

AN INVESTIGATION INTO CULTURAL ELEMENTS VIA LINGUISTIC MEANS IN NEW HEADWAY TEXTBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

When trying to communicate with people from different cultures and languages, the possibility of miscommunication increases. Understanding a language involves not only knowledge of grammar, phonology and lexis but also certain features and characteristics of the related culture. However, the cultural elements in the New Headway textbooks seem to be neglected during the teaching and learning of English at the People's Police University (PPU). Thus, this study was undertaken to highlight the cultural elements in the Elementary and Pre-intermediate New Headway textbooks so that the learners of English at the PPU can communicate appropriately during and after using the "New Headway" course material.

Cultural elements such as norms, values, attitudes and communication styles are classified and analyzed in the Elementary and Pre-intermediate New Headway course books. The research revealed that the norms, values, attitudes and communication styles of British and American English speakers were presented practically in every text and activity. Therefore, teachers and learners need to increase their awareness of cultural elements and incorporate them into their English language instruction.

In addition, the authors also offer suggestions for incorporating cultural elements into language teaching so that English learning and teaching at the PPU can become more interesting and effective.

INTRODUCTION

As we know, language and culture are interdependent and interactional. Culture affects the way language is used and language may reflect many factors of culture in turn. In addition, what is right one culture may not be accepted in another culture. As people from one country to another, cultural differences become apparent to them. Bentahila, A. and Davies, E (1998:99-111) when discussing culture and language use have come to the conclusion that if learners do not acquire some familiarity with the cultural norms of native speakers of their target language, they will meet difficulties in communicating these ones. Thus, cultural knowledge is obviously a vital key for Vietnamese students for success in learning English because second language learning is second culture learning. Without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete. Clearly, if you do not understand about culture of a community, you cannot understand and express fully meanings in the context of that communication; therefore you will not be able to gain a successful communication.

English - the popular language in international communication has played a crucial role in many fields. It has been taught in Vietnam for decades. Nowadays, English has become a compulsory subject in schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam. Therefore, different kinds of English teaching and learning materials are available now in Vietnam. However, the main emphasis on structural rules and forms often serves as the principal method of teaching English. Most Vietnamese teachers tend to focus on teaching grammar, vocabulary, language skills without paying much attention to cultural background

knowledge. The students may get difficulties in achieving contextual, situational and cultural appropriateness in communication. With the aim to identifying British and American cultural elements revealed in the New Headway Textbook at the Elementary and Pre-intermediate, this research was carried out to raise the teachers' and students' awareness of the importance of cultural knowledge in cross-cultural communication as well as in mastering English language and to give suggestions for incorporating culture teaching into language teaching so that English learning and teaching become more interesting and effective.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Culture.

When referring to culture, we often relate to art, music, history, geography, literature, architect, religions, customs and traditions and social relationship. Up to now, the term "Culture" has been understood and defined in many ways. Each author gives different ideas. All in all, "Culture is everything that people have, think and do as a member of a society" (Ferrando, 1996:18, cited in Nguyen Quang, 2006:16). The concept of culture, therefore, involves the way people from a particular cultural background think, feel, act, make friends, worship and behave in a community. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes human being from animals. Culture is shared, learned symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and affects people's behaviors, norms, values, attitudes, customs, lifestyle, perceptions, taboos and communicative styles, art, history, geography, economics and political systems...

1.2. Elements of culture.

* **Norms** are the rules of culture that tell the members of a culture how they are expected to behave in a given situation. In other words, norms are cultural standards for behavior. "The way we do things around here". Every society or every civilization has a set of norms. This can include the folkways, mores, taboos and rituals in a culture. "Norms are prescriptive principles to which members of a culture subscribe. The attributes of a norm include: (1) a collective evaluation of behavior in terms of what ought to be; (2) a collective interpretation as to what behavior will be; (3) particular reactions to behavior including attempts to apply sanctions or otherwise include a particular kind of behavior". (Gibb, 1965: 590, cited by William B. Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey with Elizabeth Chua, 1988:61)

* **Values** are cultural standards or judgments of what is right, good, or desirable. Values are ideas that we hold to be important. Values govern the way we behave, communicate and interact with others. A value system differentiates right feelings, thoughts and behavior from wrong feelings, thoughts and behavior.

