well by saying that

> we should start to see the Myness and the Other's essence and features as the product of the diversity that is inherent in human beings. Awareness has to do with the acknowledgment, tolerance and acceptance of that diversity and the ability to reflect and evaluate it critically. It will let the individual explore, question, examine and strengthen his/her cultural identity rather than undermining the importance of his language, culture […] in front of another culture. Moreover, an individual will be open-minded to read other cultures and speakers of other languages in order to make sense of their diversity and particular identities. (163)

A graphic summary of the process of achieving critical intercultural competence is presented below.

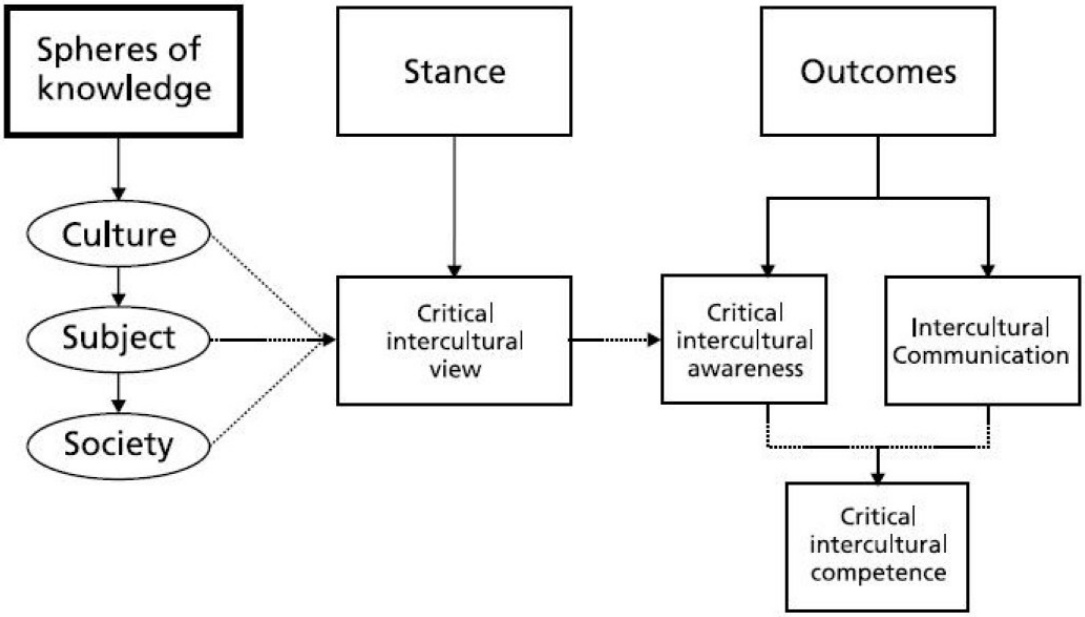


Figure 2: A framework for critical intercultural competence (Valencia and Medina 2009:165)

This approach, which takes up a point of cultural studies, in which students first have to stabilise their identity and become aware of their cultural backgrounds in order to be able to actively deal with and analyse other different cultures, is quite interesting. Concerning source culture content in textbooks it seems that there is a tightrope walk between what can be seen as strengthening a student's cultural identities for facilitating the development of tolerance and understanding towards other cultures and reinforcing a learner's 'nationalistic' identity by referring to her source cultures (cf. Kubota 1998). I will come back to this issue when presenting educational matters in Japan in chapter 4. First I would like to discuss another concept closely related to background cultures and its impacts on intercultural learning.

3.2. Culture(s) of learning

One aspect that has to be borne in mind when teaching a foreign language is that every participant in the classroom – whether teacher or learner – brings her learning culture(s) as background to the learning environment. “[...] [D]er Lernende [nimmt] die Sprache auf dem Hintergrund seiner Kultur [wahr]” (Bredella 1999:88). Since everyone has made different experiences which have shaped their way of learning and reflecting, it can be assumed that various “cultures of learning” (Cortazzi and Jin 1999:212) meet in one classroom.

A “culture of learning” is, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), a “taken-for-granted framework of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning” (212). It can be seen as a basis for cultural interpretations. According to the authors, the classroom is the place where the teacher's, the student's and textbook's cultures of learning meet and engage in a dialogue. They claim that if these learning cultures correspond to each other, target culture content can easily be mediated. However, on the other hand, special attention has to be given to cases in which one of these elements is not congruent with the others. This might lead to cultural misunderstandings or confusion on part of the students or the teacher. Cortazzi and Jin give a few examples of constellations in which various cultures of learning are represented in the classroom, pointing out that any combination can be a chance for experiencing, for instance, different methodologies and a challenge for both students and the teacher to transcend from their points of view to create a matching learning environment. By contrast however, the learning process can be hindered if communication fails and learning streams run only parallel instead of crossing each other (212-214). Nevertheless, one always has to bear in mind that these theoretical models only exemplify simplistic learning environments. Looking at the real-life-classroom, one will see the diversity of cultural backgrounds represented, demanding an on-going negotiation process between the different cultures of learning. Cortazzi and Jin express the situation

quite fittingly: “The cultural mirror in the EFL materials and methods is many-faceted” (214).

Having said that, I would still like to cite an example given by the previously mentioned authors. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) refer to their own study conducted in 1996, in which they examined the relationship of and interaction between Western teachers and Chinese students. What they observed was that in general Western teachers see an EFL textbook as a resource, whereas Chinese students often regard both, instructor and textbook, as “authority” and “provider of knowledge” (215), which should not be questioned. While Western educators might want to focus on the communicative aspect and try to trigger a discussion about certain cultural aspects in the book, Chinese students' learning background might make them feel uneasy about stating their own critical view in front of their classmates. In contrast to Western teaching styles, where teachers might expect learners' questions as a sign that meaning is being negotiated, Chinese students anticipate that the teacher will add details to facts if they seem relevant to her without previous demand of the students. As a result, as Cortazzi and Jin state,

> [i]f no explanation comes, [students] conclude that this aspect is not important or that they may find answers from the textbook and materials if they read them again and try to solve the problem themselves. (216)

It is needless to say that cultural learning takes place in many ways, spheres and situations, with many factors influencing the happenings within a classroom, making it impossible to set up generalisations. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that “the full realization of the cultural content of textbooks [ultimately depends on the participants]” (Cortazzi and Jin 1999:219).

Although I am aware of the fact that Chinese and Japanese cultures of learning

do differ in some ways, I still think that certain elements, such as classroom participation, are quite similar throughout Asia. Therefore I regard this example somewhat appropriate, as it shows how various cultures of learning – whether on the part of the teachers, students or textbooks – can have an impact on language and culture acquisition and how perception differs depending on each individual's learning history. This has to be kept in mind when analysing textbooks.

For a short overview on the classroom situation in Japan, I will include some recent findings on Japanese teaching styles and methods in chapter 4.

3.3. Roles of a textbook – a cultural mediator

When it comes to teaching a foreign language the textbook is in a majority of cases *the* major tool for referring to both, linguistic as well as cultural elements. Ashikaga, Fujita and Ikuta (2001) state that textbooks “can be primary sources for students to obtain cultural knowledge and thus they may play an important role in formulating students' values and attitudes towards the target culture” (2). Similarly, Lin Zu (2009) points out that textbooks have a guiding function not only for learners but also for teachers, and that it therefore is of “vital importance that textbooks provide a systematic and comprehensive cultural perspective” (114). Also Browne and Wada (1998) stress that textbooks do not only serve students but can also be seen as an advising framework for EFL teachers. In their study they found out that Japanese teachers are most likely to teach primarily the contents of the book used in class (105).

Cortazzi and Jin (1999), who examined the representation of culture in EFL textbooks, recognise various functions of textbooks. For once, they serve as trainer for those teachers who have not gained much teaching experience yet and still have to develop their own strategy of including cultural elements and

resources in their teaching. Moreover, Cortazzi and Jin call it “an authority”, as it is often seen as “reliable, valid and written by experts” (200). While taking the given information as complete and correct, teachers might not consider the contents as objectively as they should. The authors also point out that in many cases, textbooks are approved by the ministry of education or some other authority, and that teachers often do not get the chance to freely choose their favoured textbook (200).

This leads to a further aspect not to be ignored when reviewing the functions of a textbook: as political statement or, as Cortazzi and Jin term it, an ideology. By introducing or leaving out certain cultural aspects or topics – for whatever reason there may be - students and teachers are “exposed” to the thoughts and constructions of the author(s) who created the textbook (200). Similarly, Gray (2002) states that the contents of a textbook are “a result of the interplay between, at time, contradictory commercial, pedagogic and ethical interests” (157). In fact, he states that textbooks are always culturally bound, representing a certain political, moral or economical attitude, even if there are handbooks aiming to advice authors on textbook-objectivity and neutrality and giving recommendations on what to (not) include with regard to content (157-161).

Needless to say, it is up to those on the 'receiving end', namely the teachers and students, to handle the given information with care and form their own opinion about it. However, as pointed out before, often teachers and students are willing to accept the cultural representations without challenging them, or do not have the capacities or choices to constantly engage with the dynamic process of culture and its changes. Nevertheless, Richards (1993) concludes that “in order to be able to serve as sources for creative teaching, teachers need to develop skills in evaluating and adapting published materials” (49). He sees textbooks as source material that should make a teacher's work easier as they provide her with ideas of how to incorporate various exercises in the lessons. Furthermore, if textbooks are up-to-date in terms of taking in the

newest research findings on language teaching and current approaches, a teacher's performance might be influenced positively. However, he warns that an over-dependence on textbooks, seeing them as course books suggesting a fixed schedule, is rather hindering for the development of highly qualitative classroom teaching (45-46).

So far the many functions of a foreign language textbook have been discussed. In the following section I would like to turn to the different ways cultures can be presented in textbooks and how they can be evaluated or examined as to their cultural content.

3.4. Evaluating textbooks for their cultural content

Quite a few methods and procedures for evaluating textbooks have been suggested by various scholars of all kinds of fields[5]. After all, cultural issues in the classroom can be approached from several academic disciplines such as sociology, ethnology and/or educational studies. Of course, textbook evaluation checklists depend on what they are supposed to examine. Some lists have a focus on how culture is represented through communicative activities, while others put their emphasis on scrutinizing the diversity of cultures represented in the textbook. One also has to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative measurements. In this chapter I will discuss only a selection of methods which I have come across a few times and which, I believe, are relevant for the further course of my thesis.

Already published in 1974, Elizabeth Joiner's evaluation form for examining the cultural content of foreign language textbooks has frequently been quoted and

[5] For a short summary of different evaluation methods see Kawano (1987) or Cortazzi and Jin (1999).

used for follow-up studies (see Kitao 1979; Kawano 1987). According to Joiner, the textbook is a “cultural bearer” (242). As mentioned in chapter 3.2., students who start to learn a foreign language already have a certain concept and attitude towards it in mind. Therefore the textbook carries a lot of responsibility in so far as it either “serve[s] to correct [a student's] misconceptions, […] increase[s| his cultural understanding or [...] confirm[s] him in his prejudices” (242). Joiner points out that textbooks contain a 'hidden' curriculum by including and omitting certain features of a culture. The aim of each textbook should be to demonstrate an “objective and accurate picture” (243). Joiner's evaluation checklist was designed to help finding out whether such a “correct” picture is presented or whether the textbook rather contains a set of stereotypes. At this point it has to be put into question whether judging the given information to be “correct and objective” or not is possible at all. It always has to be kept in mind that both, textbook content and the analysis of such content, underlie the subjective influence of the author and the analyst. Hence I doubt that an objective representation of cultures is within the realms of possibility.

The author combines both qualitative and quantitative measurements by, for instance, first counting the number of illustrations occurring in the textbook and grouping them according to what is seen on the pictures (“Segments of society represented in illustrations” (245)) and then evaluating them by reflecting about the quality of these visual aids. For this process Joiner provides check-lines for marking the evaluator's own impression that means whether the material displays inoffensive or controversial aspects of culture. Further sections of Joiner's article include a close examination of cultural texts, general questions regarding culture and the investigation of supplementary material available for the teacher (245-246). While her framework seems quite applicable for any quantitative analysis of EFL textbooks, for qualitative research it might be seen as a weakness that, in the end, the answers to the close-up questions regarding cultural content depend on the investigator's own, subjective point of view. It is

therefore up to the analyst to define replicable rating criteria.

One of the most prominent researchers on intercultural learning and cultural content in the classroom is Michael Byram (1989; 1993; 1998). Focusing on cultural content in foreign language textbooks, he has published a list of criteria examining the extent and methods of how culture is presented. These include, among others, sociological factors such as social class and (social) interaction, but also historical and geographical aspects. Further categories are stereotypes and national identity i.e. if 'typical' national symbols appear in the textbook (1993:10-15). While Byram's criteria do seem like an extensive version of Joiner's framework, they include more aspects on society, addressing various cultural sectors. Hence, these criteria are far more in-depth and critical. Furthermore, there is also a focus on beliefs and behaviour (e.g. moral, religious...) and, among others, ethnic minorities.

Another approach to textbook evaluation is given by Jack C. Richards (1993). He speaks of a “demystification” of textbooks. That means that the given information must not be taken for granted but rather be questioned critically. Textbook contents should be scrutinized closely and objectively. Richards suggests a two-stage process, in which the material is first examined and categorized into its different functions, such as teaching or practising language content, learning skills or tasks, which are related to real life. In a further step different kinds of activities are identified in order to become aware of how an item or task can be presented or worked on. As an example, Richards points out the many ways a simple reading passage can be dealt with (50).

Richards differs between a macro-, and a micro-level analysis, the former being adaptable for any kind of textbook and the latter containing criteria for specific textbooks. Three categories for a macro-level analysis are suggested: first,

teacher factors, including the judgement of usability and cultural appropriateness, second, learner factors, as for instance the attractiveness of the format or the language level, and third, task factors, such as whether tasks fit their objectives. As already said, micro-level criteria investigate textbooks specifically for their fulfilment of the aims they claim to have. In the case of a textbook for foreign language education, evaluation points regarding cultural aspects could be on whether cultural awareness is raised or if authentic material for real life situations is used. According to Richards, teachers should be able to examine textbooks with these categorical checklists before they start using them, filtering out what they want to include in their teaching and what they plan to omit (50).

