

# Portrayal of Culture in the EFL School Textbooks in Grade Four in the Public Schools in Egypt<sup>(\*)</sup>

Under the Supervision of  
**Amira Agameya**

**Ahmed Awwaad**  
Faculty of Arts, Cairo University

## Abstract

This paper examines the developmental stages of culture in the English as a Foreign Language school textbooks used in grade four in the public schools in Egypt. There are three major stages marking the change in the perceptions of why and how culture needs to be taught in EFL (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). In the first stage, from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s, culture was viewed as an object of study, and EFL learners were expected to learn factual information about the target cultures. The second stage, during the 1990s, introduced a broader view of culture and this included acquainting EFL learners with the habits and the practices of the English native speakers. The third stage, introduced by Byram in 1997, focused on the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is the ability to communicate with people from different cultures. The classification of the developmental stages of the concept of culture in EFL was employed to design a three-stage model of analysis (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). The analysis revealed that Egyptian culture is positively represented through various activities on: nature, food items, people demographics, authors, holidays, national festivals, detailed geographic and economic information about some Egyptian governorates, plants and animals. Furthermore, the study found that the Anglo-American cultures are neither idealized nor foregrounded. Rather, the activities on cultural activities were found to enable learners to relate their home culture to different foreign cultures, which is indispensable to enhance their development of intercultural communicative competence.

**Keywords:** Critical cultural awareness, culture as an object, culture as a verb, culture in EFL, cultural representation, intercultural communicative competence.

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### ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث تحليل مراحل تطور مفهوم الثقافة في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية المستخدمة مع طلاب الصف الرابع الابتدائي في المدارس الحكومية المصرية. تم تصنيف مفهوم الثقافة وكيفية تدريسها في هذا المجال إلى ثلاث مراحل رئيسية (Byram, 1997; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). في المرحلة الأولى، التي تمتد من منتصف الخمسينيات إلى أوائل التسعينيات، كانت الثقافة يُنظر إليها على أنها مجموعة معلومات وحقائق وكان من المتوقع من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية خلال تلك الفترة تعلم هذه المعلومات والحقائق حول الثقافات الأنجلو-أمريكية. وتطور مفهوم الثقافة في المرحلة الثانية، خلال التسعينيات، ليشمل دراسة العادات والممارسات اليومية والقيم الخاصة بمتحدثي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أولى. بينما كان التركيز في أول مرحلتين على الثقافة الأنجلو-أمريكية فقط، ركزت المرحلة الثالثة، التي قدمها Byram عام ١٩٩٧، على الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات وهي القدرة على التواصل بفعالية مع أشخاص من خلفيات ثقافية وجغرافية مختلفة (Awayed-Bishara, 2020). تم استخدام تصنيف مراحل تطور مفهوم الثقافة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لتصميم نموذج تحليل من ثلاث مراحل (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). كشف التحليل أن الثقافة المصرية ممثلة بشكل إيجابي من خلال أنشطة تركز على هذه الثقافة؛ مثل: الطبيعة، الطعام، التركيبة السكانية للأشخاص، المؤلفين، الأعياد، المعلومات الجغرافية والاقتصادية التفصيلية عن بعض المحافظات المصرية؛ مثل دمياط والغردقة، النباتات والحيوانات. علاوة على ذلك، وجدت الدراسة أن الثقافات الأنجلو-أمريكية ليست ممثلة بشكل إيجابي في الكتب. ولكن وُجد أن الأنشطة الثقافية تمكّن المتعلمين من ربط ثقافتهم المحلية بثقافات أجنبية مختلفة، مما يمكّنهم من تطوير كفاءتهم ليتواصلوا مع مختلف الثقافات.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الوعي النقدي الثقافي، الثقافة كمادة دراسية، الثقافة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التمثيل الثقافي، الكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات.

## **1. Introduction**

Although the number of the English native speakers come in the third place after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, English is the most spoken language in the world (Ethnologue, 2024). This reflects the wide use and various functions of the English language (Crystal, 2008; Ethnologue, 2024; Kachru, 1990), which qualified it to be the current global language. To be a global language, Crystal (2008) maintains, the language has to be recognized in most of the countries in the world. In the case of English, it has three different roles in more than 160 different countries: first language, official language and primary foreign language (Crystal, 2008; Ethnologue, 2024). These various functions of the English language were originally classified by Kachru (1990) into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. In the inner circle countries, English is the first language of the country. In the outer circle countries, English serves as the official language in the government, the law courts, the press and the educational system. In the expanding circle countries, English is widely studied as a foreign language. According to the more recent analysis and data about the use of English (Crystal 2008; Ethnologue, 2024; McKay, 2003), Kachru's analysis is still valid since English is spoken as a first language in the USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa in addition to some other territories (Ethnologue, 2024). In addition, English has an official and administrative status and is used as the primary medium of communication in official domains such as the government, the law courts, the press and the educational systems in over seventy countries, such as India, Ghana, Singapore and Zimbabwe. In contrast to the first two roles, English may not have an official status in the third case but is made a priority in the foreign language teaching policy in more than 100 countries (Ethnologue, 2024). That is, English is the chief foreign language children study at school, and it is the most demanded and available language to adults in continuing education in these countries, located in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. These various language uses, according to Crystal (2008), are the conditions needed for a language to be considered a global one.