* **Attitudes** are the external displays of underlying beliefs that people use to signal to other people of their membership. This includes internal members. Attitudes also can be used to give warning. For example, in Vietnamese family, children are not regarded as having 'rights'. Daughters are expected to assist with household chores from an early age, to defer to men, to protect their virginity, and to regard marriage as automatic. Boys are often indulged, and encouraged to pursue 'manly' activities. Children share rooms with their brothers and sisters, and in poor families, with their parents as well. Nakedness and family discussion of sexual matters are taboo.

* **Communication styles**: Communication style means the way a particular individual communicates with other persons. Different people follow different styles of communication, depending on their personality and attitude. Then, there are some people who follow all the communication styles, depending upon what is required at a given point of time, in a particular situation. While some people are direct, honest and upfront; some

are indirect, manipulative and aggressive in a rather passive way. Most people use a mix of styles consciously or naturally. The style of communication can affect the results achieved in business and personal situations. For example, in Britain, “please”, “thank you”, and sometimes “thank you very much” are involved in just about every human transaction. They are necessary and expected in communication with the British. People in Britain are very time-oriented, respecting deadlines and punctuality. People who talk loud are considered ill-bred, ill-mannered and ill-educated. British people have a quite indirect communication style. Most British are masters of understatement and do not use effusive language. Brits tend to be indirect, subtle and suggestive communicators. “Perhaps we could ask John whether he could finish that report by Monday” actually means “Tell John he must finish the report by Monday”.

1.2.1. British culture.

In general, the British people are well known with sense of fair play, integrity, and understatement. The British, especially the English, are renowned for their politeness and courtesy. So British communication style is “indirectness”. When doing business in the UK you generally find that direct questions often receive evasive responses and conversations may be ambiguous and full of subtleties. When chatting with the strangers, they often talk much about the weather to avoid private things. They always apologize for bumping into someone even if it is not their fault. They quite respect people's personal space and always wait in line. They are quite reserved, quiet. So it is difficult to make friends with them but when you are closer, they are very friendly. We can learn the humor, stiff upper lip and patience of the British people. The importance of humor in all situations, including business contexts, cannot be overestimated. They accept the jokes. One of the most confusing aspects of British culture is humor. Bantering, ribbing, or "taking the mick" are all ways to describe making fun of someone but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Teasing someone is a common way to show affection. In Britain, women are entitled to equal respect and status to men in all areas of life and tend to have more independence and responsibility than in some other cultures. Women are usually independent and accustomed to entering public places unaccompanied. The British people consider the ideal person to be an individualistic, self-reliant, independent person and they especially respect individual freedom, in thought, action and feeling, etc. They have been trained since very early in their lives to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies, for their own decisions. Hence, they work very hard. The people of Britain are also very conscious of time and they are very particular about reaching an appointment on time. Being late for an appointment is considered impolite in Britain. For examples, you should arrive a few minutes early for public meetings, plays, concerts, movies, sporting events, classes, church services, and weddings but if you are invited to someone's house for dinner at half past seven, they will expect you to be there on the dot. An invitation might state "7.30 for 8", in which case you should arrive no later than 7.50. However, if an invitation says "sharp", you must arrive in plenty of time. The British people are the ones who love the nature and animals. They like fresh and healthy life in the countryside.

1.2.2. American culture.

The development of the culture of the United States of America has been marked by a tension between two strong sources of inspiration: European ideals, especially British and domestic originality. American culture encompasses traditions, ideals, customs, beliefs, values, arts, folklore and innovations developed both domestically and imported via colonization and immigration from the British Isles. It includes both conservative and liberal elements, military and scientific competitiveness, political structures, risk taking