For the qualitative analysis in this thesis, I have decided to create my own set of research questions. Inspired by the various evaluation checklists available, I have picked out criteria and checkpoints relevant for the analysis. This includes questions e.g. aiding the evaluation of images. I will present the whole framework for analysis used in this study in chapter 5.

When talking about evaluating foreign language textbooks, it is usually presumed that the cultural content is mostly about the language to be learned with the help of this material. In other words, information displayed in the textbook is about the target culture. Looking at the latest developments in language teaching and the discussion on interdependence between language and culture which has been led for over 20 years now, one might furthermore assume that by now FLE textbook writers in most parts of the world have taken the findings on the importance of culture in language education into account and have re-written them accordingly. That is, incorporating the Communicative Language Approach and promoting the development of intercultural skills by contrasting various cultural groups and raising awareness of cultural diversity.

However, with regard to the presentation of culture groups in textbooks, it has been found that not all FLE textbook automatically focus on the language to be acquired (the target language). After examining a range of textbooks from all over the world, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) created three major groups to which FLE textbooks can be aligned to: textbooks based on source cultures, target cultures and international target cultures (204).

3.4.1. Source culture textbooks

As an example for the first category, the authors name three textbooks from Venezuela, Turkey and Saudi-Arabia. Information such as geographical or historical facts given in the textbook is primarily based on each nation's cultures, the source cultures. Basically all features reinforce the students' native cultures and habits, while only the language used to talk about food, the weather or directions is English. Using such textbooks enables students to talk to a foreign visitor, e.g. a tourist. However, since they have not been made aware of possible differences in communication styles, communicating with the foreign interlocutor might fail in spite of sharing a common language - “a classic setup for miscommunication (205)”. Obviously students dealing with only a limited set of cultures, even it is in another language, cannot develop intercultural communication skills as they have little opportunity to engage in the critical process of viewing and reflecting over cultural diversities. Although one reason brought forward for the usage of source culture-based textbooks is that students become aware of their own identity by dealing with issues of their cultures, one might argue against this 'justification' by pointing out that as long as language learners do not have the possibility to find out differences and similarities of two cultures, they will not become aware of these, neither in their native cultures nor in any other cultures. It is then up to the teacher to draw attention to source culture aspects which could cause difficulties when communicating with target

language speakers (204-207).

3.4.2. Target culture-based textbooks

In the case of English as a foreign language, textbooks based on target cultures include those, which mainly present “Western” English speaking cultures such as the USA, UK or Australia. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) point out that compared with textbooks from the 80s, textbook content has changed in so far as that controversial issues such as race and environmental issues are included and “traditional” stereotypes such as illustrations of men as the working force and women in roles of the housekeeper are more and more declining. The authors furthermore make a distinction between “open” and “closed” texts (208 on the basis of Luke 1989). The latter format does not require any student responses as it usually presents facts or “an unproblematic world” (208) with no space for further interpretation, reflection or discussion. On the other end of the spectrum we find “open” texts, demanding the learner to cognitively engage with the issues presented and formulating her own opinion about them. Clearly, “open” formats about target cultures contribute the most to raising cultural awareness among EFL learners as they, while working on their tasks, connect their world knowledge with what they have just learned and reflect about it.

3.4.3. International target-based textbooks

As textbooks, which aim at international target cultures, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) define those which present

> a wide variety of cultures set it English-speaking countries or in other countries where English is not a first or second language, but is used

> as an international language. The rationale for such *international target cultures* is that English is frequently used in international situations by speakers who do not speak it as a first language. (209)

Benefits of such textbooks are that students develop intercultural skills relating to a variety of cultures, instead of just focusing on a limited set of cultures. Furthermore, by approaching different cultures and comparing them, they are indirectly also forced to re-define their own cultural identity (204). This might seem one of the best textbook formats in foreign language teaching because of the manifold learning results. However, Cortazzi and Jin point out that using an international target culture-based textbook requires the teacher to have a vast knowledge of various cultures and appropriate methods for teaching them, otherwise there may not be an in-depth reflection but cultural learning will only superficially be touched upon (210).

3.4.4. Target-source culture-based textbooks

In regard to my thesis statement, in which I claim that the cultures represented in Japanese junior high school textbooks are mostly source and target culture elements, I would like to mention a fourth type of textbook format – target-source culture-based textbooks – which includes features that directly compare the two.

The same has been done by Ashikaga, Fujita and Ikuta (2001), who examined Japanese high school EFL communication textbooks for their cultural content. I will briefly describe the outcomes of their study later on.

4. English language education in Japan

Reading through academic papers on the Japanese education system, I get the impression that it is full of faults and failures. Particularly in regard to foreign language education, most (Western) scholars like to criticise the lack of training of FLE teachers, classroom methods of instruction and the overall (unofficial) aim of studying English only to be able to pass the university entrance tests, which are commonly known to be extremely difficult.

Nevertheless, looking at recent curriculum developments and efforts made by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, in short MEXT, it seems that the Japanese government has put some serious thought in restructuring, or at least, improving the foreign language education system.

Before taking a closer look at the major reform in English language education implemented in 2003, I will briefly summarise the history of English language education in Japan with its previous background aims and explain how various factors contributed to the system that has long prevailed English language education in schools.

4.1. Developments in English language education in Japan – an overview

Japan has always had a changing relationship with the English language. Butler and Iino (2005) describe it as an “alternating […] focus on *English for practical purposes* and *English for entrance examination for higher education* […] (27)”. Even though recordings of English lessons for the elite held earlier than the “opening-up” of Japan (around the 1870s) can be found, English language knowledge became more and more important after diplomatic relations with the US were established during the early Meiji era when Japan officially ended its

seclusion. Being able to do business in English counted as being 'modern' and advanced in contrast to the Japanese way of trading which was devalued and seen as old-fashioned. Soon the English language had taken its place as main foreign language – one of the major developments triggered by the Westernisation process (Butler and Iino 2005:27-28).

Nevertheless, the enthusiasm about the Western world was exchanged with growing nationalism after Japan had won the Japan-Sino and Japan-Russio War, with the result that almost all materials treating foreign matters were banned from education. Instead of being a medium for communication, the English language was only seen as an academic gateway to enter Japanese high schools and, later on, universities. As the entrance tests only required passive knowledge in form of vocabulary and grammar rules, the focus of English language education was put on translating and memorization (28).

The Second World War again caused a complete rejection of the English language. However, after the U.S. had occupied Japan, it not only imposed the 6-3-3-4 education system, which is still prevalent nowadays, but also re-established English as a subject at school. Since English knowledge was still (and since then has always been) necessary to pass the entrance examinations to high school, which a high number of students opted for after completing their compulsory nine years of education, the study of English continued to be heavily emphasised on the learning of grammar rules and vocabulary (28, see also Kikuchi and Browne 2009).

No doubt that these developments have had an impact on how English is seen and taught today. Although various attempts have been made to shift the focus towards a more communicative aim in foreign language education, not much has changed if you look at classrooms today. Yet it has to be noted that

curricula have been altered to allow, if not to say, implement a more culture- and communication related way of teaching.

4.1.1. The curriculum for English as a second language – changes and aims

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology issues official sets of guidelines almost every ten years. The last major revision of the *Course of Study Guidelines* was in 2003, so we can be expecting the next version to be revised and brought out in the next couple of years. At this point it has to be mentioned that there has been another publication of the study guidelines in 2008. However, since the guidelines (i.e. the wording) for junior high school level do not differ in the version of 2003 and the most recent publication, I will continue referring to the 'original' document of 2003.

In theory, one can assume that these guidelines have a great impact on what is being taught at school. Butler and Iino (2005) state that

> […] the curricula at the junior and high school levels in Japan have been controlled to a great extent by the guidelines set by the MEXT, and teachers have had relatively limited control over such curricula. National guidelines prescribe the types and numbers of vocabulary, grammatical items, and cultural and societal topics that should be introduced at each school level […]. (29)

The MEXT began to include curriculum goals related to communicative competence in the curriculum of 1989. For the first time, the students' speaking ability was set as a clearly defined aim of English teaching (Yoshida 2003 in Kikuchi and Browne 2009:173). Ever since then, the curriculum has officially taken up the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) and uses the 4-skill categorisation (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to further specify its

objectives. It also takes into account cultural learning as essential part of foreign language teaching.

The 2003-version of the *Course of Study for Foreign Languages for Lower Secondary Schools* (in English) starts with the overall objective to

> […] develop students' basic practical communication abilities such as listening and speaking, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude towards communication through foreign languages. (1)

Focussing on the materials used in classroom it is stated that

> […] In regard to teaching materials, in order to cultivate practical English communication abilities, material that gives sufficient consideration to actual language-use situations and functions of language should be utilized. Teachers should take up a variety of suitable topics in accordance with the level of students' mental and physical development, as well as their interests and concerns, covering topics that relate to the daily lives, manners and customs, stories, geography, history, etc. of Japanese people and the peoples [sic] of the world, focusing on countries that use English. […] (5)

To fulfil this objective it is furthermore suggested to use materials that provide the following qualities:

> […] a) Materials that are useful in enhancing the understanding of various ways of seeing and thinking, *cultivating a rich sensibility, and enhancing the ability to make impartial judgements.*
>
> b) Materials that are useful in deepening the *understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan and the rest of the world*, r*aising interest in language and culture, and developing respectful attitudes to these elements*.
>
> c) Materials the are useful in *deepening international understanding*

> *from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community, and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation* [emphasis added] (5).

Around the same time when the revised guidelines were published, the MEXT also issued another document called *The Action Plan* (2002), which can be seen as a supplement to the curriculum.

4.1.2. The Action Plan

In the first press release of the *Action Plan* in 2002, it is also titled as "Developing a strategic plan to cultivate Japanese with English Abilities". The subheading "Plan to improve English and Japanese abilities" furthermore defines the purpose of the *Action Plan*.

The *Action Plan* can be interpreted as a further response to the criticisms that the English language education system in Japan prepares students insufficiently to "meet the various needs of Japan for globalization" (Butler and Iino 2005:33).

According to Philipp Seargeant (2008), the

> *Course of Study* […] is primarily a curriculum document, and its view of language policy is thus mostly expressed through the arrangement of syllabus resources. The *Action Plan* […] offers explicit explanation and comment of its rationale and aims, and in doing so provides a blueprint for language education policy […]. (136)

Reading through the documents, it soon becomes apparent that English is seen as lingua franca. When reading closely, it seems that the Japanese government

is setting its hope on English to improve the communication between Japan and non-Japanese cultures.

In the *Action Plan* it is stated that

> [w]ith the progress of globalization in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English, which has become a common international language, in order for living in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation […] (1)

Later in the section it is declared that

> [a]ccordingly, we have formulated a strategy to cultivate "Japanese with English abilities" in a concrete action plan with the aim of drastically improving the English education of Japanese people. In addition, we aim to make improvements to Japanese-language education. (1)

It is important to note that this document is not only meant to be applied to secondary school education but to all levels of education, including elementary and tertiary education. Clear hands-on proposals on how to improve foreign language education show the great interest of the Japanese government to fulfil the aims of the *Action Plan*. These include, for example, establishing trainings and workshops for EFL teachers in service, introducing standardised testing methods for evaluating English abilities and promoting the Assistant Language Teacher programme (ALT) to bring in more native speakers of English into Japan (MEXT 2003).

The last of the five "key policy issues" (6) stated in the *Action Plan* is to improve

not only the foreign language education system, but also to foster Japanese language education. It is aimed at “cultivat[ing] Japanese-language abilities for appropriate expression and accurate comprehension” (6) via promoting the new *Course of Study* which is based on the assumption that intercultural education can only be successful if students are already confident in expressing themselves clearly in their native language. It is therefore emphasised that one focus in foreign language education should also be devoted to helping students develop and strengthen their, what is assumed as, Japanese identity. This policy is often viewed in a critical way, which I will go into detail about in section 4.3.

For now, a brief insight into 'Japanese classroom reality' should give some idea on how the *Course of Study* and the *Action Plan* influenced EFL teaching and learning in the past years and what factors might have negatively or positively affected the implementation of the two documents.

4.2. EFL classrooms in Japan

Kikuchi and Browne (2009) acknowledge the “modernisation” of the study guidelines as “[...] example of the Japanese government's response to the pressure or desire to teach English as a global language […] (177)” but agree with Nunan (2003), who claims that especially in Asian countries, where efforts to update the curriculum have recently been made, there has not been much consideration of the consequences involved with such implications (591). In other words, theoretically the concept of teaching English as a global language and considering the intercultural competence aspect works out well on official guidelines, however it is not easy to realise these approaches in the classroom due to various obstacles e.g. a lack of appropriate teacher training or resources.

Kevin O'Donnell (2005), in a study on Japanese EFL teachers' values and beliefs in the classroom, has described the prevailing situation quite well:

> While reform has been mandated at the very top levels, the classroom has been slow to follow. Bureaucrats may give orders, but it is up to individual teachers to implement those changes at the classroom level. (301)

In his study he outlines various factors which can be seen as potential obstacles for the complete realisation of CLT in Japanese classrooms. Among others he mentions two aspects – both of them are usually also critically mentioned by other scholars who investigate English language education in Japan – namely preparations for post-secondary entrance examinations (*juken*) and the custom of teaching foreign languages with the grammar-translation method (*yakudoku*) (O'Donnell 2005:300-304). Both have had a long tradition in Japan and are, in a way, tied together.

Some educators (cf. Butler and Iino 2005; Riley 2008 among others) argue that passing top-level university examinations, which are known to be extremely difficult, have become the main purpose of studying English in secondary schools. Since they mostly consist of testing receptive skills, grammar or translations rather than requiring any intercultural or communicative knowledge, classroom contents mainly focus on training these skills, regardless of the official objectives given in the study guidelines (Riley 2008:110).Gorsuch (2000) has found out that teachers are put under enormous pressure to prepare students properly for the examinations, which leaves them almost no space to introduce supplementary activities such as role plays or extensive projects (681-682). The school management does not support any 'experiments' in the English classroom as it fears a bad reputation: parents insist on traditional

teaching methods to ensure a, what they consider, decent education which prepares the students for the examination, and students themselves, pressured to study enough to pass the university tests, are more interested in conventional grammar-translation exercises (687). Communicative language teaching therefore has yet to defend its important role in the classroom and also in society.