English is, thus, a must-have ability for the outer and external circle countries to get access to the international community of politics and economics. For nations, English is needed in order to interact in the United Nations, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. For entities exporting and importing products or introducing overseas services, they must hire English-speaking individuals. In addition, having English as the main language used in international travel, high-ranked research journals and technological advancements necessitates its learning (Crystal, 2008; Marcuse, 2000; McAuliffe & Oucho, 2024). In short, English is the gate for most individuals in the outer and expanding circle countries seeking quality education, internationally accredited certificates, and recognition in reputable research communities.

These different uses and needs to master the English language have been creating needs for the educational services provided by the inner circle countries, whether on their premises, i.e. remedial English courses, or through their representative institutions and products in the outer and expanding circle countries, such as the British Council and Amideast.

The large demand for the English language proficiency courses and products of the inner circle countries has led to enormous economic gains for these countries. For example, research has shown that the revenue generated by the educational services for Britain was the third category earned for the year 2007-2008. In addition to the economic gains, Spring (2009) found that the culture and ideologies of the inner circle countries are disseminated through English language teaching materials and textbooks used in the outer and expanding circle countries. The positive representation of the culture of the inner circle countries as evident in the content and pedagogical activities in the textbooks teaching English as a foreign language, is well-documented in the literature (Asghar, 2012; Gray, 2010; Phillipson, 1992; Spring, 2009). The definition of culture, its developmental stages in the EFL field and sample studies analyzing its representation in EFL textbooks are provided in the coming section.

## **2. Literature Review**

The present literature review focuses on the developmental stages of culture in the EFL. After highlighting the relation between culture and foreign language learning, the literature focuses on the analysis of the developmental stages culture in the EFL. Then, a review of sample studies investigating the representation of culture in the EFL textbooks is provided. Then, contextual information about the Egyptian education system in addition to the roles of the EFL school textbook in this context are provided.

### **2.1. Culture in EFL**

Defining the concept of culture is difficult because of the different orientations of the researchers attempting to define it, i.e. linguistics, anthropology, sociology and psychology (Byram, 1997). Attempting to keep the argument relevant to the research topic of the present study, the following part focuses on the developmental stages of the concept of culture in addition to theories and methods of teaching it in the EFL field.

The indispensable relation between learning a language and its culture is repeatedly highlighted in the literature (Byram, 1997; Minami 2004). Interpreting meanings in any language consists of two types of knowledge: systematic and cultural knowledge. While systematic knowledge includes vocabulary and syntax of the language, cultural knowledge is the relationship between people and their native language (Alptekin, 1993). The two types of knowledge develop concurrently, Alptekin (1993) argues, when acquiring a native language. This concurrent development of linguistic and cultural proficiency does not occur in the same sequence for nonnative speakers, since they usually refer to cultural knowledge of their native language when dealing with the new foreign language.

### **2.2. Developmental stages of the concept of culture in EFL**

Tracking a clear line of academic argument of the concept of culture in EFL literature is a difficult task because of the plethora of research written on it. Another reason for this difficulty is the development of teaching methods, which was accompanied by

different interpretations of the concepts of competence and culture in different eras. The section below includes three different developmental stages of the concepts of culture and competences in the EFL literature from 1950s till today.

### **2.2.1. Culture as an artifact (1950s to 1990s)**

There are three main stages marking how perceptions about why, and how culture needs to be taught in foreign language education have changed (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). In the first stage, from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s, culture was viewed as an object of study. This means that EFL learners during that period were expected to learn factual information about the cultures of the first circle countries, so that they became members of their societies. During this stage, Kramsch (2015) maintains, nonnative learners studying English in second or third circle countries used to idealize the English and the culture of the first-circle countries. The native speaker's English proficiency and knowledge about their L1 culture were the model that the foreign language educators tried to enable their learners to imitate. Teaching native speakers' culture entailed teaching their speaking habits in academic, formal and written modes; which were captured as the big C culture of literature and the arts (p.403). Big "C" culture, according to Kumaravadivelu (2008, p.10), constitutes the intellectual and aesthetic life of a community, and covers themes such as history, politics, music, economy, education, geography and social system (Chen, 2004; Sadeghi & Sepahi, 2017).

The development of the concept of competence in language learning is interrelated with the concept of culture. In the 1950s, Chomsky stressed the importance of grammatical competence. In contrast to Chomsky's focus on grammatical competence, Hymes highlighted the importance of sociolinguistic competence (1972; 1976). That is, Hymes analyzed social interaction and communication within a social group using one language. One of the challenges of Hymes' analysis was that the description of first language acquisition and communication among native speakers was transferred into the description of the aims and objectives of foreign language teaching and learning, which is misleading (1972). This implicitly suggests that

foreign language learners should model themselves on first language speakers, ignoring the significance of their social identities and cultural competence. Reciting factual information about big C culture would not be sufficient for foreign language learners to be culturally competent. In “*Culture Is a Verb*”, Street (1993) refers to this problem by highlighting the difference between culture as a noun and culture as a verb. Culture as a noun falsely implies that it is an object and thus learners seeking to master it just need to recite factor elements defining this noun. As a reaction to this problematic concept, Street (1993) refers to culture as a verb, which means that it should be viewed in terms of what it does rather than what it is. Another challenge related to the first phase is the hard task for non-native speakers to develop either the linguistic or the cultural competence of the native speakers.