and free expression, materialist and moral elements. It also includes elements which evolved from native American, and other ethnic subcultures; most prominently the culture of African American slave descendants and different cultures from Latin America. In general, Americans are renowned for individual freedom. Freedom is the most prominent value of American. Americans commonly regard their society as the freest and best in the world. Americans who respect the rights of other citizens are free to work, play, worship, travel, and live as they please. We can encounter that in America children are also allowed to make many of their own choices – what to wear, what to watch on television, how to spend their free time, even what school to attend because American parents feel their children have many rights, including freedom of speech. American life is marked by change and those who thrive are self-sufficient, quick jumpers, who can exist, if need be, far from family. They are very self-reliant, self-sufficient and dependent people. They are also very friendly and informal. People tend to not wait to be introduced, will begin to speak with strangers as they stand in a queue, sit next to each other at an event, etc. With Americans, equality is a good chance for a personal success. They work hard and always compete to survive. Americans believe that people should hold jobs and not live off welfare payments from the government. Volunteerism in American community and political life reflects Americans' optimistic pride in their ability to work out practical solutions themselves. In spite of equality, the women still do most of the housework and childcare in the family due to old habits. They also love the nature and animals. Cats and dogs are considered the rest of the family. In America, time is a very important commodity. People 'save' time and 'spend' time as if it were money in the bank. Americans ascribe personality characteristics and values based on how people use time. For example, people who are on-time are considered to be good people, reliable people who others can count on. Also, materialism has always been an integral part of life for most Americans. They consider it almost a right to be materially well off and physically comfortable.

1.3. Language.

According to Claire Kramsch (1998:3), “Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.” When communicating, human beings both express their experience and create their own experience through language. They give meaning to it through the media they choose to communicate with one another in order to make people understandable to the community or social group they belong to. It is obvious that language is the primary and essential means people use to communicate and express their thoughts, feeling, ideas, desires, etc. Moreover, language is not only our main link with the outside world, it is also a marker that distinguishes us from the animal creatures we share the world with. (Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, 2007:164). Thanks to language, people can understand each other more easily. It helps people build a better society to satisfy their lives and desires.

1.4. Interrelationship between Language and Culture.

It is commonly accepted that the relationship between language and culture is well established and must be placed within the social context. They are dialectically interrelated and language is one of the most typical presentations for perception and thinking. Language both reflects and affects one's world view. When referring to the relationship between language and culture, Joyce M. Valdes (1986:4) suggests the circular pattern of language, culture and thought in which each influences and is influenced by the others. “They are not all the same thing, but none can survive without the others”. Obviously, it is impossible for human beings to study anything without being acknowledged of the language and its culture at the same time. Culture is a deeply ingrained part of people's

lives. However, language - the means for communication among members of a culture - is the most visible and available expression of that culture. In short, culture influences the way in which language is used; each individual, social group or community communicates basing on its own typical cultural viewpoint. And in its turn, language which contains many factors of culture plays a crucial role in expressing cultural values and perceptions as well as maintaining and developing culture from generation to generation. Culture shapes our view of the world and language is the most representative element in any culture.

1.5. Cultural dimension of English language learning and teaching.

Teaching a language cannot be separated from teaching its culture because the purpose of teaching a language is to help people communicate with each other and culture plays an important part in communication. Claire Kramsch (1993:93) asserted: "If language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency. Culture in language teaching is not expendable fifth skill, tacked on, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing". Regarding teaching culture in language training, it is very important to mention the conclusion of Robert Polizer, "As language teachers, we must be interested in the study of culture (in the social scientist's sense of the word) not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of the other country but because we have to teach it" (1959: 100-101). As Englebert (2004) also describes: "...to teach a foreign language is also to teach a foreign culture, and it is important to be sensitive to the fact that our students, our colleges, our administrators, and, if we live abroad, our neighbors, do not share all of our cultural paradigms." In addition, Prodromou (1988) argues that the way we teach reflects our attitudes to society in general and the individual's place in society. The nature of teaching culture is to increase the students' awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, helping them to gain the understanding among the cultures. If one teaches language without teaching about the culture in which it operates, the students are learning empty or meaningless symbols or when using the learnt language, may use the language inappropriately in a cultural context, thus fail to achieve the purpose of learning a language. However, many Vietnamese teachers and students have not truly paid attention much to cultural elements revealed in the textbooks, they only focus on vocabulary, grammar and four language skills. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). Being lack of cultural knowledge seems to cause misunderstandings in real life communication. The students may face culture shock when they learn and try to understand English language. If the students are equipped fully about cultural background knowledge, they will understand that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors; social variables such as age, sex, social class and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave; more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture; increasing their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language; necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture; curiosity about the target culture. Basing on those, the students will be more interested in lessons.