Moreover, as Browne and Wada (1998) have investigated, teachers do tend to fall back on how they themselves were taught English in school. Even though they might disagree with the *yakudoku* method, they still apply it as their own teaching style. According to Browne and Wada, this can be traced back to the insufficient pre-service training teachers receive at university. Most EFL teachers in Japan do not carry a specified degree in teaching but have majored in English literature or English linguistics (most of which is taught in Japanese and focuses rather on a historical context than applied linguistics and didactics). Although some universities do offer courses for ESL methodology, testing styles or didactics, these subjects can be taken on an optional level and are not obligatory for obtaining an additional license for teaching at a secondary institution. There is only one compulsory course related to language teaching that has to be completed during the course of study, together with a two-week internship at the end of the semester (Browne and Wada 1998:101; see also Kikuchi and Browne 2009:174-175). It is obvious that one reason communicative language teaching has failed in Japan, is the lack of appropriate pre-service teacher training where recent findings and insights on pedagogical insights can be transmitted.

In his qualitative study, for which Kevin O'Donnell (2005) interviewed various Japanese EFL teachers, he reveals that most teachers feel unprepared for their role as teacher when they start working at a school. Although they are keen to

attend workshops and seminars for in-service teachers, they are often not able to take time off due to the many extracurricular responsibilities that come together with the employment as a teacher. O'Donnell concludes that teachers are overburdened as they have to manage preparing their students for the entrance exams and at the same time completing various administrative tasks. As a consequence, they employ a teacher-centred method because it a) saves preparation time and b) they themselves are not confident enough to try different teaching styles due to insufficient pre-service and in-service training. It is also indicated that the workplace very often does not support “unconventional” approaches (O'Donnell 2005:310-312; see also Gorsuch 2001).

I have outlined various factors that seem to challenge the recent efforts of the government to increase the communicative and intercultural competence level of Japanese students. Kikuchi and Browne (2009) have formulated the current situation quite well when they refer to a “[...] complicated gap between educational policies and actual teaching practice [...]” (172). A number of circumstances incompatible with contemporary ideas such as the enormous power of post-secondary institutions make it difficult to realise the new objectives stated in the guidelines.

The whole situation, however, can also be looked at from another viewpoint by considering ideologies and sociocultural attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures. In the following section I will outline some criticism dealing with cultural ideals and norms, which are said to have a great impact on foreign language and cultural perceptions and therefore also play a great role in pedagogy and policy-making.

4.3. Ideologies, intercultural education and EFL in Japan

Most scholars on English language education in Japan agree with their colleagues that macro-level factors influence the final realisation of the newly published curricular guidelines. However, some of them also propose to, in a further step, critically review deep-rooted ideas existing in today's Japanese society on multi-, and interculturalism and on the teaching and learning of foreign elements (see Tsuneyoshi 2004; Butler and Iino 2005; Aspinall 2006; Okano 2006; O'Neill 2008; Seargeant 2008 among others).

Before going into further detail on these existing ideologies and their impact on government policies and social beliefs, I would like to briefly introduce two concepts which have certainly shaped the image of English and other foreign languages and cultures different to Japanese cultures.

4.3.1. *Nihonjinron* – the discourse on 'Japaneseness'

The term *nihonjinron* translates as 'discussions on Japanese identity'. It describes a collection of texts, essays and other formats (such as TV-shows and radio programmes) of the discourse on Japanese identity and can be considered as one form of cultural nationalism. Although in the field of Japanese studies, most works related to the *nihonjinron* are not seen as reliable sources for academic papers, their influence on Japanese society and how it sees itself cannot be denied. In other words, since the collection of materials on Japanese identity ranges from light, easy-read articles to complex papers on “Japaneseness”, members of various social and educational groups are familiar with the concepts of *nihonjinron.*

According to Harumi Befu[6] (2001) the *nihonjinron* aims at "demonstrat[ing] the unique qualities of Japanese culture, Japanese society, and the Japanese people (4)." Several premises and ideologies underlie the *nihonjinron:* First of all, contributors to the *nihonjinron* claim that due to various sociological, historical and psychological factors, the Japanese culture and language have become 'unique'. At the same time it is implied that only those equipped with Japanese blood and the accompanying "intuition" are able to understand the unique features of Japanese society and its language – this excludes any non-native Japanese (66-67). Ethnocentricity and the "assumption that the Japanese people are a homogeneous 'race' and possess a homogeneous culture" (68) are further prominent features found in the *nihonjinron.* Comparisons with the West, particularly with the United States (because of its political and economical relationship with Japan), are frequently made by *nihonjinron*-writers, not only creating an essentialist dichotomy, but also judging the different "Other" (6) as inferior (6, 67; see also Kubota 1998:300). According to Befu (2001), only few contrasts can be found between Japan and other Asian countries, while Africa is never even mentioned in any of the discourses (6).

While most of the texts were produced between the 1960s and the 1980s when Japan experienced an economic boost, publications reaching from academic papers to popular books and magazines with *nihonjinron*-related content are still presented nowadays (Befu 2001:46; Burgess 2004:7). The prevailing existence of some *nihonjinron*-similar ideas in today's Japanese society, such as homogeneity, and the frequent references made to the nihonjinron-discourse in political statements, leads to the criticism that the already established diversity within in Japan is ignored and that certain ideologies are still held up even though reality looks different nowadays (see Kubota 1998:300; Burgess 2004:7). Kubota (2008) states that it is time to "[...] deessentialize the persistent

[6] For an extensive review of the *nihonjinron,* see Harumi Befu's *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (2001).

discourse that defines culture as a unitary, distinct, and objective reality (343)".

Before turning to possible impacts of the *nihonjinron* on government policies and the language education system, I will briefly introduce another concept, *kokusaika,* which is related to both, *nihonjinron* and the educational policies in Japan.

4.3.2. *Kokusaika* – Internationalisation

Kokusaika translates as 'internationalisation' and became quite a popular term in the 1980s, when the need for the ability to effectively communicate with economic business partners around the globe increased. Several efforts were made to improve foreign language communication skills of the Japanese society. For instance, companies introduced seminars for their employees and in the school curriculum of 1989, the objective to study English for communication was officially stated for the first time (Yoshida 2003 in Kikuchi and Browne 2009:173).

Although the overall aim of 'internationalising a nation' sounds rather promising, when reading through (mostly Western) articles and studies on *kokusaika,* it becomes clear that many scholars do not consider the internationalisation as a positive change. Ryuko Kubota (1998), for example, after critically evaluating the policies of *kokusaika*, concludes that the discourses of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika "*promote both strengthening Japanese identity based on nationalistic values and learning the communication mode of English (302)". She points out that, similar to the *nihonjinron*, Japan is only compared with the West, idealising "Inner circle" English speaking cultures (cf. B. Kachru) while devaluing non-Western cultures (301). In another paper she states that *kokusaika* "is an

attempt to maintain Japanese identity and to communicate distinct Japanese perspectives to the rest of the world (2002:17)".

A similar view is also presented by Chris Burgess, who calls the discourses[7] of *kokusaika* and *nihonjinron*

> sophisticated because they give the impression of 'an ideological shift from an ideology of homogeneity to an ideology of difference' (Ertl quoted in Burgess 2004), while actually maintaining and reinforcing the former (8).

Furthermore he states that instead of overcoming cultural boundaries, *kokusaika* has the effect of reinforcing the differences between foreigners and Japanese people, once more designating a "category of difference (11)" to non-Japanese people.

These observations also correlate with Delanoy's (2006; 2008) discourses on inter-, and transculturality, in which he stresses that seeing cultures as separate entities can lead to an 'inclusion via exclusion'. He furthermore urges to "include forms of communication within, between and across cultures, where cultural boundaries can be dissolved, crossed, reaffirmed or newly created" (2008:180) rather than seeing cultures in an essentialist view.

Relating the concepts of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika* to past and current English language education policies, several assumption and observations can be

[7] In his article "Maintaining Identities. Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalizing Japan", Chris Burgess (2004) also discusses three other terms – namely *ibunka* (different culture), *kyousei* (co-existence) and *tabunka* (multiculturalism) – often found in the same context as *kokusaika* and multicultural education in Japan. Although the author argues that *kokusaika* has been "superseded by other, perhaps more sophisticated, Discourses (12)" and suggests to rather refer to the other terms describing similar concepts, I have decided to only include *kokusaika* in this thesis, as most authors make reference to this long-standing term.

made, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.3. The influence of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika* on EFL

> The discursive nature of culture problematizes common teaching practices that assume the existence of culture (and language and ethnicity) as a single objectified entity. It also calls into question the commonly used instructional practice of asking students to compare and contrast the target culture with their own culture, because this approach objectifies and essentializes not only the target culture but also their own culture. (Harklau 1999:129)

Ryuko Kubota (1998; 2002; 2008), as leading critic of the Japanese foreign language education system and its policies, presents a quite drastic view on English ideologies in Japan. According to her, the core of the failure to successfully realise efforts to improve intercultural communication skills lies in the "fundamentalist over-glorification of Western cultures" and ignorance of other "inferior" cultures (Kubota 1998:298-299; see also Kubota 2002:14-17).

Kubota claims that Japan was forced to respond to the recent developments of globalisation, which have also taken place in Japan, by officially including intercultural aspects in education. However, under the disguise of promoting intercultural communication in education, she clearly sees issues that point towards supporting and reinforcing nationalistic values. She furthermore criticises that although multiculturalism has long taken place in Japan as well, this fact is regularly ignored by officials as well as by scholars, who still tend to define Japan as 'culturally homogeneous' country. Instead of making use of the already existing cultural diversity within the nation, of which Koreans, Chinese and Brazilians make up a great part, only Western cultures, especially from Europe and North America, are valued as worthwhile studying and are seen as useful for intercultural understanding (Kubota 1998:298-299; 2002:14-16).

Also Kaori Okano (2006) shares Kubota's view that Japan has failed to manage the “internal cultural diversity” (474) in a successful way. Instead she claims that through the current educational system attempts have been made to assimilate non-Japanese citizens rather than integrate them.

> Japan not only projects itself as an ethnically and linguistically homogeneous nation but most citizens share that view. This derives at least partially from the modern system of education, which has nurtured a sense of what it is to be “Japanese” and assimilated other ethnic groups under its umbrella. […] Long-standing ethnic groups have become […] invisible. (Okano 2006:474)

Kubota (2002) draws back her conclusions on the basis of the two previously introduced Japanese concepts, *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika*. Particularly the discourse of internationalizing Japan has had a great impact on how foreign – especially English – language education is perceived nowadays. Kubota states:

> […] *Kokusaika* has produced the following premises in foreign language education: 1) 'foreign language' is 'English'; 2) the model for 'English' should be standard North American or British varieties; 3) learning English leads to 'international/intercultural understanding'; and 4) national identity is fostered through learning English. These premises demonstrate convergence towards English, so-called standard English, and Anglophone cultures as well as maintenance of national identity, while failing to promote linguistic and cultural pluralism [...]. (19)

The reputation of English as doorway to the global world and to international understanding has given it enormous power. However, Kubota points out that instead of 'global' English or English as a lingua franca, only standard varieties of English spoken by native speakers and 'Inner circle' cultures (see B. Kachru 1989:16) are accepted as valid. This is also reflected in education and school books, in which, as Kubota claims, only Anglophone varieties are directly

compared with Japanese cultural elements or language.

> [...] [L]earning English leads not so much to 'international understanding' in a sense of cosmopolitan pluralism or critical multiculturalism (cf. Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997) but to cultural essentialization and dichotomization between Japanese and Anglophone cultures. […] While the discourse of *kokusaika* promotes Anglicization, it also reinforces cultural nationalism through constructing a rigid cultural boundary between Us and Them. […] (Kubota 2002:23)

Butler and Iino (2005) see similar problems and regard not only the educational reform in general but especially the newly imposed *Action Plan* as "challenge due to conflicting ideologies" (38). In contrast to Kubota, who in her article insinuates nationalistic purposes in the newly issued documents, the authors acknowledge the Japanese government's efforts to improve and internationalise foreign language education in Japan. Nevertheless, they agree with her observation that "[...] multilingualism itself is still largely understood as being synonymous with Japanese-English bilingualism […]" (39) and take the *Action Plan* as example in which English is taken as key to intercultural understanding. They furthermore recognise the guidelines as one method to "[...] bring economic/political/cultural power into Japan […] but not to promote communicative integration among linguistically heterogeneous groups within Japan." (39; see also Seargeant 2008:129-130).

Similarly, addressing the issue of intercultural education in Japan, Ryoko Tsuneyoshi (2004) points out that Japan, although it still holds onto its illusory image as a culturally homogenous nation, has been "challenged to recognize the diversity within" (56). She sees the revised policies as first step to create awareness to change the essentialist picture of 'pure' Japan.

Although I am analysing Japanese schoolbooks designed to be used in *English*

as a foreign language classes, I find it important to bear these introduced concepts and ideas of multiculturalism in Japan in mind. Japanese EFL textbooks are examined to meet the policies given by the Japanese ministry before they are approved to be used in the classroom. By closely looking at how units are structured and which cultures are mentioned in the textbooks, I expect to find further hints whether or not the revised guidelines intend to support intercultural understanding and diversity within the nation (also considering non-Western cultures).

5. Analysis of junior high school textbooks in Japan

Let me briefly summarise the outcomes of the first chapters and clarify a few other matters before turning to the analysis.

5.1. A brief summary

I have discussed the main tenets of intercultural education and have clarified that the process of intercultural understanding involves strengthening a learner's cultural identities, so that she can actively and critically reflect on her own perspective and compare it with those of others. Instead of creating a 'black-and-white viewpoint', in which cultural aspects are divided into 'superior' or 'inferior', the aim of intercultural education is to generate acceptance and tolerance towards other cultures and to foster mutual understanding.