### **2.2.2. Culture as a small c (during the 1990s)**

Reacting to the marginalization of EFL learners’ home cultures and the idealizing of the native speakers’ linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge in the first phase, the second phase (Kramsch, 1993) introduced a broader view of culture than factual information about famous people and places. According to this view, successful language acquisition entails cultural awareness, developed through acquainting language learners with the cultural practices of the speakers of the target language. Cultural behavior, habits and everyday practices of the target language learners are referred to as culture with a small c (Pulverness, 1995), which was incorporated into the language curriculum in the second phase. The changes in the perceptions of culture from a noun to a verb and from capital C to a small c was based on research on socio-linguistic competency (Hymes, 1972; Kramsch, 1998).

Following the work of Hymes, in the following decades, 1980s and 1990s, language teaching theory acquired a socio-linguistic component but still lacked a socio-cultural emphasis (Byram, 1997). Attempting to fill in this gap, Byram introduced the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, ICC (1997). This represents a move from the focus on grammatical and socio-linguistic

dimension of foreign language teaching to the socio-cultural one. Since ICC represents the heart of phase three and a milestone in the field of culture in the EFL field, a detailed analysis of its components is in order.

### **2.2.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence (late 1990s-present).**

Reacting to the exclusive focus on the target language culture (Prodromou, 1992), Byram introduced the intercultural competence concept in 1997, which he defines as the ability to successfully communicate with people from different cultural and geographical backgrounds (Awayed-Bishara, 2015). The basic components of Byram's ICC model are: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness/political education.

Learner's attitude is a critical pre-condition for successful intercultural competence since "positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding" (Byram, 1997, p. 71). Attitudes, Byram explains, refer to the learner's curiosity, readiness and openness to suspend one's own beliefs. In addition, knowledge includes realizing the status of self and others (Byram, 1997). Identifying the similarities and differences between cultures, which is a level of knowledge, learners can foster a positive or a negative attitude towards cultural differences (Byram, 1997). Skills of interpreting refer to the ability to analyze data from one's and other's own cultures. They also include the ability to interpret a document from one country for someone from another and to comprehend one's own and the interlocutor's environment (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003). Relating skills refers to the ability to relativize one's beliefs and behaviors in comparison with a person from a different culture. This happens through discovering the beliefs and behaviors of the different cultures and identifying the similarities and differences from the learner's home culture (Byram, 1997). The skills of discovery refer to the ability to discover a phenomenon and its connotations in another country. Discovery and interaction skills denote finding new data while interacting with interlocutors from another cultural background.



Byram's ICC model represents a shift from idealizing the status of native speakers for foreign language learners to the intercultural communicative competent learners who can establish a relationship between their own "social identities and those of their interlocutor" (Byram, 1997, p. 47). Expanding the tasks of the intercultural competent learner, Byram (1997) likens this learner to a mediator between people of different origins and cultures. These tasks of establishing relationships and mediating distinguish the intercultural speaker from the native speaker (López-Rocha, 2016). In contrast to the older EFL approaches which aimed to train foreign language learners to achieve the linguistic proficiency and cultural competence of the native speaker, the intercultural communicative approach trains learners to be "diplomats", who can perceive cultures from a perspective of "informed understanding" (Corbett, 2003, p.2). According to Byram (2011), being familiar with the home cultural beliefs, social norms and structures are indispensable for EFL learners to develop intercultural communicative competence.

Shifting from the idealization of native speakers to the competence of the intercultural learner has an important dimension in the EFL field, which is the possibility of achieving the desired proficiency or competence. While it is difficult for foreign language learners to achieve native speaker's linguistic and cultural competence, it is much less difficult to achieve intercultural communicative skills through developing the skills of observation, explanation and mediation (Byram, 1997; López-Rocha, 2016). These skills empower the learner to appreciate and develop critical awareness of their own and the other's target culture, which is another distinctive feature of Byram's model (Corbett, 2003). This empowerment has implications for the role of the foreign language instructor, who used to be subordinate to the native teacher, but in light of Byram's model, this has changed. That is, the mission of the FL teacher, according to the ICC model, is to equip learners with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for their interaction with other cultures (Corbett, 2003). This new role of the FL teacher, which is to help learners develop and achieve these skills rather than achieve native speakers' linguistic competence, contrasts with the point of

view of placing the non-native language learners as second level to the native ones (Byram, 1997; Phillipson, 1992).

### **2.3. Research on Culture in EFL textbooks**

Gray (2010) examined the cultural content of four widely disseminated UK EFL textbooks. Gray (2010) highlights the gap between the content of EFL textbooks and the learners' culture. Expressing his stance against essentialism, wherein a group of people from the same nationality are represented and stereotyped, Gray's analysis mainly focused on the representations of minority groups and women. In addition, Gray (2010) analyzed the minority groups and women's attitudes, drawings, accents, social and professional roles. Attempting to get a more comprehensive rationalization of his analysis, Gray (2010) interviewed the sales and editing teams in the publishing house producing the EFL textbooks analyzed. Gray (2010) found that both the sales and the editing teams care most about market attitudes and book sales. This was exemplified by the editing team's choice to exclusively include attractive-looking people in their books, since, as they maintain, this would sell more in the market. Such ideas result in misrepresenting the British culture and community and would mislead EFL learners studying these textbooks to believe that all the British community members are attractive-looking people. Another finding was that the books present one version of English, which does not represent variations within English as a first or second language. This means that EFL learners studying these EFL textbooks would mistakenly think that there is only one variety of English used in the British community. Given that, those learners would be interested in learning this version only. This could later lead to more communication problems if these EFL learners encounter some British citizens using another version of English different from the one they studied in the textbooks.

