

Elements Of Culture in Language Teaching – Textbook Analysis

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Abstract

The teaching of foreign languages is inseparable from the integration of the target language's culture. However, teaching culture remains a persistent challenge for language educators: What cultural content should be included, how much, and how should it be presented? The cultural distance between the learners' native culture and the target culture often influences these decisions. Traditionally, language instruction has focused on developing four core skills—listening, reading, writing, and speaking—typically in an integrated manner. Recently, a growing number of scholars and educators have emphasized the importance of a "fifth skill": cultural competence. Yet, defining culture and identifying appropriate pedagogical strategies for teaching it remains complex. Textbooks, as central tools in language instruction, adopt varying approaches to cultural content. Some align with intercultural and multicultural frameworks, as recommended by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), while others fail to reflect modern perspectives or do so inconsistently. This study compares two 7th-grade language textbooks used in Romania: one for teaching English, and the other for teaching Romanian to Hungarian minority students in Transylvania. Our analysis suggests that the English textbook demonstrates a more diverse and pedagogically sound approach to integrating cultural elements.

Keywords: English and Romanian textbooks, target language, different approaches