Creating intercultural understanding is mentioned as one of the objectives in the latest version of the Japanese national curriculum for English language education. At the same time it is stated that another learning objective should also include strengthening the students' Japanese identity and making them

aware of their 'native' cultures (MEXT 2003). Technically, this aim coincides with the approach of intercultural education which postulates that the “understanding of the own leads to the understanding of the different” (Bredella 1999:101). However, critical voices see the formulation of these aims problematically. They see a 'hidden aim' in the curriculum, namely that under the disguise of promoting intercultural understanding, nationalistic values are supported and encouraged. It is feared that intercultural education is misinterpreted in a way that inner cultural diversity is ignored, while other (Western) cultures are praised. Studies on Japanese classroom practices have shown that long-standing traditions, values and teaching methods are only slowly given up in favour for communicative language teaching and, as part of it, intercultural education.

By qualitatively analysing Japanese EFL textbooks from 2010 as to their cultural content, I want to shed light on how different cultures are seen and presented in current textbooks. Even though coursebooks make up just one part of the on-going learning process in classrooms (i.e. many other factors also influence teaching and learning), I expect to at least be able to see how the objectives given in the *Course of Study* are implemented in the textbooks. Thereafter, I want to investigate if and how inner diversity and how other cultures are presented.

5.2. *Hypothesis*

Considering my observations and the results of the studies on cultural content in Japanese EFL textbooks conducted up to this point (see section 5.6.), I anticipate the following results:

- A great amount of cultural items are referring to source cultures (that is, in this case, cultural aspects stemming from Japanese cultures). With regard to cultural diversity within Japan, I assume that Japan and its cultures are mostly presented as 'homogeneous'.
- Concerning the inclusion of cultural material from other cultures, a bias towards English-speaking Western countries can be expected.

In order to systematically scrutinise the textbooks chosen as subject for investigation, I have collected a set of research questions, guiding me through the process of analysis.

5.3. Research questions

Based on the evaluative questions suggested by Tricia Hedge (2000:357-358; 369-370), I will consider the following aspects when screening through the textbooks:

- Does the book show parallels and contrasts between the learners' culture(s) and others? Are differences made explicit in the textbook?
- What aspects of culture are in focus and what kind of situations are presented? (For example, typical sights or monuments, lifestyle, food, habits, festivities...)
- Does the book present national cultures as monolithic, or does it show awareness of cultural variation? (For example, immigrants in Japan, ethnic groups...)
- Are different social environments catered for? (Including 'contemporary' concepts such as international marriages; inclusion of physically or mentally challenged people...)

- Does the coursebook contain stereotyped, inaccurate, condescending or offensive images of gender, race, social class, or nationality?

5.4. Procedure of analysis

First, to become familiar with the structure and the content of each textbook, I will examine each one in detail and will then comment on my general impression. In this first screening, I will attend to various aspects such as the cover of the textbook, the overall design and build-up, topics of singular units, characters leading through the course, possible explicit notes on cultural differences and cultural icons in general. The research questions introduced in Section 5.3. will have a guiding function when analysing these aspects.

Since I have decided to employ a content analysis concerning cultural matters, I will not comment on any linguistic aspects. Neither will I consider teaching approaches and techniques employed in the textbooks. I assume that EFL coursebooks approbated by MEXT fulfil the requirements stated in the *Course of Study*, namely to draw on the communicative language approach. Furthermore, any additional teaching material (in connection with the textbook) available for teachers and students has not been considered.

In a second step, the focus of the analysis will be put on visual material (e.g. photos, maps, cartoons...). However, I will also pay special attention to the content of dialogues or texts (including letters, emails...) featured in the textbooks since both kinds of material carry a great amount of cultural information. The outcomes will be presented in different subsections in each textbook-section.

At this point I should note that I am aware that a qualitative analysis involves subjective judgement. In other words, the findings and the conclusions I will

draw from them are based on my personal experiences, ideas and (cultural) knowledge. Most facts about Japan and, what I might consider as 'typical Japanese culture', I have learned in my studies as a bachelor-student for “East-Asian and Japanese Studies” at the University of Vienna. I have investigated phenomena such as *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika,* multiculturalism and immigration in connection with the Japanese education system for my bachelor-thesis (2010). Before starting my studies, I gained a lot of intercultural experiences while spending one year as high school student in a Japanese school (2004-2005). Furthermore I spent one year as a university exchange student at the Tokyo Metropolitan University (2010-2011), during which I was able to put my acquired theoretical knowledge (for example, cultural habits and manners) into practice. These personal experiences together with what I have acquired through reading scholarly articles and magazines form the basis for my analysis.

5.5. Materials

For junior high school there are currently six different approbated coursebooks available which I have chosen to take as subject for the qualitative analysis. All of them are designed to be used over a period of three years (junior high school grade 1 to 3). Since an analysis of all school level books would exceed the framework of this thesis, I have decided to focus on first year books and to analyse them to their cultural content. Japanese students enter junior high school at the age of 12, after attending six years of elementary school. Even though the elementary school curriculum does not include English language education as compulsory subject, it is stated that already in the last two years of elementary education, pupils should be “familiariz[ed] […] with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages” (MEXT 2008). This includes introducing games and songs in foreign languages (focussing on English) as well as

studying the Latin alphabet. Therefore it can be assumed that first year junior high school students are acquainted with foreign cultures to a certain extent.

Junior high school textbooks are provided free of charge to all Japanese students and are distributed directly in the school at the beginning of each academic school year (starting in April) (Gaimusho [Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in short MOFA] 2005), but can also be easily purchased for a cheap price (315 Yen per book, approx. 4 Euro) at any larger bookstore in Japan (in case of loss or for private use). Schools may choose which textbook to use.

In order to receive approbation from the Ministry of Education, textbooks are closely scrutinized if the contents fit the national *Course of Study* and whether the material, apart from correct orthography and without inaccuracies, fulfil certain criteria:

> 1. […] [T]here should not be any potential to pose a barrier to the learning process for students.
>
> 2. The treatment of politics and religion should be impartial, and no part of the textbook should support or criticize a specific political party or religious sect or its ideology or beliefs.
>
> 3. There should be no bias towards specific subjects, phenomena or fields, and an overall balance should be maintained.
>
> 4. One-sided views should not be included without adequate safeguards.
>
> 5. Overall amount of material and its allocation, organization and linkage (for material not specified in the Courses of Study, if applicable, its amount) should be appropriate […]. (MOFA 2005)

All of the examined textbooks were screened for approbation in 2005 or 2006, after the revised *Course of Study* had been published and were printed in

February 2010, just before the new school year started. I will analyse the following coursebooks:

- *One World* 1 (Kyoiku Shuppan)
- *Total English* 1 (Gakko Tosho)
- *Sunshine* 1 (Kairyudo)
- *New Crown* 1 (Sanseido)
- *Columbus 21* 1 (Mitsumura Tosho)
- *New Horizon* 1 (Tokyo Shoseki)

I will discuss each textbook in detail when commenting on its format, its structure and my overall impression in Section 6. First however, I will introduce a few results of studies on Japanese EFL textbooks that have been conducted so far.

5.6. Studies on Japanese EFL textbooks

I have found various studies which have been carried out in order to evaluate the cultural content in Japanese EFL textbooks. Already in 1979, Kenji Kitao analysed several junior and senior high school English textbooks to how much cultural material was included in the coursebooks. Using an adapted form of Joiner's evaluation form (see section 3.4.), he focused on the cultural representation of the United States. According to his results, textbooks back then were very much language-oriented and contained little cultural information, of which most was 'inaccurate' or included invalid facts (117-118). It has to be noted though, that it was not until the beginning of the 1980s that the Japanese government started to review the curriculum policies and introduced more modern approaches such as CLT. Taking this into consideration, it is little surprising that textbooks appeared to be less culture-oriented than they are now.

In the results of a study carried out a few years after Kitao's research, the shift towards internationalisation and a more communicative way of teaching and learning can also be seen in Japan's EFL textbooks. Madoka Kawano (1987), in an attempt to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse high school EFL textbooks to their cultural contents found out that, compared to Kitao's outcomes, the amount of cultural units had risen to averagely one fifth of the content in each textbook evaluated (96). Apart from criticising that not enough focus is put on cross-cultural communication, Kawano also stresses that instead of raising cultural awareness by explicitly pointing out differences, cultural information is presented to students without requiring them to reflect on it. Furthermore she shows that most material was included in “essay-type” texts and calls for a larger variety of input discourses. All in all, Kawano's conclusion on her study is quite negative: she critically comments on the lack of authentic material, the ethnic and national bias towards Western cultures (especially the USA), and the presentation of them as being superior to Japanese culture and ignoring other East Asian cultures. She also negatively attends to the superficial and stereotyped presentation of other countries, leaving out diversity and issues such as racism or other social problems (97-102).

Although improvable, I would interpret these results from 1987 as positive first steps towards a more culture-oriented classroom atmosphere. Given the economic and political circumstances and the strong promotion of *kokusaika* in the 1980s, it is hardly surprising that the cultural focus of EFL textbooks was primarily on America. What is more, the cultural domain as part of English language teaching had only just become prominent in the discussion of educational policies, which might explain the, seen from today's perspective, unreflected approaches to culture in the textbooks.

More recently, Ashikaga et al. (2001) have investigated cultural aspects in

Japanese high school EFL textbooks designed for “Oral communication classes”. In their study, the authors counted and categorised the presented cultural units (such as photos, songs, maps, dialogues and exercises) into “Abstract Culture” and “Concrete Culture” (2; see also section 2.1.1.) and further aligned them according to their background cultures (see sections 3.4.1-4.). The results confirmed their original hypothesis assuming that concrete culture elements appear far more often than hidden manifestations. Consequently, the authors fear that due to the poor amount of abstract culture elements which, as has been argued, are “indispensable for successful intercultural communication” (2), students might be hindered in developing satisfactory intercultural communication skills (7). They furthermore point out that the majority of cultural items, whether categorised in abstract or concrete culture, referred to target cultures, followed by references to source cultures (7-8).

Despite the fact that this study gives very precise figures on the amount of cultural elements included in the assessed textbooks, it, without doubt, is in the need of a qualitative evaluation. Even though Ashikaga et al. differentiate between various modes of presentation, the length of a dialogue or the size of a picture does not matter in the rating. In other words, even though target culture elements outnumber international culture units, the latter might have been presented in such an appealing way (for example, large and colourful photographs) that it may make a deeper impression on students than other cultural items (such as monotonous dialogues). Without a qualitative analysis, one cannot make valid deductions or assumptions on how cultural learning is taking place in the classroom.

In fact, this is also the problem when interpreting the results given in Yamanaka's “Evaluation of English Textbooks in Japan from the Viewpoint of Nations in the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles” of 2006. Similar to Ashikaga

et al.'s categorisation of cultural elements into target-, source-, or international cultures, she makes use of Braj Kachru's three-concentric-circle model (1989), classifying adjectives, nouns or alternative terms referring to nations into “inner”, “outer” and “expanding” circle elements. Numerically seen, aspects featuring the USA and the UK (two “inner circle” countries) outweighed other items mentioning nations from the “outer” or “expanding” circles. Japan (as representative for an “expanding circle” country) also got a high score in terms of places, names or other items referring to things Japanese or Japan as a nation. Concluding from her results, the author calls for a more extensive inclusion of “outer circle” nations in the textbooks, so students would be provided with more cultural diversity (70-71).

All of the above mentioned studies must be interpreted in a very critical way. Certainly the quantitative results do illuminate the distribution of cultural content in textbooks to a certain extent. However, one has to bear in mind the following aspects.

Firstly, it is up to the teacher and the students how textbook content is 'used' in the classroom. For example, even if only one chapter in the coursebook is on i.e. Malaysia but is discussed in class for a longer period of time, students might gain more intercultural knowledge than from dealing with other content for just one lesson. Quantitative measurements do not consider the context 'around' a cultural item, nor do they pay attention to possible attributes such as size, length or aesthetic style. However, one might claim that exactly *these* characteristics have a great impact on successful intercultural learning.

Secondly, as already said, quality prevails over quantity. Numbers do not give reliable results on how the presented material is perceived by the students and affects their language learning. Comparing the quantitative outcomes of

investigations conducted in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s does reveal that more cultures have found their way into EFL coursebooks in the past two decades. Further qualitative study is required to refine the results and to be able to formulate supplementary suppositions on whether intercultural education is fostered sufficiently or not.

Thirdly, it has to be mentioned at this stage that the viewpoint of 'nation-equals-culture' seems to be an outdated concept, especially in the world of cultural studies, in which boundaries are seen as constantly changing and fluid. The process of arranging items into categories of culture therefore becomes questionable, because they most probably occur in more than one cultural environment. Again, this makes a counting and rating invalid, since it is often not clear on what basis one cultural category has been chosen over another.

6. Analysis and results

I have decided to analyse each textbook separately, always bearing in mind my research questions. However, since each textbook has different features more or less worth pointing out, I have created subsections allowing more space to highlight various features than strictly keeping to the research questions. In most cases, an analytical interpretation directly follows the presentation of the items.

6.1. New Horizon

The *New Horizon* series rank highest in the choice of Japanese junior high schools. According to the figures given by Yamada (2010), *NH* accounted for more than 47% of all EFL textbooks employed for teaching in public schools in 2008 (497). This means, almost half of all first year JHS students are familiarised with English via the content of this textbook. According to the list of authors given at the back of the textbook, more than 50 writers participated in creating the coursebook, with most of them being university lecturers and school teachers. Judging from the names list, although this, of course, cannot be counted as a 'reliable' source, there were five non-Japanese authors involved in the project, whose names are written in Roman letters instead of *kanji*-signs[8] (*NH* 126).