Gray (2010) supplemented his analysis with interviewing the teachers using these EFL textbooks and found that they agreed that these textbooks idealize the British content. The results of Gray's study indicated that representing only attractive-looking people, using

one version of English and idealizing the British culture would lead the EFL learners to misperceive the British culture, and would lead to what Kramsch called “naïve realism” (1998, p .83). Furthermore, these combined misrepresentations of the British community would lead to a potential culture shock to the EFL learners studying these textbooks, who would later interact with a British citizen with different physical appearances or another variety of English.

In the same line with Gray (2010), Shin, Eslami, & Chen, (2011) examined the levels of cultural representations of the target and home countries in seven series of internationally published EFL textbooks. The study used Kachru’s (1985) categorization of the use of English as a first language, as in inner circles countries, English as the official language, as in outer circle countries, and English as a Foreign Language, as in expanding circle countries. The textbooks selected were classified as bestsellers, which would ensure that a large number of learners used them. In line with Byram’s (1997), Shin et al. (2011) refers to the paradigm shift in the EFL field from the focus on the native speakers’ culture to the foreign language culture. Since the number of English learners as a foreign language, Shin et al. (2011) argues, surpasses the number of English native speakers, the EFL textbooks have to reflect the foreign learners’ national culture. Shin et al.’s (2011) proposal of including EFL learners’ national cultures in the EFL textbooks comes in alignment with Byram (1997) and Philipson (2009). In contrast to their rationale and analysis of what should be incorporated in the EFL textbooks used in the outer and expanding circle countries, Shin et al. (2011) found that these books were dominated by the culture of the inner circle countries, where English is spoken as a first language. This would indicate that the cultures of the inner circle countries are more valued than those of other cultures. Furthermore, Shin et al. (2011) found that many of the lessons and information provided remained at the knowledge-oriented level. These findings come in line with Gray’s (2010) regarding the superficial and misleading representation of the target culture. The findings of both Shin et al. (2011) and Gray (2010) show that although the analyzed textbooks were published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they exclusively provide the first two developmental stages perception

about culture: factual information about the target culture and the native speakers' habits and values. This does not allow for the development of the learners' intercultural communicative competence or critical awareness (Byram, 2008).

Selecting four EFL textbooks, published by major ELT publishing houses and globally used to teach general English, Hilliard (2014) conducted a study with the aim of uncovering hidden ideologies within these textbooks in addition to evaluating the general effectiveness of cultural information and activities included from a pedagogical perspective. In line with Gray (2010) and Shin et al. (2011), Hilliard found that the Anglo-American images, values and cultures are positively over-emphasized. Furthermore, Hilliard (2014) found that standard native speakers' accents are heavily featured in all the audio material and that Caucasians are the most prominent group in all the images. In contrast to this overtly positive representation of Western images and culture, other cultures are underrepresented in their images and audio material. These biased representations of culture could give students a false and superficial impression of the target language culture. Besides the superficial view of culture these representations provide, they are also insufficient for developing the desired students' intercultural communicative competence or critical awareness.

Studying the cultural content of three EFL textbooks published by international British and American publishing houses, Rodriguez (2015) found that these books mainly contain static and congratulatory topics of the Anglo-American culture and omit complex and transformative forms of culture. Besides being insufficient to understand the complexities of the target culture, the primary focus on the superficial, target culture items, i.e. congratulatory descriptions, tourist attractions, celebrities, historical facts and food, would lead the EFL learners to believe in fixed, superficial stereotypes of these cultures. In line with Gray (2010) and Hilliard (2014), Rodriguez (2015) concluded that the three textbooks analyzed lack deep cultural content that might help learners develop intercultural communicative competence.

Another more recent study focusing on the cultural content of three bestselling international EFL textbooks is that of Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017). This study investigated EFL learners' and teachers' attitudes towards culture learning and teaching. Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) analyzed the concepts of big C and small c. According to their classification, big C items include history, politics, music, economy, education, geography and social system while small c culture covers greeting, holiday, weather, lifestyle, customs, food, body language, and daily routine. The study found that the three textbooks were dominated by small c values, and this was in considerable agreement with the teachers' and learners' preferences. This, as explained by Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017), is due to the occurrence of small c values in everyday lives. The teachers' favoring small c items reflects their lack of awareness of relating these items to the more general context of the target culture. Moreover, since affective intercultural communication needs both small c and big C items, the focus on the small "c" items would inhibit misrepresentations and misunderstanding in interactions with people from different cultures (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). This suggests that the learners studying the EFL textbooks in Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017) would not be able to develop the desired intercultural communicative competence. Finding a good degree of match of cultural preferences between small c and big C, according to Sadeghi and Sepahi (2017), is a challenge in EFL contexts for policymakers and educators. To overcome such a problem that would further lead to a cultural clash between target and source cultures, the researchers recommended conducting a cultural needs analysis prior to the use of EFL textbooks in any context to avoid any such clashes.