Thus, culture must be fully incorporated as a crucial factor of language learning. Teachers should recognize the basic cultural items in every aspects of the language that they teach. The more the teachers enrich cultural knowledge, the more they are confident about what they teach. This will affect the success of communication as well as teaching English language. Teachers must be learners themselves, if they want to teach culture to their students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research question

The study focuses on identifying the cultural elements such as norms, values, attitudes and communication styles of British and American in the New Headway textbooks. So the study is set up to answer this question: What are the cultural elements that can be found in New Headway Textbooks at the Elementary and Pre-intermediate level?

2. Methods of the study

This study used quantitative method in order to quantify British and American cultural elements such as norms, values, attitudes and communication styles in New headway Textbooks at the Elementary and Pre-intermediate level. Data was collected by means of descriptive analysis and statistic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Identifications of British cultural elements in New Headway textbooks.

1.1. Norms:

1.1.1. Non-verbal behavior

The handshake is the common form of non-verbal greeting. A firm handshake is the norm; there are no issues over gender in the UK. When you are first introduced to someone, shake their right hand with your own right hand. It is considered polite to do so. (Unit 11- p87- Elementary)

1.1.2. Table Manners

Table manners are Continental, i.e. the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating. (Elementary: unit 5- p38; unit 9- p71)

1.1.3. Punctuality

The people of Britain are very conscious of time and they are very particular about reaching an appointment on time. Being late for an appointment is considered as impolite in Britain. If you agree to meet friends at three o'clock, you can bet that they'll be there just after three. You may arrive 10-15 minutes later than invited to dinner. However, if going to a restaurant, try to be on time. In Britain, people make great effort to arrive on time. If you are unable to keep an appointment, it is a good idea to telephone and offer your apologies. Although the British value punctuality (Unit 13- p104- Elementary; Unit 2- tapescript- p119- Pre-intermediate)

1.2. Values:

1.2.1. Individualism and privacy

Individual needs are considered primary. They consider the ideal person to be an individualistic, self-reliant, independent person. They have been trained since very early in their lives to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies, for their own decisions. The British are very reserved and private people. They will not necessarily give you a tour of their home and, in fact, may keep most doors closed. They expect others to respect their privacy. This extends to not asking personal or intimate questions. For example, do not ask questions regarding your British counterpart's background, occupation or income such as "How much money do you earn?" "How much do you weigh?" or "Why aren't you married?". Do respect personal space. The British value their space and keeping an acceptable distance is advised. So the safest topic to break ice is the weather. The apparent lack of curiosity about other people is simply a greatly cherished sense of privacy and fear of invading yours. (Pre-intermediate: unit 3- p22; unit 8 - p66; unit 13- p107)

1.2.2. Freedom

British people especially respect individual freedom in thought, action and feeling, etc. Although Britain is historically a Christian society, people are usually very tolerant towards the faiths of others and those who have no religious beliefs. (Pre-intermediate: unit 5- Tapescript - p121; unit 7- p58; unit 8- p66, 67)

1.2.3. Equality

Women in Britain are entitled to equal respect and status as men (and indeed vice versa) in all areas of life and tend to have more independence and responsibility than in some other cultures. Women are usually independent and accustomed to entering public places unaccompanied. It is usual for women to go out and about on their own as well as with friends. Men and women mix freely. (Elementary: Unit 3- p20; unit 7- P57)

1.2.4. Self-reliance and independence

Children are early gone to school to learn “self-reliance”, ‘independence’. These values are developed and enhanced in British people’s lives. The British don’t subscribe to clinging. (Unit 7- p53- Elementary; unit 8- p67- Pre-intermediate)