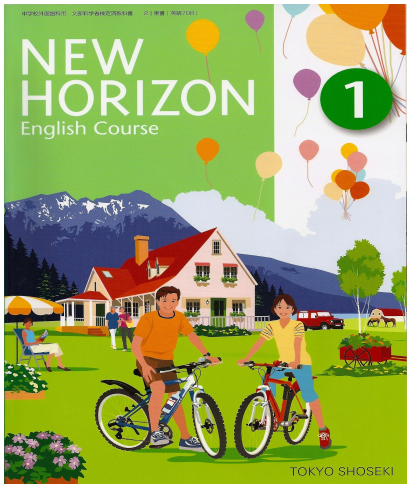


Fig. 3: Cover page of New Horizon

6.1.1. Cover pages

The front cover displays a drawing of a young boy and a girl in the foreground. Since it is a drawing it is not clear whether the pair is of Japanese origin or not. However, the snowy mountain and the house shown in the back suggest a non-Japanese environment: especially the structure of the house – very large, with a

[8] The Japanese writing system makes use of three different kinds of writing styles – *kanji, hiragana* and *katakana*. *Kanji*-signs (stemming from the Chinese language) are usually used for native Japanese words and Japanese names. *Hiragana* and *Katakana* are syllable systems. While the former, *hiragana*, is employed for expressing Japanese words, the latter, *katakana*, is used for transliterating foreign terms (including names and loanwords).

red pitch-shaped roof and flower-boxes at the windows can be seen as one indicator that the scene is set outside of Japan, since this kind of architecture is usually not found in Japan. Snowy mountains, although also part of the Japanese landscape in a few regions, are very often associated with a European environment by Japanese people. This, as I was told when visiting the World EXPO 2005 in Japan, was the result of a survey conducted in order to find out what Japanese people identify with 'the West'. All in all I can say that the high-gloss, colourful cover page definitely has the potential of attracting a students' interest.

The double-page inside cover shows colourful photographs of children around the globe, wearing national dresses. Each photo is accompanied with textfields in which the terms for "Hello" and "Thank you" and the countries of origin are listed. One could argue that displaying children in a national dress might create stereotypical images of other countries. However, I believe that Japanese EFL students' interest in other cultures will increase when looking at these introductory photos and comparing them with their national dress – a *yukata* or *kimono.* I would furthermore like to point out that the foreign vocabulary is printed in various writing systems according to the nationality (such as Arabian or Hindi letters), with a transliteration in *katakana* beneath. I interpret this as a sign of showing respect towards other languages and cultures, realising one tenet of intercultural education.

6.1.2. Settings and leading characters

At the beginning of the textbook nine characters are introduced who guide the students through the course. It is furthermore mentioned that the units will take part in two different settings – Japan and Canada. For the Japanese setting, two native first year junior high school students (Emi and Shin) together with two international classmates from Australia (Mike) and America (Judy) have been chosen to be the main 'actors'. Ms. Kazuko Saito and Ms. Ann Green are introduced as English teachers, coming from Japan and Canada.

Fig. 4: The teachers (NH)

Lisa, Koji, Bill and Bin are characters living in Canada. It is especially noteworthy that Lisa (Canadian) and Koji (Japanese) are presented as a married couple, who had been teaching in Japan the year before, but have now moved to Toronto. Bin appears to be a Chinese immigrant living in Canada.

Interestingly, no 'real' persons function as representatives. That is to say that instead of displaying photographs of, for example, a random Japanese student as model for Emi, the characters have been drawn in a cartoon-like style (see Figure 4). Hence, certain classifications often being made to describe an 'Asian' or a 'Western' person such as references to the shape or colour of eyes, are avoided. Neither are obvious differences in the style of clothing or in hair-styles shown. It has to be noted though, that those with a Western background have been drawn with light brown or blond hair, while their Asian colleagues have dark brown or black hair. This is reflected in all of the examined textbooks.

Already by looking at the introductory section of *New Horizon*, a part of my research questions can be answered. First of all, there seems to be an explicit emphasis on the representation of English-speaking countries other than the USA and the UK. If a direct contrast between Japanese cultures and English-speaking cultures exists, we can be expecting that Canadian cultural elements will function as main role models for cultural differences.

Secondly, it is interesting to see that the concept of international marriage is brought in from the very beginning. The percentage of a Japanese marrying a non-Japanese is quite low (around 5-6%), however, numbers are on the rise (Burgess 2008:66). The inclusion of this contemporary trend into the textbook might indicate that the authors are actively trying to change Japan's image as 'homogeneous'.

Generally, as we will also see later on, drawings make up a major part of the pictures shown in the textbook. Various reasons seem plausible: firstly, it takes less effort and money to provide a textbook with drawings than real photographs. Moreover, considering the age of the students using this book, colourful drawings might be more attractive to them. As a third reason, creating a certain image of 'prototype-person' for different cultures can be avoided by abandoning photographs of real-life persons.

6.1.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

My assumption that most cultural aspects are based on Canada or Japan is confirmed when further looking into *New Horizon*. Unit 4, "*nihon daisuki"* (I love Japan) deals entirely with various Japanese cultural items such as *origami* (32-33) or calligraphy (34-35). However, it is interesting to note that the two *international* students, Mike and Judy, discuss these aspects. For example, they compare their eating habits with Mike who states that he eats "rice and miso soup" for breakfast (36-37).

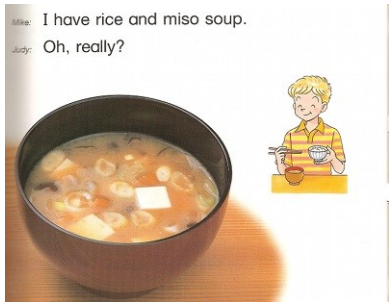


Fig. 5: Mike has rice and miso soup for breakfast (NH 37)

In unit 6, the Canadian teacher (Ms. Green) speaks about her family in Canada. When she introduces her sister Lisa, the following dialogue takes place:

> **Emi:** Does Lisa like kabuki[9]?
> **Ms. Green**: Yes, she does. She likes Japanese culture.
> **Emi:** Does she read kanji?
> **Ms. Green:** No, she doesn't. But she reads and writes *kana* very well. (52)

The Japanese student interrogates whether Lisa, although living in Canada, is familiar with Japanese cultures. Even though the setting of unit 6 has been moved to Toronto, *kabuki*-theatre and the Japanese writing system are the focus of the conversation (and the accompanying pictures aside).

Another noteworthy text can be found on the succeeding page:

[9] Japanese-style theatre

> Koji has a Chinese friend in Toronto.
> Koji doesn't speak Chinese, and his friend Bin doesn't speak Japanese.
> But they're good friends.
> *They both speak English*. (53; emphasis added)

It is pointed out that Koji and Bin do not share the same native language. However, they are able to communicate because of a third language – through English. This implies that English is seen as a bridge for international understanding.

There are two more examples of cultural representation which I would like to mention. While unit 9 deals with Christmas in Canada, unit 11 is about the celebration of the New Year (*o-shogatsu*) in Japan. *O-shogatsu* can almost be seen as the Japanese equivalent to a Western-style Christmas in terms of family gatherings and contemplative celebrations .
Looking at the drawings, Canadian Christmas is depicted in quite a stereotypical way: roast turkey for dinner, a Santa Claus smiling from the TV and a huge decorated Christmas tree in the living room. Nevertheless, the English phrases presented next to the pictures do not explicitly elaborate on what is displayed ("Emi, Judy and Bill are watching TV"*)* (72-73). In this case it is up to the classroom teacher to encourage the students to reflect on different (Christmas) traditions. She is furthermore required to provide the students with the background knowledge on e.g. 'typical' Canadian Christmas menus, since this is not done by the textbook.

Fig. 6: Ms. Green at a shrine, wearing a kimono (NH 94)

Similarly, in unit 11, Ms. Green tells her students that she went to a shrine at New Year's eve, a traditional activity most Japanese people do on the night of December 31st. The drawing underneath the text shows the blond teacher in a shrine, wearing a *kimono* and being surrounded by other, possibly Japanese, people who are praying (94; see Figure 6). Again, students are not provided with further information on how New Year's eve is spent in other cultures. However, the picture suggests that a foreigner has adapted a Japanese way of celebrating the beginning of the New Year.

6.1.4. Concluding comments

Generally it can be said that *New Horizon* slowly introduces EFL beginners to cultures different from their native culture(s). That is to say that instead of throwing the students into almost unknown territory right from the beginning, the familiar is still kept in the foreground. Nevertheless, cultural awareness is already raised by introducing international characters within the context of Japanese cultures.

At this point it has to be mentioned that only English-speaking target cultures are represented throughout the textbook. While the inclusion of an American and an Australian character at least suggests diversity in the English-speaking world, Asian or African cultures do not serve as reference, except in the inner cover.

6.2. New Crown

About 20% of all Japanese schools chose to use the *New Crown* series in 2008 (Yamada 2010:497). Therefore it is the second most popular textbook in Japan.

6.2.1. Cover pages

The front cover page of *New Crown* can be interpreted as an allusion to the children's book *The Wizard of Oz.* Displayed is a sailing boat with an elderly man, a black cat and a figure very similar to *Tin Woodman,* a character of *The Wizard of Oz*. However, no further hints are given from where this scene is taken from or how it should be interpreted. Furthermore I could not find any section on *The Wizard of Oz* in the textbook, which might indicate that my understanding of the front cover does not fit at all.

While most of the inner cover pages of the other examined textbooks often have an underlying 'international message' by showing photographs of people around the world, *New Crown* has dedicated its inner cover to “Language and Communication”. In an introductory text it is stated that

> […] communication, which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing, has become part of our everyday life. Communication leads to mutual understanding and respect. Let's look at a few examples where communication takes place. (*New Crown* inner cover page; my translation)

Ten photographs show different modes of communication. For example, we see a man talking on his mobile phone, a group of boys listening to the radio or a female student giving a speech.

Although the international aspect has been taken into account as the people

depicted on the photographs range from a dark-skinned boy to an Asian man, the main focus has been put on the communicative aspect. It is implied that communication is facilitated through learning English. However, having said that, it appears that the characters introduced on the next page show a greater variety in terms of nationalities than seen so far which counter-proves the assumption that there is less focus on internationality.

6.2.2. Settings and leading characters

The foreign people guiding through the textbook include a Chinese, an Indian, an Australian, two Americans and a girl coming from the UK. Interestingly, while other textbooks often appear to have 'substituted' their American character with a Canadian one, this nationality is left out in *New Crown*. On the other hand, this is the only textbook in which an Indian person plays a role. No further description on the characters' ages, relationships (to each other) or current place of living is given, however, I assume that most of them are students attending the same school together with the Japanese characters. One American, Pat Miller, appears to be an English teacher in Japan as she is depicted in front of a blackboard.

The topics of the single units reveal that the main setting is Japan, with one excursive chapter on “Students in the USA” (unit 7). Unit 9, “A Letter from the UK”, suggests a few cultural references to the UK and its cultures.

6.2.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

New Crown shows a great variety of topics relating to different aspects of life. First of all, there is an international focus throughout the textbook. Japanese

and international students meet in the first unit, become friends and share the upcoming events occurring in the coursebook from that moment onwards. By integrating the foreign students into the daily lives of the Japanese students, mutual respect is implied. Although most of the scenes are set in Japan, I could not find many references I would classify as 'typically Japanese'. For example, in one of the first conversations the friends talk about sports activities such as football, basketball and tennis (unit 3). These activities exist almost everywhere in the world and are not specifically culturally bound (any more). A counterexample would be if *judo* or *karate* are referenced to, as both of them stem from Japanese cultures.

Another aspect included in *New Crown* is the protection of the environment. In unit 4 the students are in a nature park when the following dialogue takes place:

Paul: Look at this flower. It's beautiful.

Kumi: Stop!

Paul: What?

Kumi: Don't pick the flower. Take a picture.

Paul: I see. We live with nature.

Kumi: That's right. (38)

Figure 7: Sign at national park (New Crown 38)

A photograph with a sign saying “Please take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but footprints” (38) underlines the statement in the dialogue. The underlying message is that everyone is responsible for protecting the environment and should aim for a sustainable living. Nevertheless, at this point I should mention that there are no follow-up exercises on this issue. It is once again up to the teacher to go into further detail, so that students may actively reflect on what they can do to protect the environment.

The authors have also taken into account a social aspect when creating the textbook. Unit 6 is on assistant dogs as support for physically challenged people. This chapter has included quite a lot of photographs showing various situations in which dogs assist their owners. Clearly the aim of this unit is to raise the students' awareness of handicapped people. This is also done in *Total English* (see section 6.4.3). In this context I would like to mention two phrases that have struck me when reading the accompanying conversation on assistance dogs:

> [...]
> **Paul:** In the USA, we also have guide dogs and service dogs.
> **Kumi:** We have them in Japan too. *But we need more.*
> **Paul:** We do too. (60; emphasis added)

Can this be interpreted as subtle criticism of the social systems, both in Japan and the USA? In find these almost provocative comments quite interesting and can imagine that they can trigger interesting discussions in the classroom.

6.2.4. Concluding comments

All in all I would say that *New Crown* has covered a great variety of cultural aspects. There is a clear attempt to fulfil the main aims of intercultural learning which are to create mutual understanding and respect. From my perspective I would say that *New Crown* has a less clear bias towards certain cultures than other textbooks.

One point I would like to criticise is the poor quality of the photographs printed in the textbook. Even though *New Crown* has been revised in 2006 and printed in 2010, many of the pictures appear to be antique and old-fashioned, and should

be exchanged with newer ones.

Figure 8: An old-fashioned depiction of an American nurse (New Crown 70)

6.3. Sunshine

In the figures of 2008, the *Sunshine* English series ranked third (16%) in the textbook selection of Japanese schools (Yamada 2010:497). Judging from the author's list in the back of the book, five out of 34 mentioned contributors were foreign.

It is interesting to note that *Sunshine* has included “action-cards” with an “action”-picture on the front side and its correlating verbal phrase on the back side, ready to be taken out and cut up in 18 different cards. This suggests that the authors try to encourage learning activities (such as mime games) which are not explicitly mentioned in the textbook. However, no clear instructions on how to use the cards were found. This means that the teacher must be familiar with games (involving the action cards) in order to be able to guide the students through the activities.

6.3.1. Cover pages

Various scenes are pictured on the *Sunshine* cover page. In the foreground, a group of friends is picnicking at a camping site: one light-haired boy carrying some wood, a blonde, blue-eyed girl setting the table, a dark-skinned boy preparing tea or coffee and another brown-haired, brown-eyed girl appearing to be ready to cook something. In the back we can also see a boy who has just caught a fish. Even though a drawn picture is shown (instead of a photograph), the variety of appearances of the young people gives the scene an 'international touch' – it may be interpreted as a get-together with participants of various nations. The smiling faces suggest that the group is having fun, regardless of their different origins. By assigning different chores to each member of the group, necessary teamwork, community spirit and intercultural communication is implied. However, one point of improvement could be to also include a physically challenged person in the picture e.g. someone sitting in a wheelchair.