A more recent study on the representation of world cultures and English in three EFL global textbooks is that of Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020). In their study on the representation of the English varieties and cultures of the inner, outer and expanding circle countries, Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) investigated their representation in three global EFL textbooks that are widely used to teach EFL in many countries and within the researchers' context, Iran. For the sake of comparability, the three books were chosen from the

intermediate level. The researchers focused on the representation of the following categories: social, personal, religion, art, humanity, politics and institutions and environmental concerns. The culture of the inner circle countries in the three textbooks was found to be exclusive to that of the U.S.A. As for the varieties of English used, the three books mainly produced the inner circles accents. These findings, the researchers conclude, indicate that learners studying these textbooks cannot be communicatively competent. Furthermore, Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020) recommend that policymakers and curriculum designers should promote the development of local EFL textbooks that include references to the local culture. They also recommend that local English teachers use culture comparison activities to develop the learners' "intercultural sensitivity" (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020, p. 13).

#### **2.4. Current structure of the educational system in Egypt**

Egypt has the largest education system in the MENA region (UNDP, 2008), which plays a central strategic role in the area (El Fiki, 2012). There are two types of classification of schools reflecting the nature of the Pre-university education in Egypt; the first is based on content: secular and religious (Al Azhar schools), and the second is based on the tuition paid by the learners: private and public (El Fiki, 2012). The second classification of the schools into public or private is more generic since all the schools, including Al Azhar ones, are classified into either public or private. There are three pre-university stages in the formal education system in Egypt: primary, preparatory and secondary. Both the primary stage, which consists of 6 years, and the preparatory stage, which consists of 3 years, are compulsory and defined as elementary (Zahran, 2023). There are two types of public schools: Arabic and experimental. Arabic schools teach the national curriculum in Arabic, whereas experimental schools use English as the language of instruction and teach a second foreign language at the preparatory level, usually French or German. Since the focus of the current research is on analyzing the EFL school textbooks used in the public schools, the next section addresses the challenges associated with these types of schools.

## 2.5. Common Challenges and Attempts of Reform

The World Economic Forum ranked the quality of Egypt's education system the **130<sup>th</sup>** among 137 countries in its *Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018*. This shows that there are various and overlapping challenges facing the system, such as: crowded classes, budget constraints and digital illiteracy. Other challenges include the quality of instruction, private tutoring, rote learning, assessment methods, the training of pre- and in-service teachers (Assaad & Kraft, 2015; Hartmann, 2013; Sobhy, 2012). All of these challenges lead the stakeholders to focus mainly on having learners pass the end of year achievement exams. One of the consequences of this exam-oriented setting is enhancing the authority of the school textbooks as the main reference and guide for the teaching process.

Attempting to improve the quality of education in Egypt, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) developed an education reform program (2018-2030) in order to deliver high quality service, which is indispensable to meet the country's labor market needs and to respond to the evolving social and political systems (Zahran, 2023). Attempting to achieve the country's strategic vision for education 2030, the Ministry of Education launched Education 2.0 reform project. According to Egypt's Updated Vision 2030, the aim of this reform was to build a new education system in Egypt from k-12 to de-emphasize the culture of exam and to focus on learning. Other targets of the project included developing curricula and teacher training in addition to abolishing year end examinations during the first two years of primary stages with the learners sitting for final school examinations at the end of grade three (Zahran, 2023).

Some of the promised changes were implemented: the primary stage curricula updated, the assessment system modified, and the primary teachers trained (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2023). However, no study was designed to evaluate the content of the newly designed school textbooks in terms of teaching approaches, gender or cultural representation. Attempting to partially fill in this gap, the current study analyzes the representation of the

Egyptian, Anglo-American and other cultures in the updated EFL school textbooks used in grade four in the public system in Egypt.

## **2.6. EFL Textbooks in the Public School System in Egypt**

The challenges of the public education sector in Egypt, such as the lack of instructional materials, crowded classes leading to dependence on private tutoring and unqualified teachers, led to the adoption of a traditional teacher-centered approach, where the focus is on the teacher to deliver information to the learners (Assaad & Kraft, 2015; Sobhy, 2012). The teachers' main task in this context is to use different techniques to help learners recite the content of the school textbooks rather than stimulate their critical thinking skills. What enhances the authority of the school textbook in this context are the final standardized achievement tests promoting the rote learning and memorization of the subject content (Sobhy, 2012). Thus, school textbooks have become the main reference for all the stakeholders in the educational process: the teachers, the learners and their families in addition to the administration.

In this context, the EFL textbook is considered a holy book beyond criticism (El Fiki, 2012). EFL teachers, thus, adhere to the explicit or implicit portrayals of the culture presented in the texts and images, regardless of their accuracy or aim. This shows that the EFL school textbooks are the main driving force for teachers and learners in the English language teaching process in the public schools in Egypt. Hence, the influence of the school textbooks content on the learners' perception of themselves and the other is powerful (El Fiki, 2012).

## **2.7. Gap and Contribution of the present study**

As can be discerned from this review of the literature, there is no study, to the researcher's knowledge, that analyzes the representation of culture in the curricula designed for Egypt Vision 2.0. Thus, there is a need to investigate which developmental stages of culture is represented in these curricula, which, according to Egypt Vision 2030, should enable learners to "accept diversity and differences and is proud of his country's history" (p.13).