1.2.5. Hard work:

British people are pressured and constrained by time because they are trying to control it. People shouldn’t waste or kill time. They must rush to get things done. They must follow their schedules to be productive. Their hard work is measured by the numbers of hours worked in a week. Many people often work several hours overtime a week. (Elementary: unit 3- p20; unit 4- p28, 29; unit 6- p117 (tapescript); unit 7- p53,57; unit 13-p104); (Pre-intermediate: unit 8- p123(tapescript); unit 13- p106, p127(tapescript))

1.3. Attitudes:

1.3.1. The love of nature:

British have an idealized vision of the countryside. To them, the countryside means peace and quiet, beauty, good health and no crime. They have no negative view about countryside such as some countries, for example, poor facilities, lack of educational opportunities, unemployment and poverty, etc. Most people would live in a country village if they could find a way of earning a living there. If not, they still spend a lot of their time with “nature” such as houses and gardens. The British are known as a nation of gardeners. Many people in Britain are proud of their houses and gardens. They want their houses and gardens to look nice. Every town in Britain has one or more DIY (Do it Yourself) centres and garden centres. These places are very popular with British home-owners at the weekends. (Pre-intermediate: unit 4- p33; unit 5- p121; tapescript)

1.3.2. The love of animals.

The British tend to have a sentimental attitude to animals. Nearly half of the households in Britain keep at least one domestic pet. When these pets die, British buried them in their back gardens. The status of these pets is taken seriously. For example, it is illegal to run over a dog in your car and then keep on driving. You have to stop and inform the owner. (Elementary: unit 5 - p116 (Tapescript); (Pre-intermediate: unit 5- p120 (Tapescript))

1.3.3. Dresses

Style of dress depends more on personal preference than on position or rank: don't be surprised to find lecturers in jeans or sweaters. British are very particular about the way they dress. The citizens always dress according to the occasion. Blazer, coat, tie and trousers are specially worn on formal occasions. During informal occasions people wear variety of colorful dresses. However, colors are often more muted (especially outside London). In a funeral, British wear black clothes (Unit 14- p114- Pre-intermediate)

1.3.4. Food

The eating habits of British are varied. However, despite regional and cultural disparities a few common benchmarks can be delineated. Usually, British people are fond of good food and they love to eat Italian, Indian and Chinese dishes. (Tapescripts: unit 5-p116- Elementary; unit 9- p120- Elementary; unit 1-p118-Pre-intermediate)

1.3.5. Drink

The attitude to alcohol in Britain is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is accepted and welcomed as an integral part of British culture. The local pub plays important role in almost every neighbourhood and pubs, it should be noted, are predominantly for drinking of beer and spirits. Even a certain level of drunkenness is acceptable. Provided this does not lead to violence, there is no shame attached to it. On the other hand, the puritan tradition has led to the widespread view that drinking is something potentially dangerous which should there be restricted, in terms of both who can do it and where it can be done. A love for tea is almost a common trait among all British people. Britain is a tea-drinking nation. Everyone makes and drinks a lot of tea. Every day people drink about 165 million cups of the stuff and each year around 144 thousand tons of tea is imported. (Elementary: unit 9- p119 (typescript); (Pre-intermediate: unit 13- p127 (typescript))

1.3.6. Entertainment

People enjoy various indoor and outdoor activities in Britain. The weekends are a time for families in Britain. Often the parents are not at work. They have already worked a five day week from Monday to Friday. (Unit 4- p34 - Elementary)

Going shopping is popular with many families; especially Saturdays are a busy time for shops. (Elementary: unit 11 - p89; unit 14 - p108); (Pre-intermediate (typescripts): unit 10 - p125)

Going to the pub is the most popular leisure activity outside the home. Pubs are popular social meeting places. Pubs are an important part of British life. People talk, eat, drink, meet their friends and relax there. Be aware that Brits buy drinks in the pub in rounds, meaning they will take turns in buying drinks for the whole group. If there are five or six people of you, someone may offer to split the cost. (Pre-intermediate (typescript): unit 1 – p118; unit 2 - p119)

Sports and physical recreation have always been popular. Local governments provide cheap sport and leisure facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, parks and golf courses. People go to watch other people play sports like football or take part in sports themselves. (Unit 3- p20; unit 12- p94, 95 - Elementary)