In the upper part of the cover page, a rodeo rider is pictured on the left and a landmark tower of an undefined city can be seen on the right. The scenes appear to correspond with the content of the textbook, with the topic of unit 4 being camping ('*kyanpu no junbi'* [camping preparations] and unit 7 discussing “A day a the Rodeo”.

Similar to the other evaluated textbooks, the inside cover pages display photographs of children around the world, greeting the EFL students in their native languages. This includes a 'Hello' in Suahili, French, English, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabian, Korean and Japanese. Like in *New Horizon,* different styles of writing (such as Arabian or Korean) are printed below the *katakana*-transliteration, which can direct the EFL students' awareness towards the existence of alphabets other than the, so far familiar, Japanese systems and

Roman letters. An interesting point is that next to the photos showing children in their national dresses, only the *language* they speak is stated. In other words, it is not defined whether the children saying "*Boa tarde*" in *Portuguese* are from Brazil or Portugal (or any other part of the world). It is also not made explicit that French is spoken not only in France, but also in Switzerland and Canada (among others). In my opinion, an additional clarifying statement would be appropriate.

Furthermore noteworthy is that the authors have included a graphic figure on the distribution of languages spoken around the world. The visual display also comprises a bar on how many people speak each language as their second language, indicating that although the number of English native speakers is limited, the number of ESL speakers is relatively high. By looking at this graph, Japanese EFL students might become aware from the very beginning that learning English is not only necessary for communicating with people coming from English-speaking countries but facilitates communication around the world.

6.3.2. Settings and leading characters

Yuki, a Japanese first year junior high school student, is leading through the textbook together with three of her classmates. Furthermore, two international students, Andy from America and Mike from Canada, are introduced. Both are attending an international school in Japan. Another character mentioned is Mr. Brown, an assistant language teacher (ALT), whose origin is not further defined. Although a foreign teacher plays a role in most textbooks, it is the first time that someone is introduced as participant of the ALT-programme, which can be interpreted as a reference to the *Action Plan*. In the document it is stated that one of the steps to improve English language education is to raise the fiscal budget for the ALT-programme and to promote it internationally, so the number

of assistant language teachers, preferably from English-speaking countries, would be increased.

The settings of the units in the textbook are mainly Japan and America, when Yuki decides to go on a short-term exchange to Seattle (unit 5, 6 and 7). However, as I will also discuss in the next section, already in unit 3 a guest from Singapore is introduced. In other words, the students get to deal with the 'international' aspect of English before turning to a country, which is among those often primarily being referred to when teaching English as a foreign language.

6.3.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

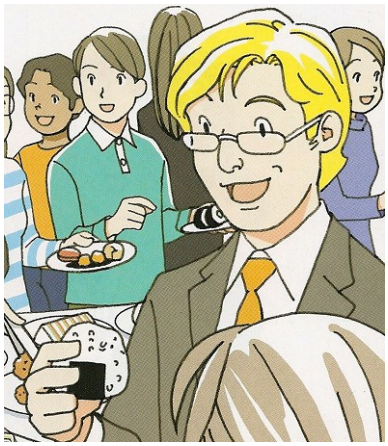


Figure 9: Foreigner eating Japanese snack (Sunshine 13)

Yuki and her Japanese classmates become friends with Mike and Andy at an “international party” (unit 1), to which they accompany Mr. Brown. The introductory double-paged picture of unit 1 shows a bunch of people of various appearances talking to each other and enjoying some food. Especially noteworthy is the illustration of blonde Mr. Brown in the foreground, holding an *onigiri*, a filled riceball, and the plate in front of him displaying *sushi* and *maki*-rolls. These kinds of food are very popular (party-)snacks in Japan and are part of its typical cuisine. Instead of introducing refreshments often served at parties in other cultures (that could be, for example, meatballs, potato chips or popcorn), the authors of *Sunshine* have decided to include objects Japanese students are

probably already familiar with.

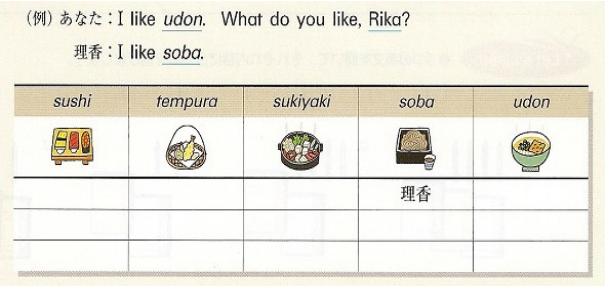
Japanese food items appear to play a major role of reference when looking through the textbook. In unit 3, “A guest from Singapore”, James Chen introduces himself to the class as Singaporean college student. The following dialogue takes place:

> **Teacher**: Do you have a question, Takeshi?
>
> **Boy:** Yes. Do you like Japanese food, Mr. Chen?
>
> **Mr.** Chen: Yes, I do. I often eat *tempura*[10] in Singapore.
>
> **Girl:** Do you speak English with your family?
>
> **Mr. Chen:** No, I don't. I don't speak English at home. I speak Chinese. (30-31)

Two aspects I find very interesting: first of all, the beginning question whether Mr. Chen likes Japanese food establishes an immediate connection between the foreign and the native cultures. With food being one part of culture, this question can further be interpreted as to whether the Singaporean likes Japanese *cultures*. The statement that he frequently eats *tempura* in his home town does not only imply that this typical Japanese dish is also served in other countries such as Singapore, but also that it is known under its Japanese name instead of a descriptive term in other languages. Similarly, the fill-in activity given on the consecutive page of the dialogue (33), in which students are asked to state their food preferences, only Japanese dishes are among the pre-given choices. In my opinion, this can have a positive and a negative effect at the same time. On the one hand, EFL students can focus on the phrases to be remembered through the activity (What do you like? I like …..). However, by suggesting them to use Japanese food names such as *sukiyaki* (fondue), *soba* (buckwheat noodles) and *udon* (thick noodles), they might get the impression

[10] Vegetables and seafood deep-fried in batter.

that the given terms are also familiar in the English speaking world. Therefore they do not develop an awareness that some dishes are not widely known and would have to be described in other words.


(例) あなた：I like *udon*. What do you like, Rika?
理香：I like *soba*.

sushi	*tempura*	*sukiyaki*	*soba*	*udon*
			理香	

Figure 10: Information-gap activity with Japanese food items (Sunshine 33)

The other aspect I would like to discuss is the second part of the conversation. By emphasising that Mr. Chen is not a native speaker of English, however is able to interact with the Japanese students by using a 'third' language, once more the implication of English as a medium for international communication can be seen. Furthermore it has to be mentioned that there is a supplementary reading section on each unit at the end of the textbook. In the short essay on Singapore it is stated that

> Singapore is an *island country*. […] Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil are the official languages of the country. English is the language of education. Teachers use English at school. […] Chinese, Indian, Malay and Indonesian food are popular in Singapore. People enjoy Western food too. *Singapore is a country of many cultures*. (96; emphasis added)

Theoretically, the chapter on Singapore, including the reading material, can be used quite well for further in-class discussions on similarities and differences to Japan, which is also an island country. The students could be asked what other cultures are represented in their environment and could reflect on how Singapore has become a multicultural country. This could be one method to raise cultural awareness. However, since there are no further comments on the text content, it is up to the teacher to trigger such process and to provide extra materials such as maps or photographs. “Culture notes” similar to those in *One*

World (see section 6.5.) would be desirable.

Unit 8 in *Sunshine* is another very noteworthy chapter as its topic is “Clean energy”. So far, only few of the examined textbooks have dedicated a whole section on global issues such as renewable energy or the saving of (natural) resources. I find it quite commendable to include such topic. Since the need for a sustainable lifestyle becomes increasingly important, it is essential to raise the students' awareness already through education at a young age. In a way, the inclusion of an outline of solar energy, which is even further explained in Japanese in a little box next to the English text (64), shows the textbooks' global and contemporary attitude.

6.3.4. Concluding comments

It can be criticised that *Sunshine* mainly employs cultural elements referring to Japanese cultures. Since Singapore and America are the only foreign countries and cultures dealt with throughout the textbook, a greater variety of cultures would be desirable. However, on the other hand the many contemporary aspects and approaches to be found in the textbook have to be positively commented on. This concerns both, the inclusion of extra learning material (action cards) and the introduction of topics that go beyond learning the English language and other cultures but also fulfil other educational objectives (unit on “Clean energy”).

6.4. Total English

The *Total English* textbook does not seem to be very popular among Japanese EFL teachers. According to the figures given by Yamada (2010), only 7% of all

public schools in Japan selected *Total English* as the textbook to be used in the English classroom.

6.4.1. Cover pages

Compared to the other examined textbooks, the cover of *Total English* stands out immediately since one can see real photographs of various children and cultural items instead of some comic-style drawing. At first sight, it almost reminded me of the cover of the Austrian *You and Me* series, as they also show squared pictures depicting children of different origins.

The depiction of not only a blonde boy but also an Asian girl and some teenagers with dark skin, together with photos of a Halloween pumpkin, a roast turkey, a text in Braille and a sea turtle, gives the impression of a textbook which is 'open-minded' and 'international' as well as trying to include various cultural, global and social issues.

The inside cover shows a variety of photographs with children around the world saying “Hello” in their native language. Like in the other textbooks with a similar design, each “Hello” is printed as it would be written in other countries (such as Arabian letters, Cyrillic or Korean). However, while I have criticised *One World* (see section 6.5.1.) for not mentioning that the same language can be spoken in more than one country, *Total English* has taken this fact into account. For example, next to “*Bonjour*” it is stated in brackets that this could be a greeting in France, certain parts of Canada and Senegal. For Spanish, Bolivia, Mexico and Spain are given as examples of where it is spoken. Of course, the list of countries where each language is spoken is not complete, nevertheless, it has to be appreciated that *Total English* has at least made the effort to make EFL

students aware of the linguistic variety worldwide.

6.4.2. Settings and leading characters

Five characters are introduced at the beginning of the textbook, two of which are Japanese students and three are foreigners. The latter are the American teacher Ms. Beck, an American boy attending an international school in Japan and the third one is a girl from New Zealand. In her introduction it is stated that she is a Maori. Hence, the authors have included a minority aspect in the textbook. Since none of the other textbooks provide any information on minority groups or indigenous people, I find this feature especially noteworthy and highly appreciable.

Since all of the guiding characters live in Japan, this is also the only setting throughout the textbook. However, the foreigners Jim, Mihi and Ms. Parker bring in cultural elements from their home countries through conversations with the Japanese students and through letters and photographs.

6.4.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

In terms of intercultural learning I find three units (unit 7,8 and 9) especially interesting. In unit 7 Mihi shows her 'hobby', namely to study Braille in her free time, to Shun and Aki. In a dialogue she explains how the alphabet for the visually challenged works and demonstrates how blind people are able to differ between a shampoo and a conditioner bottle (69). Next to the text there is a picture of the two items with one having an uneven texture. On the next page we find the whole Braille alphabet printed with impregnated letters. In other words, EFL students themselves can try to feel and recognise various letters. It

can be assumed that awareness of handicapped people is raised and students develop a respectful attitude towards those in society who are physically or mentally challenged. What is more, besides the visual input also the sense of touch is stimulated (through the impregnated letters) which might cause a greater learning effect.

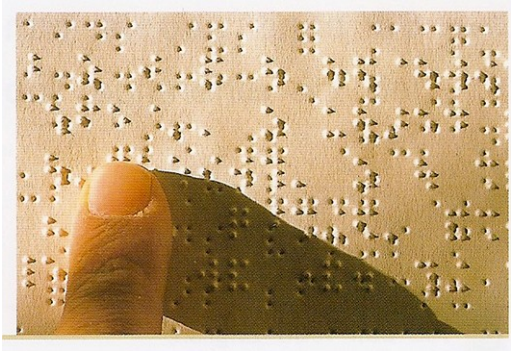


Figure 11: Reading Braille (Total English 70)

Figure 12: New Year's vs. Christmas menu (Total English 80)

Unit 8 (“New Year's traditions”) starts off with two photographs, one depicting a typical Japanese New Year's *bento box* and the other one displaying a roast turkey with side dishes and Christmas decorations (80). EFL students are invited to directly compare the two pictures and comment on them before reading the dialogue between Aki and Jim on the next page which goes into further detail on the different festivity traditions in America and Japan (81). By directly comparing these cultural differences EFL students might develop an interest in doing further research on Christmas and New Year's traditions around the world. In this case one objective of intercultural learning would be fulfilled.

The following chapter, unit 9, is an extensive unit on New Zealand. It includes photographs of landmarks, scenic sights and animals as well as a map and pictures of Maori people. These are discussed on the next page:

Mihi: Did you receive my letter?

Aki: Yes, I did. Thank you very much.

Mihi: Did you enjoy the pictures?

Aki: Yes, I did. Well, in one of the pictures people are touching each other's noses. Are they smelling each other?

Mihi: No, they aren't. That gesture means “hello” in Maori. (92)

Figure 13: Greeting of the Maori-people (Total English 92)

One the one hand, I find it a good idea to introduce such distinct cultural habits like touching each other's noses as a greeting. We can assume that Japanese EFL students have at least heard of Western-style greeting gestures such as kissing on the cheek or shaking hands whereas the Maori-style greeting is probably new to them. In this way, a dichotomous comparison between Japanese and Western cultures is avoided. However, I have found no further description on *who* Maori people are exactly (i.e. regarding their origin, their history or their status in society). If the teacher does not provide her students with more details on the indigenous group, the learners might get the impression that Maori are simply the inhabitants of New Zealand without actively reflecting on minority groups in general. On the other hand, this unit could also trigger further valuable discussions on minority groups in Japan (such as the *Ainu*[11]), which is desirable and important for successful intercultural education.

[11] An indigenous group of people living in the North of Japan.