## **2.8. Research questions**

- 2.8.1. How is the Egyptian culture represented in the EFL school textbooks in grade four in the public schools in Egypt?
- 2.8.2. How are the other cultures represented in the EFL school textbook in grade four in the public schools in Egypt?
- 2.8.2.1. Which developmental stage of culture is represented in the EFL school textbook in grade four in the public schools in Egypt?

## **2.8. Definition of Terms**

The developmental stages of the concept of culture in EFL: culture as a noun, culture as a verb and intercultural communicative competence.

Culture as a noun: decontextualized factual information in EFL activities about the Anglo-American culture. This includes references to famous actors, geographical information, history, politics, music, economy, education, geography, food and social system.

Culture as a verb: EFL activities introducing learners to the Anglo-American cultural practices, behavior, values and habits. Sample of such activities include the English native speakers' lifestyle, customs, daily routine, body language and eating etiquette.

Intercultural communicative competence: the EFL cultural activities developing learners' skills to compare, contrast and reflect on the similarities and differences between the images, practices, norms, beliefs and structures of the Egyptian culture and other cultures: Anglo-American, Asian,..etc. Sample activities include role plays and discussions among learners of different nationalities representing and reflecting on their home and other cultures.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Scope of Research**

The research focuses on the representation of the Egyptian, Anglo-American and other cultures in the EFL school textbooks in grade four in the public schools in Egypt. The analysis covers the EFL school student books, but it does not cover the workbooks or the teachers'

manuals or any other supplementing materials. The total number of books is two, one book for each semester. These books were written by native speakers and revised by a committee of Egyptian educators. The rationale for using these books is that they were recently designed as part of Egypt Vision 2030 aiming to “enhance the quality of education” (p.113). The aim of the analysis is to examine the level of the developmental stages of culture represented in the newly designed EFL school textbooks.

### 3.2.

### Data

#### Analysis Instrument

**Table 1**

*Model of Analyzing the Developmental Stages of Culture in EFL*

Phase	Definitions	Sample Examples
Culture as a noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factual, superficial information in EFL activities about the Anglo-American culture (Chen, 2004; Kramsch, 1998).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about famous actors, geographical information, history, politics, music, economy, education, geography, food and social system.</li> </ul>
Culture as a verb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL activities introducing learners to the Anglo-American cultural practices, behavior, values and habits (Hymes, 1972; Pulverness, 1995).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• References to native speakers' lifestyle, customs, daily routine, body language, eating etiquette, practices in different occasions, i.e. holidays, weddings and events.</li> </ul>
Intercultural Communicative Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFL cultural activities developing learners' skills to compare, contrast and reflect on the similarities and differences between the images, practices, norms, beliefs and structures of the Egyptian culture and other cultures: Anglo-American, Asian,...etc. (Byram, 1997; 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role plays, reflective discussions, presentations among learners of different nationalities representing and reflecting on their home and other cultures</li> </ul>

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The current study employs a model, Table 1, focusing on the three developmental stages of culture in the EFL field: culture as a noun, culture as a verb and intercultural competence. Table 1 provides a brief definition for each stage along with sample corresponding examples. To design the model, the current study adopts the three-stage classification of culture in EFL proposed by Weninger and Kiss (2013). The first phase of the model, culture as a noun, is a reaction to Chomsky's exclusive focus on the native speakers' grammatical competence, which led to the idealization of native speakers' linguistic and their cultural knowledge. The second phase of the model, culture as a verb, is theoretically based on Hymes (1972) who highlighted the significance of sociolinguistic competence (1972;1976). The focus on this stage is on the English native speakers' practices during their social interaction and communication. The third component of the model, intercultural communicative competence, is theoretically based on Byram (1997) who stressed the indispensable role of learners' home culture in developing their competence in the target one. In addition, Byram (1997) highlighted the importance of having learners reflect on and compare their home culture to other cultures to develop cultural awareness. This, Byram (2008) maintains, helps foreign language learners develop intercultural communicative competence (Awayed-Bishara, 2020).

### **3.3. Analysis Procedures**

The instrumental tools designed to analyze the cultural content in EFL materials differ according to their focus: textual content, visual content or both (Weninger & Kiss, 2013). One of the common challenges among these tools is that they assume that "meaning is fixed" in the text or the image regardless of the pedagogical task or the context (Weninger & Kiss, 2013, p. 699). Attempting to avoid these challenges, the current study employs a model, Table 1, focusing on the textual and visual content in addition to the pedagogical task linking them. Focusing on the pedagogical task would enable the researcher to identify which level of culture is represented.

The analysis began by identifying the representation of different cultures, Egyptian, Anglo-American or other cultures, in

each unit. Then, the pedagogical tasks, visual and textural representation and the pedagogical tasks were investigated to decide which level of culture is represented.

#### **4. Findings**

This section starts by providing an overview of the main findings and then it presents them according to the three sections of the model of analysis: culture as a noun, culture as a verb and intercultural communicative competence. Appendix A includes sample images and texts supporting the analysis.