1.3.7. Meals:

Meals tend to be eaten quickly and the table clearly. Parties and celebrations are not normally centred around food. The evening meal is the main meal of the day in most parts of Britain. Eating out has grown in popularity. British are happy to have a business lunch and discuss business matters with a drink during the meal. (Unit 9 –p70- Elementary; unit 13 – p127 (typescript) – Pre-intermediate)

1.4. Communication styles

1.4.1. Politeness.

British are very polite. It is an important value in British society, often accomplished by some rather pointless exchanges of pleasantries. When entering a business meeting, expect to spend the first 10 minutes exchanging niceties before moving into business. In a restaurant, people will have to say thank you when they get the menu, thank you when they place the order, thank you when getting your dishes, thank you when the waiter takes away the plates and even thank you when paying! It is very good manners to say "please" and "thank you". It is considered rude if people don't. You will notice in England that people say 'thank you' a lot.

People will have to say "excuse me" if they want to pass someone and "I'm sorry" if accidentally touch someone. British people even say sorry if you stand on *their* toes! This is a habit and can be seen as very amusing by an 'outsider'. (Elementary: Unit 1- p11; unit 2- p19; unit 3- p25,27; unit 4- p35; unit 5- p43; unit 8- p63; unit 13- p104; unit 14- p113); (Pre-intermediate: unit 3- p26,27; unit 4- p36; unit 9- p72; unit 12- p101)

1.4.2. Indirectness:

The British, in particular the English, are renowned for their politeness and courtesy. So “indirectness” is a key element of British culture and is a fundamental aspect of British communication style. When doing business in the UK you generally find that direct questions often receive evasive responses and conversations may be ambiguous and full of subtleties. (Elementary: unit 8- tapescript- P118); (Pre-intermediate: unit 8- p67)

1.4.3. Formality and informality

The British have both formality and informality; depend on different situations, roles and environment. Most people use the courtesy titles or Mr, Mrs or Miss and their surname. (Unit 6- p51- Elementary)

However, if communicating with someone they know well, their style may be more informal, although they will still be reserved. First names usage and the lack of formal ritual are typical. In spite of the fact that Britain is still well known for its class society, relationships in the workplace and in an educational setting are very informal. People often call each other by their first names where in other countries people use last names. For example, the employees call their bosses or managers by their first names. This is not rude. Many bosses prefer this. (Unit 2- p13- Elementary)

1.4.4. Humor

Humor is a vital element in all aspects of British life and culture is the renowned British sense of humor. The importance of humor in all situations, including business contexts, cannot be overestimated. Humor is frequently used as a defense mechanism, often in the form of self-depreciation or irony. It can be highly implicit and in this sense is related to the British indirect communication style. It is used in numerous ways: to establish a positive atmosphere, to create a sense of togetherness, to bridge differences, to introduce risky ideas, to criticize, to show appreciation or contempt of a person. British people joke about everything including the queen, politicians, religion, themselves. (Pre-intermediate: unit 10- p125 (tapescript); unit 14- p115)

1.4.5. Friendliness and stiff upper lip.

British are also very "quiet" and keep to themselves. There is a proper way to act in most situations and the British are sticklers for adherence to protocol. This can be hard if you want to make friends with them. Friendships take longer to build; however, once established they tend to be deep and may last over time and distance. “*Stiff upper lip*” is a term often used to describe the traditionally British portrayal of reserve and restraint when faced with difficult situations. In British culture, open displays of emotion, positive or negative are rare and should be avoided. During meetings, this means your British colleagues will approach business with an air of formality and detachment. Although the British are generally seen as being reserved, you will find that in the North of England, people are usually quite friendly. They will appreciate it if you make a chat about the weather or take an interest in local affairs. Especially as a man, you might have to get used to the fact that many (older) people address you as "Love". Don't worry, they don't have amorous intentions. (Elementary: unit 13- p102, 103); (Pre-intermediate: unit 8- p67; unit 2- p119 (tapescript); Unit 13- p106)

Obviously, these textbooks do not focus on cultural contents but more or less include cultural knowledge. In fact, while we learn English language, we have to face with its culture. In each activity or text of the course books contains British cultural content which is vital to English learners. If we understand its culture, we can master English language better. Through lessons, English learners can gain certain target cultural background knowledge.