6.4.4. Concluding comments

There is a comparably high percentage of photographs included in *Total English.* This might appeal to the EFL students more than the comic-like drawings given in the other textbooks I have examined. It also gives a more realistic and authentic impression than exaggerated illustrations of people and objects do.

In my opinion, a further plus of *Total English* is the inclusion of a Maori character and a whole chapter on the indigenous group, even though it does not provide further cultural explanations. Hence, teachers who work with this textbook will have to bring in supplementary knowledge and material in order to be able to exploit the full potential of such a topic.

6.5. One World

Deducing from the figures of 2008 given by Yamada (2010), *One World* is only chosen by a small percentage of schools in Japan, accounting for 5% percent of the EFL textbooks used. In other words, *One World* is the second least popular coursebook in Japan. The list of authors reveals the involvement of three foreign contributors, which is comparably few.

6.5.1. Cover pages

One World's drawn cover page displays are large group of tourists doing sightseeing at a place not further described. Nevertheless, judging from the appearance of sights – an oversized Chinese-style dragon and a pagoda in the background – I would interpret the scene as set in some bay area in Asia,

possibly in China or Korea but not in any Western town. This is interesting as it implies that although it is an *English* textbook, the focus may not entirely be on English-speaking countries and cultures.

The inside cover of *One World* is, as in the other examined textbooks, dedicated to an 'international spirit'. Photographs of different festivals around the world are printed. For example, masqueraded figures at the Venetian carnival or Egyptian Beduines at the Shiva-festival are shown on the pictures. The purpose and annual date of each festivity is further described in Japanese next to the photograph. There is also a short introductory text:

> Festivals around the world: each country in the world has its own language(s) and culture(s). Let's acknowledge these languages and cultures. Let's respectfully find out about each other and communicate. [This textbook] is about English as international language. (*One World* inside cover; my translation)

Already by reading this short text passage, we can assume the overall attitude shown in this textbook, namely, to focus on the international aspect of English as a foreign language.

6.5.2. Settings and leading characters

The presented characters frequently appearing throughout the coursebook include Ms. King, a Canadian teacher in Japan, two Japanese students (Aki and Kenta), an exchange student from Vietnam and a girl from New Zealand. Also introduced are Tom and his friend Jun, who is also Aki's cousin living in America. As we find out later, Jun cannot speak any Japanese although he has got Japanese relatives. I find this aspect quite interesting. As Tsuda (2008) in

his article on Japanese-Brazilian immigrants has pointed out, there is a high expectation towards those with Japanese ancestors or family members to still be able to speak Japanese and know Japanese traditions although born and raised abroad. The 'blood is thicker than water'-viewpoint, which is also part of the *nihonjinron*, is still very often reflected in today's Japanese society. By introducing a character who, except for his first name (and probably his appearance), does not share any Japanese 'qualities', almost seems like a counter-demonstration to a deep-rooted belief.

The first four chapters are set in Japan which however cannot be defined as the overall main setting as the scene switches to California for unit 4 to 8. Jun, as cultural mediator, shows his daily life-style and his hobbies to the EFL students in Japan. Unit 9 compares the New Year's traditions in Japan, Vietnam and Canada.

Judging from the main characters and the various settings, it seems that there is a balanced ratio of familiar and unfamiliar cultures.

6.5.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

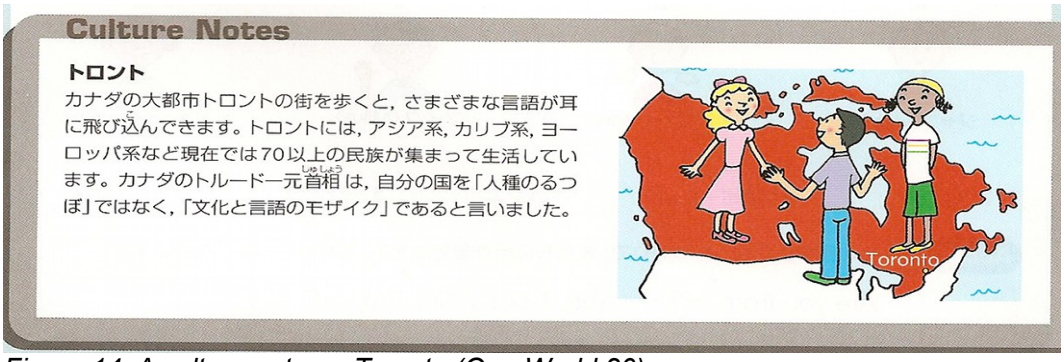


Figure 14: A culture note on Toronto (One World 20)

The most prominent feature regarding cultural learning are text-boxes with “Culture notes”, which are included in each chapter. Depending on the topic of

the unit, further explanation in Japanese is given to the EFL students. For example, in unit 1, in which the Canadian teacher introduces herself to the class in the textbook, her birthplace Toronto is subject of the “Culture note” (20). Further “Culture notes” include, among others, descriptions on the American junior high school system (49), camping in a camping car (73), New Year's traditions in Vietnam (97) and Edgar Allen Poe (107). Most notes are also accompanied with a little photograph or map.

As one of the objectives of intercultural learning is to raise awareness of other cultures, traditions and lifestyles, I find the “Culture notes” in *One World* very appropriate. Students deal with cultural differences while learning English phrases, however, through the supplementary “Culture notes” a further reflective process might be triggered. Furthermore, direct comparisons are facilitated.

I would like to point out one further aspect regarding gender roles. In unit 4, set in California, Tom and Jun go to their weekly soccer training. At the training field they see two unfamiliar persons:

> **Jun:** Who is that?
> **Tom:** That's Sam. He is a new player.
> **Jun:** Who's that girl behind him?
> **Tom:** Uh, I don't know. May she's a new player, too.
> **Jun:** Is she? (44-45)

> **Coach:** Ok, everyone, sit down. Be quiet, please, and listen carefully. My name is Janet Brown. Call me Coach. (46)

In my point of view, this is an attempt of the *One World* authors to change the

picture of soccer as a men-dominated domain. Even though the depicted team has male team members only, a female is also introduced into the setting. What is more, this female has a role as authority, which can be seen as implication that women should be just as respected as their male counterparts. This is reinforced once more in the continuing dialogue:

Tom: Is she our new coach?
Jun: She's so young!
Coach: Don't talk!
Tom: Sorry, Coach. (47)

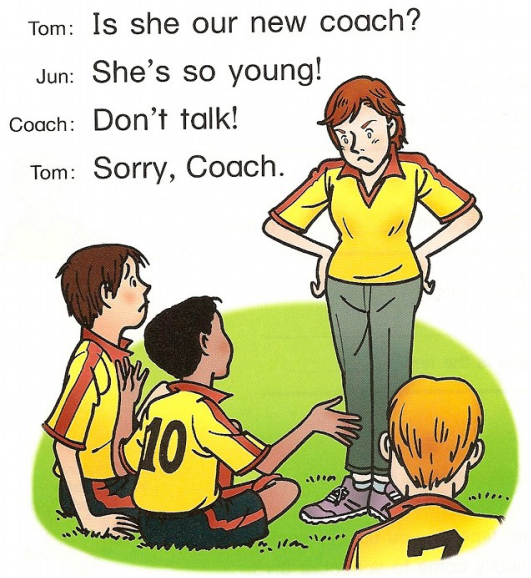


Figure 15: Gender roles: female coach (One World 47)

One could argue that the female depiction in this scene is a little bit exaggerated. However, I insinuate that if the coach admonishing the two boys was a man, only few people would challenge his role as authority. Therefore displaying a female in this role can be seen as one step towards a worldview seeing men and women in equal positions and rights.

6.5.4. Concluding comments

In terms of cultural content, *One World* clearly shows an emphasis on raising cultural awareness among the EFL students. Starting off with a familiar environment (such as the beginning of the school year in Japan and the discussion of some Japanese cultural items), Japanese EFL students are slowly led into another environment and culture. From this moment on (unit 4), almost no references to Japanese cultures can be found. The consecutive sections on

shopping, camping and sports are set in America and also display foreign instead of familiar items on the printed pictures. This might require the students to actively reflect and compare what they see and learn through the textbook with what they know from their experiences. The “Culture notes” can reinforce and support this process.

6.6. Columbus 21

The *Columbus 21* series are the least popular among the EFL textbooks available on the Japanese market. In 2008, only around 2% of all schools selected *Columbus 21* to be used in the English classes (Yamada 2010:497). It is not stated however, what factors influence a school's choice on which textbook to pick. Does the low number of schools choosing *Columbus 21* indicate anything about its content quality or does the choice rather have to do something with tradition, i.e. a certain textbook has been used over years now and it would be too much effort to get used to a different kind?

6.6.1. Cover pages

Compared to the colourful cover page of *New Horizon*, the *Columbus 21* outside cover seems a little dull. It shows the drawing of a house, surrounded with a green lawn and a couple of trees. There are no indications on where this scene is set, nor does the picture suggest that *Columbus 21* is a language textbook.

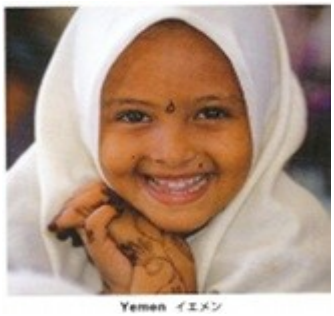


Fig. 16: Smiling girl from Yemen (Columbus 21)

The inside cover section is dedicated to “Smiles around the world”. Close-up photographs of smiling people are shown, with a subtitle stating their nationality. Quite (stereo)typically, the Yemeni girl is wearing a head scarf and has henna tattoos on her hands and face. Representative for Kenya is a black girl, while the photographs of the USA shows a blonde. Other nationalities include Italy, Switzerland, Madagascar, Mexico and Bhutan. There are no further comments printed such as explanations where these countries are or what language is spoken. The smiling faces can be interpreted as statement that 'a smile counts more than thousand words'. However, this message has to be taken with caution. Body language nuances and gestures, as well as facial expressions carry all kinds of different meanings in different cultures. Sometimes the good-will of a smiling face can be misinterpreted as condescending or dishonourable. These hidden meanings are part of Abstract culture (see section 2.1.1) and becoming aware of them is crucial for successful communication. Therefore, I would find the inclusion of descriptive statements appropriate, as they make students aware that not only language but also its 'side-effects' (such as body language) convey meaning.

6.6.2. Settings and leading characters

Like in *New Horizon*, a few drawn characters are introduced with their name, age and nationality at the beginning section of the textbook. The main protagonists are Hiro from Japan and Jenny from America taking the lead through the course. However, also Hiro's and Jenny's families and friends are introduced. Interestingly, Hiro's circle of acquaintances is entirely Japanese, while Jenny's friends are Chuck from Canada and Edu from Brazil. This can be seen as, subliminally spoken, a representation of the Japanese environment as homogeneous, while Americans are confronted with cultural diversity. Even

though Brazilians account for a great percentage of immigrants[12] in Japan (see, for example, Tsuda 2008), Edu is introduced as *Jenny's* friend. If the authors wanted to introduce a Brazilian character, why didn't they include Edu as an immigrant already living in Japan, as it often is the case today? In my opinion, this would be one step further in acknowledging Japan's internal diversity.

6.6.3. Aspects of culture represented in the textbook

The main setting is Japan. Jenny, as cultural mediator, is an American exchange student who is welcomed by Hiro's family in unit 1. For the most part of the textbook, Jenny is introduced to Japanese cultural items such as movies (f.e the film *Princess Monoke*) (40), how to wear a *yukata*[13] (43), or how to traditionally dance to the music usually played at a Japanese summer festival (45). There are no direct cultural comparisons made, but the dancing scene is accompanied by the following dialogue:

> **Hiro:** By the way, do you have a festival like this in America?
>
> **Jenny:** Gee, I don't know. *Let's find out more about different festivals*.
>
> **Hiro:** How? On the Internet?
>
> **Jenny:** Sure. (45, emphasis added)

[12] Due to a labor force shortage in Japan in the 1980s, Japan recruited foreigners of Japanese descent, whose ancestors had emigrated to countries such as Brazil or the Philippines, before or during the war. Visa regulations have been facilitated for those with 'Japanese roots', which partly explains why Koreans, Chinese and Brazilians are the three largest immigrant groups in Japan.

[13] Similar to a *kimono*, but different in material and design. A *yukata* is usually worn in summer.

Figure 17: Worldwide video-phoning with friends (Columbus 21 36)

Even though not explicitly stated in the textbook, students might be encouraged to do some research on festivals around the world. I also find the fact that the internet is advised as reference source worth mentioning. Also in other parts of the textbook, we see Jenny video-phoning with her friends around the world. As one of the major mediums of communication nowadays, the inclusion of the internet in the content of the EFL textbook is necessary and appropriate.

An example referring to English as an international language, as given in *New Horizon*, can be seen in unit 7. Edu is recording a video in Brazil for Hiro:

> **Edu:** Hiro, you see those kids. They're playing soccer in the street. Their ball is not very good. But they're having fun. Let's go and have a chat with them.
>
> **Edu**: *Boa tarde.*
>
> **Boy 1:** *Boa tarde*.
>
> **Edu:** Do you speak English?
>
> **Boy 1:** Yes, a little.
>
> **Edu:** Do you know Japan? Now, I'm making a video for some Japanese kids. You like soccer, right?
>
> **Boy 1**: Yes, of course.
>
> **Edu:** Why?
>
> **Boy 1:** Because it's fun.
>
> **Edu:** I see. Say something to the kids in Japan.
>
> **Boy 1:** Ok. Hello. Soccer is fun. *Divertido*! So we play it every day.
>
> **Boy 2:** Let's train hard.
>
> **Boy 3:** See you at the World Cup. (58-59)

Several sublime statements can be read out of this dialogue. First of all, communication is possible through English, even though both parties (the Japanese students and the Brazilian boys) yet have quite a low level of English abilities. Another thing that strikes me is the general set-up of the scene and Edu's comment on the ball. Various clichés are implied here: Brazilian kids grow up playing soccer, therefore their national soccer team is one of the best in the world. Furthermore, Brazilian children are poor, so they cannot afford to have a 'good' ball, but they are happy anyway. What is more, there are no lawns or training spaces, so they have to play soccer on the streets. The picture at the beginning of the unit, underlines this statement. Only boys take part in the video, so there is also a prescribed gender role. What I can positively comment on is the reference to the World Cup, which will be taking place in Brazil in 2014. Therefore, the textbook relates to events happening in 'real life'.