The study found that most of the activities and lessons in the EFL school textbook in grade four in the public schools are about the Egyptian culture. There is a whole unit devoted to the features shaping and distinguishing the Egyptian identity: nature, food items, people demographics, authors and sports champions (see Figures A19 and A20). Other representations of the Egyptian culture include: holidays, national festivals, detailed geographical and economic information about some Egyptian governorates, such as Damietta and Hurghada, different types of houses in the city and the country, sample plants and animals (see Figures A7, A11, A12, A17 and A18).

While the Egyptian culture is positively represented, the Anglo-American culture is not idealized in the books. Rather, the books provided sample activities about different cultures: Algerian, American, Australian, Chinese, English, French and Romanian (see Figures A5, A8, A21, A22, A23). The analysis revealed that the representation of these cultures was classified according to the three developmental stages of culture. For instance, basic information and sample images, which is identified as culture as a noun, were provided about Australia, Romania, Morocco and Algeria (see Figures A13, A14, A21). Furthermore, the study found that sample practices of peoples from the English, French and Chinese cultures, which is defined as culture as a verb, are provided (see Figures A18, A22 and A23). Some of these practices refer to the decoration of Christmas trees and the methods followed by people in these cultures to fight pollution. In addition, various activities are provided to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence, such as stories

with good morals from the Chinese and American cultures and sample role play activities in which Egyptian students introduce information about Eid Al-Fitr for their American counterparts (see Figures A5, A8 and A15). Providing learners with different levels of information about various cultures could have a positive impact on developing their communicative cultural competence. After introducing how the Egyptian culture is introduced in the coming sections, the representation of the other cultures is provided according to the subcomponents of the analysis model: culture as a noun, culture as a verb and intercultural communicative competence.

#### **4.1. Representation of the Egyptian Culture**

The analysis revealed that the Egyptian culture was portrayed positively in the two EFL school textbooks used in grade four in the public schools in Egypt. The portrayal of the Egyptian culture includes using Egyptian looking characters and names; most of the characters of the children and adults in the EFL textbooks resemble their counterparts in the Egyptian community (see Figures A7 and A15). Other representations of Egyptian culture include reference to plants and animals living in the Egyptian environment (see Figures A3, A6 and A7). This would enhance learners' knowledge about their own environment which would cultivate their sense of belonging. In addition, including information about common Egyptian dishes would help learners engage with the book activities, since this is related to their daily habits (see Figure A3 and A7). Furthermore, the textual and visual portrayals of the geography, type of houses, lifestyle, common jobs and daily practices of the residents of some Egyptian cities, such as Hurghada, Damietta and Nubia, not only contribute to enhancing learners' sense of belonging, but also enable them to improve their English proficiency through reflecting on their daily lives (see Figures A11 and A12).

One of the activities enhancing learners' appreciation of their history is the one on Papyrus, which was primarily used in writing and creating documents in ancient Egypt (see Figure A10). Linking the concept of planting plants in modern Egypt with Papyrus enables

learners to relate their everyday actions to their historical background and to nurture their identity.

Lesson three, unit nine focuses on citizenship and the unique characteristics featuring and distinguishing the Egyptian identity: nature, food items, people demographics, authors and sport champions (see Figures A19 and A20). Generally, the representations of the Egyptian culture in the EFL school textbooks could have a positive impact on learners. However, this positive impact is highlighted when the focus of the unit is on the distinctive features distinguishing the Egyptian identity. The unit is entitled “*What makes us special?*” and the two lessons focus on games and festivals around the world (Drury & Gardner, 2021, p. 42). The third lesson in the same unit focuses on citizenship and what makes the Egyptian identity unique. Exposing learners to various cultures has a positive impact, since it would raise their awareness of the cultural differences and would develop their ability to accept the differences. In addition, highlighting sample features about the Egyptian culture after the two lessons would enable learners to reflect on what makes them unique among other cultures.

#### **4.2. Culture As a Noun**

According to the model of analysis, Table 1, culture as a noun refers to factual, superficial information idealizing the Anglo-American culture (Chen, 2004; Kramsch, 1998). The analysis revealed that the Anglo-American culture is not idealized, and that factual and superficial information refers to other cultures. For example, at the beginning of each unit, there is an interesting piece of information from a different culture, which is relevant to the topic of the unit (see Figures A13 and A14). For example, at the beginning of unit seven which focusing on where humans and animals live, there is information about the World Capital of Cats in Romania, where the cat population is four times larger than the human population (Drury & Gardner, 2021, p. 3). Another example is the information about a famous dish in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia at the beginning of unit eight focusing on food (Drury & Gardner, 2021, p.19). The aim of this information is to stimulate learners’ interest and encourage them to search about the topic (see Figure A14). The culture as a noun

representation is limited to brief factual information about various cultures.

#### **4.3. Culture As a Verb**

Culture as a verb, according to the model in Table 1, refers to the practices, behavior, values and habits of the English native speakers (Hymes, 1972; Pulverness, 1995). In contrast to the exclusive focus on the English native speakers' practices in this definition, the study found that practices and values from other cultures are far more represented than the Anglo-American. For example, there is a lesson on games around the world such as "musical chairs" and "pass the parcel" (Gardner & Drury, 2021, p.36). Another lesson introducing the practices of people from different cultures is the one focusing on festivals around the world (Gardner & Drury, 2021, p.38). In both of these lessons, the focus is on practices from different cultures. The aim of these activities is to raise learners' awareness of the practices of different cultures, which is the first step in developing their critical skills. This means that in contrast to the definition and main objective of culture as a verb in the EFL activities, the findings of the current study indicate that the Anglo-American cultural practices are neither promoted nor idealized. Rather, the focus is on the practices of different cultures in different games and festivals which is an initial step to develop learners' critical communicative competence.