2. Identification of American cultural elements in New Headway textbooks

2.1. Norms

Table manners: The fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating. (Unit 9 - p71 - Elementary)

2.2. Values

2.2.1. Freedom

Freedom is the most prominent value of American. Americans commonly regard their society as the freest and best in the world. Americans' understanding of freedom is shaped by the Founding Fathers' belief that all people are equal and that the role of government is to protect each person's basic inalienable rights, including provisions for freedom of speech and religion. American life is marked by change and those who thrive are self-sufficient, quick jumpers, who can exist, if need be, far from family. (Pre-intermediate: Unit 2 – p19; Unit 5 – p42; Unit 10 – p83)

2.2.2. Individualism

Individualism, understood not only as self-reliance but also as economic self-sufficiency, has been a central theme in American history. In the early days, most Americans were farmers whose success depended not on cooperation with others but on their ability to confront the hardships of land and climate on their own. Both success and virtue were measured by individual resourcefulness. For example, the family unit is generally considered the nuclear family, and is typically small (with exceptions among certain ethnic groups). Extended family relatives live in their own homes, often at great distances from their children. Individualism is prized, and this is reflected in the family unit. People are proud of their individual accomplishments, initiative and success, and may, or may not, share those sources of pride with their elders. (Pre-intermediate: unit 2 – p19; unit 6 – p51; unit 10 – p82)

2.2.3. Hard work

Hard work has been both necessary and rewarding for most Americans throughout their history. Americans believe that people should hold jobs and not live off welfare payments from the government.

(Elementary: unit 6 - p49; unit 7 –p57)

(Pre-intermediate: unit 2 – p19)

2.3. Attitudes:

Food: The food is from every country in the world. Americans generally eat their largest meal of the day in the evening - dinner. These meals seem to revolve around some form of meat (mostly red meats or chicken) served with a starch (potatoes are most common, rice is readily and vegetables). (Unit 2 - p19 - Pre-intermediate)

2.4. Communication styles

Friendliness: Americans are well-known for their friendliness. They tend to not wait to be introduced, will begin to talk to the strangers as they stand in a queue, sit next to each other at an event, etc. (Unit 2 - p19 - Pre-intermediate)

From the table above, we can see that the values are revealed the most frequently. Next values are freedom and individualism. In fact, the values of freedom, individualism and hard work are the prominent, basic features of American culture. Communication styles of American are well- known for their friendliness but we can only see few units revealed. The least frequency is the attitudes of American. We can only identify the attitude towards food. Obviously, these textbooks are published by Oxford University Press (2000). Their sources are mainly from Britain. Therefore, contents which are transmitted mostly deal with the British culture.

All in all, via linguistic means, the target cultural knowledge are transmitted to the learners of English language frequently. English language reflects the cultures of English speaking countries, especially British and American cultures.

5. CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, teaching and learning a second language is teaching and learning second culture. It is essential to learn it right when we start to learn a language. Hence, good methods for integrating culture teaching into English language teaching need to be focused and discussed, especially when teaching the communicative course books “New Headway” for students of the PPU. It is the foreign language teachers’ responsibility to find practical solutions to this problem to integrate culture teaching into their language teaching in one way or another.

All in all, teaching English cannot be separated from teaching its culture. In order to help the students master English effectively via the textbooks “New Headway”, cultural elements should be highlighted by the teachers during the language lessons. Also, it should be noted gradually that it is necessary to teach culture to the students so that they can overcome all difficulties or culture shock in real-life communication.

In short, culture is really vital in teaching and learning English foreign language, especially with the communicative textbooks “New Headway”. So, both the teachers and students must have certain knowledge about the English speaking cultures in general and British, American cultures in particular. With the popular cultural knowledge, the students can understand more deeply about their native culture and avoid the potential misunderstanding. Then, enriching cultural knowledge by integrating cultures into language learning and teaching is quite vital. It would be hopeful that with the author’s study, the students of PPU could learn English through the New Headway textbooks efficiently and become good cross-cultural communicators.

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