One example reinforcing male and female gender roles can be found in a later section:

> […] The class went out. They gathered some snow. But Daisuke and some of the other boys started a snowball fight. One of Daisuke's snowballs hit Jenny in the back. Hiro couldn't say, “Stop it.” Jenny did nothing about it. Then another snowball hit Jenny in the face. She covered her face with her hands. Hiro got angry and said “Stop it! Don't be so mean!!” (95)

Obviously, the main message is to play in peace and not fight against each other. However, what also has to be noticed is that in this interaction boys are depicted as the aggressive ones, while the girl cannot protect herself from their snowball attacks. It takes another boy to 'save' Jenny. In today's world, where more and more attention is directed towards women's rights and strengthening their self-confidence, a cheeky answer or another way of changing Jenny's position as a victim is more appropriate.

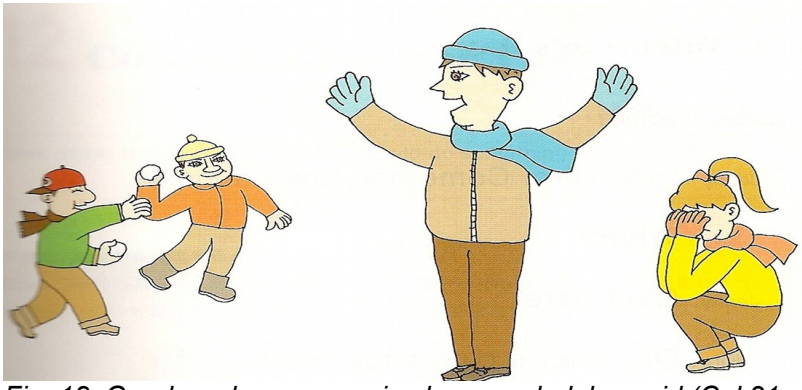


Fig. 18: Gender roles: aggressive boys vs. helpless girl (Col 21 95)

6.6.4. Concluding comments

Judging from the overall appearance, *Columbus 21* is not as attractive and colourful as *New Horizon*. Less pictures, whether drawn or photographs, are printed, which soon gives the impression of a 'text-overload'. There are almost no obvious cultural comparisons, the majority of cultural items refer to traditions, habits and a lifestyle, Japanese students are most likely to be familiar with. Hence, it is questionable whether cultural awareness is raised among the EFL learners when using *Columbus 21*.

7. Overall comparison

Generally it can be said that the structure of all six examined textbooks is quite similar. All of the inner cover pages display a collection of various photographs from all around the world. In other words, all of them put great emphasis on presenting a global picture, suggesting that communication is facilitated through learning English. As a first impulse for reflecting on different languages and cultural habits, I find this a suitable approach.

Whilst the inner cover pages are full of real-life photographs, the number of photos printed in the rest of the textbook is quite low. Instead, drawn pictures are meant to illustrate, underline and clarify dialogues and short essays. Very often images are used as a supplement to a short text, so that understanding is facilitated. In only a few cases, EFL students need to interpret pictures without any textual input.

My hypothesis to find a cultural bias towards the source cultures (Japanese cultures) and English-speaking Western cultures was proved right. Nevertheless, it has to be said that there has been no textbook which has not included other cultures than Japanese and English-speaking cultures. In most cases cultures from countries that are 'closer' to Japan than Western cultures (such as Singaporean or Chinese cultures) are represented in the textbooks.

In some cases, I noticed a greater involvement of visual influences referring to Japanese cultures than in others. For example, *One World* and *Total English* both depict Japanese students in school uniforms. Wearing school uniforms is a common practice in a large number of Japanese schools whereas those which do not have any restrictions regarding clothing style are exceptional. The question is whether students can relate better to illustrations which display a similar lifestyle they are used to or whether they are made aware of the fact that some things they might have taken for granted up to this point, can be handled differently. In other words, not displaying students in school uniforms can make students aware that this practice is not universally common. I recall a situation during my year as an exchange student at a Japanese school, in which I told my classmates that there are usually no rules regarding what to wear in school in Austria. Most of my peers appeared to be surprised to hear that. Would they have reacted differently if they had already actively dealt with this matter before?

I furthermore hypothesised that I would find Japan and its cultures presented as 'homogeneous'. Even though all textbooks introduce foreign characters among the main protagonists, this assumption has proven to be true. None of the international characters are stated to be living in Japan for a longer amount of time, for example, as Japanese citizen with different cultural roots or as immigrant. Either the foreign students attend an international school in Japan, which means that they are not fully integrated in the Japanese educational system, or the foreign students introduced are exchange students, which implies that their stay in Japan is limited to a certain amount of time. We can assume that also the non-Japanese teachers being part of the leading characters are working under a limited contract in one of the assistant language teaching programmes.

It must be said that all foreign characters are displayed to be well integrated in the community surrounding them. The Japanese students are eager to show them their lifestyles and traditions and in return, the international students inform them about their cultures. While this can be seen as direct cultural comparisons resulting in an active reflection process on cultural differences, it can also be interpreted as reinforcing the awareness that the protagonists do not stem from the same cultures, “[...] constructing a rigid cultural boundary between Us and Them. [...]” (Kubota 2002:23). It is arguable whether the introduction of an immigrant character living in Japan would weaken this dichotomising effect, however, it could be one solution to avoid the depiction of Japan as homogeneous.

With regard to Japanese cultural references it also has to be noted that some textbooks give the impression that no effort has been made to circumscribe 'typically Japanese' items or to find equivalent expressions used in English. For example, terms that could very well be described with English words such as

'*sake'*, which easily translates as 'salmon' (*New Crown* 31) or '*shamisen'* (*One World* 25), a Japanese-style string instrument, are used as part of the English language learning process although they are clearly Japanese. By employing Japanese terms for certain items, these objects are pinned down as culturally Japanese, although they may not always be.

In terms of raising intercultural awareness and creating mutual understanding, I see clear attempts of all examined textbook to fulfil these objectives. Against Kubota's claim that only 'prestigious' English-speaking cultures would serve as reference for cultural differences, and despite the results of various quantitative studies on Japanese EFL textbooks, which showed a bias towards American cultural content, it has to be said that in all cases at least one character from a non-English-speaking culture is introduced. By giving examples of interactions happening between two or more non-native English speakers, the view of English for intercultural communicative purposes is emphasised. However, it is arguable if this attempt to emphasise internationality is sufficient to raise intercultural awareness (see section 8).

Furthermore, I noticed a tendency to reduce references to American cultures and substitute them with Canadian cultural items (*Columbus 21, New Horizon, One World, Sunshine*) which, on the one hand also count as 'prestigious' Western cultures but on the other hand have not yet the image as 'conventional' reference for learning English language and cultures.

Even after this extensive cultural content analysis, it is still not possible to rank the evaluated textbooks from 'best' to 'worst'.

While some of them have included important social and environmental aspects to a great extent, they at the same time fail to present other cultural aspects sufficiently. Some textbooks put great focus on presenting a wide range of

cultural diversity, however they have not incorporated detailed information on these cultures so EFL students would actively reflect on them. In other cases particular cultural elements are especially emphasised and discussed, which, at the same time, results in a one-sided presentation of only a few aspects.

There are many more factors (such as linguistic facets) which should be closely examined before making final judgements on the quality of each textbook. It can be said that, regardless of which textbook is chosen to be used in the end, it is always up to the teacher to recognise its strengths and weaknesses. This implies that she will have to supply extra material to the students to fill in content gaps. It also means that she needs to critically evaluate the textbook to be able to point out possible misrepresentations and to correct these, at the same time raising awareness of cultural differences which should neither be judged 'good' or 'bad'.

8. Implications for the Japanese classroom and concluding remarks

The aim of this thesis was to investigate whether and how the objectives stated in the study guidelines issued by MEXT are realised in Japanese EFL textbooks. Several conclusions can be drawn from the outcomes of the analysis.

It can be said that all of the examined textbooks show clear *attempts* to foster the development of intercultural understanding by presenting a great range of cultural diversity. However, it can be criticised that a number of cultures are only touched upon in a quite superficial way (i.e. only *mentioning* other cultures but not really including them in the textbook content as such). As a result, the 'great variety' presented at first (for example, in the inner cover pages) is in the end narrowed down to a few cultures which are discussed in detail. This is the case

in all of the analysed textbooks. The majority of cultural elements refer to Japanese cultures, which are then taken as basis for further comparisons to mainly English-speaking cultures. This can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, the fact that Japanese cultural items are used as the main reference cultures can be seen as one approach to facilitate the process of learning another language for Japanese EFL beginners. Furthermore, the objective to "deepen[...] the understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan [...]" as stated in the study guidelines (MEXT 2003) can be said to be fulfilled by including aspects of Japanese cultures.
On the other hand, the vast usage of Japanese cultural references can also be viewed from a different perspective. Taking up the approach that Japanese nationalism is maintained and cultural solidarity is strengthened by putting a great focus on Japanese cultures, the clear overload of Japanese cultural references in the textbooks points towards reinforcing Japanese students' awareness of their Japanese identities.

The influences of certain ideologies which can be traced back to the *nihonjinron,* (the discourse of 'Japaneseness') and *kokusaika* ('Internationalisation'), are clearly visible. When comparing Japanese cultural elements with only a limited set of other cultures (as done in the textbooks), the often criticised dichotomising effect cannot be denied. Although non-English-speaking cultures are referred to, they are still underrepresented and appear to be not as 'equal' as English-speaking cultures. It is arguable whether this also reflects Japan's, possibly unconscious, attitude regarding power relations in the globalised world (i.e. attributing more economic and social power to English-speaking cultures).

Another remarkable point, which supports Kubota's claim (see section 4.3.3.) that Japan does not consider its own (inner) diversity, is that Japan really *is* depicted as 'culturally homogeneous'. In other words, while there is an existing focus on multiculturality in other cultures, no interaction between Japanese

people and people from domestic ethnic or immigrant groups takes place in the textbooks. This seems to reflect the ambivalent attitude towards diversity and 'internationalising' Japan which can also be seen in the *Course of Study* and the *Action Plan*. Although Japanese people are addressed as “citizens living in a global community” (MEXT 2003), judging from how Japanese cultures are depicted in the textbooks, the *global* aspect focuses on diversity in the world *outside* of Japan but not *within* it. As already stated, this might be because of the yet existing influences of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika*, which possibly still subliminally underlie the revised educational policies and the attempts of realising them.

As said before, it is necessary for teachers to go beyond the textbook material so intercultural learning can take place successfully. However, I have outlined in section 4.2. that the classroom situation in Japan is quite difficult, not leaving much time and space for teachers to bring in 'extra' activities or conduct extensive projects dealing with cultural differences. Hence, we must assume that key cultural information not included in the textbook (and which should be supplied by the teacher) is never provided to the students since there is no space due to the 'outside' pressures such as preparing students for the entrance examinations. Furthermore, the yet often prevailing teaching method in the Japanese classroom is the grammar-translation-method (*yakudoku*) which does not involve in-class discussions. Therefore, EFL students' chances to express themselves are limited.

It has to be kept in mind, that textbook content is only 'one part of the puzzle' in the overall context of English language education. Changing the study guidelines and textbook material according to the concepts of intercultural education can therefore be seen as a beginning step to improve English language education in Japan. However, there are many other components that have to be altered before the objectives of MEXT can (success)fully be

implemented in the Japanese classroom. In a further step, changes in the language education system in general (such as abandoning or changing the focus of the university entrance examinations) are essential in order to be able to create a learning environment encouraging the development of intercultural awareness.

The question whether the objectives of MEXT concerning intercultural learning in the language classroom are fulfilled or not can only partly be answered. In fact, the textbooks' efforts to successfully qualify as valid cultural mediator can clearly be seen. However, in most cases the attempts to present a culturally well-balanced picture and to foster the development of intercultural understanding can yet be improved. Nevertheless, I would say that the materials for English education in Japan are on the best way of becoming reliable and valid sources of cultural information.

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Appendix

I. List of figures

II. German Abstract

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit dem japanischen Lehrplan für den Englischunterricht in der japanischen Unterstufe (das entspricht der 6. bis 9. Schulstufe in Österreich) und dessen Umsetzung im Unterricht. Im Zuge einer Bildungsreform im Jahr 2003 wurden vom japanischen Ministerium für Erziehung, Technologie, Kunst und Kultur zwei Dokumente mit Lehr- und Lernzielen des Fremdsprachenunterrichts verfasst und öffentlich gemacht. Neben dem Erlernen der Fremdsprache Englisch, beinhalten die in den Dokumenten festgehaltenen Lernziele einerseits einen Fokus auf die Entwicklung von interkulturellem Bewusstsein, auf der anderen Seite jedoch wird auch erwähnt, dass sich die Schüler ihrer (japanischen) Identität bewusst werden sollen. Anhand einer qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse von sechs approbierten Englischlehrbüchern soll festgestellt werden, inwiefern diese Ziele erfüllt werden können.

Nach einer kurzen Begriffserklärung und einem generellen Überblick über das Konzept von interkulturellem Lernen, wird auf das japanische Schulsystem mit besonderem Augenmerk auf den Englischunterricht eingegangen. Weiters werden zwei japanische Konzepte, *nihonjinron* ('Diskurse zum japanischen Wesen') und *kokusaika* ('Internationalisierung'), vorgestellt, die, wie sich im Laufe der Diplomarbeit herausstellen wird, maßgeblichen Einfluss auf die Sichtweise und den Status von Englisch als Fremdsprache in der japanischen Gesellschaft haben.

Im Anschluss zeigt eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse der vom Ministerium approbierten Lehrbücher wie, vor dem Hintergrund der in Japan existierenden Ideologien, interkulturelles Lernen gefördert bzw. umgesetzt wurde.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Frage, ob die vom Ministerium vorgegebenen Lernziele erfolgreich umgesetzt werden oder nicht, nicht eindeutig zu beantworten ist. Die Rolle der Lehrbücher als kulturelle Vermittler ist zwar offensichtlich, kann aber noch intensiviert werden.

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