#### **4.4. Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The current study found that almost all the cultural activities in the book enable learners to relate their home culture to other cultures. For example, unit eleven focuses on the methods that different cities around the world use to fight air pollution (see Figure A22). Following an introduction in which the authors highlight the danger of air pollution, there are questions addressing the learners, "Does this happen to you in your city or town? Is the air dirty or clean?" (Drury & Gardner, 2021 p. 78). The function of these questions is to contextualize the topic and enable learners to reflect on their own environment. Then, examples of techniques to reduce air pollution in different world cities are introduced. For instance, parents in London, England, walk or cycle to schools instead of driving. Other examples

are provided from Shenzhen, China, Paris, France, Copenhagen, Denmark and Gharbia, Egypt. The sequence of introducing the topic of pollution and providing examples from different world cities would raise learners' awareness of the importance of the problem and of the fact that Egypt is not the only country facing and fighting it.

Examples of other activities enhancing the learners' intercultural communicative competence is the use of stories with good morals from different cultures. For example, there is a Chinese folktale introducing learners to the value of honesty (see Figure A5). In the story, the Chinese emperor arranges a competition among farmers through giving them seeds to grow. The winning farmer, the emperor explains, is the one with the most beautiful plant. The farmers did not know that the seeds are corrupt and cannot grow. By the end of the story, all the farmers whose plants grow lose, but the honest farmer whose plant does not grow wins. The moral of the story is that honesty is more important than winning. This would not only develop learners' appreciation of honesty but also enhance their intercultural competence through providing positive information about the Chinese culture.

Another story that could promote learners' intercultural communicative competence through linking the American culture to the Egyptian one is that of Locus' grandparents (see Figure A8). Locus is American boy telling the story of his grandparents who worked hard in order to rehabilitate a piece of land to be a farm. Although the conditions were hard for Locus' grandparents, they were resilient and managed to overcome the challenges. The farm is great now and Locus' family live happily on it. The moral of the story is that hard work and resistance are important and would help future generations. The story is followed by an activity about a project in Egypt which focuses on planting one million palm trees across the country (see Figure A9). Linking the success of Lucas' grandparents and the Egyptian future project of planting palm trees would lead learners to compare the challenges between the two scenarios and to think of solutions similar to the ones in the American story. Furthermore, the authors' stress on the happy life Lucas' family is



having would encourage learners to think about the expected positive impact of the Egyptian project.

One of the other techniques authors follow to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence is the representation of holidays and festivals. For example, there is a reading passage focusing on the date, habits and morals of celebrating Eid Al-Fitr in Egypt (see Figure A15). The target audience of this passage is the American learners. The passage is followed by sample questions asking Egyptian learners to edit or modify the details of the holiday to make it clearer to the assumed American readers. This is an example of collaborative learning in which the Egyptian learners act as cultural representatives and mediators with their American counterparts. In addition, there is an activity asking learners to search for how people from different countries celebrate Eid-Al Fitr (see Figure A16). This would raise learners' awareness of the practices of other cultures celebrating the same holiday.

The activities on Eid Al-Fitr are followed by an activity about Sham El Nessim (Figure A17), which is Egypt's oldest festival. The activities include images and description of the Egyptian habits in Sham El Nessim, such as coloring eggs and eating salted fish. Then, there is an activity on the decoration of Christmas trees, which is done in many countries (see Figure A18).

The transition from the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr for Egyptians and other Muslim countries to the oldest Egyptian festival, Sham El Nessim, to the decoration of Christmas trees, which is celebrated in different countries enable learners to develop critical cultural awareness. That is, the activities asking learners to search for the different habits of different countries celebrating Eid Al-Fitr would enhance learners' sense of belonging and raise their awareness that there are different celebratory habits for the same holiday. Furthermore, discussing the ways in which Egyptians celebrate Sham El Nessim stresses the idea of unity and helps link learners to their history, since this festival has been celebrated for thousands of years. Then, the move from holidays and local festivals to international symbols, Christmas tree, would help learners realize and appreciate

the different methods of celebrating in different cultures. This would enable learners to achieve intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2011).

## **5. Discussion**

The analysis revealed that Egyptian culture is portrayed through: nature, food items, people demographics, authors, holidays, national festivals, detailed geographical, different types of houses in the city and the country, sample plants and animals.

While the model of analysis, Table 1, was compiled with the aim of the analyzing the different levels of Anglo-American cultures, the study found that these cultures are idealized. Rather, the books provided sample activities from different cultures: Algerian, American, Australian, Chinese, English, French and Romanian. Almost all the cultural activities represented were found to enhance learners' development of intercultural communicative competence. Examples of these activities include: interesting information about different cultures, practices of different people from different countries, sample stories from different cultures, role play activities, comparison between local, religious and international festivals in addition to the different ways of celebrating them.

Similar to the aim of the current study, Abdur Rauf (2008) investigated the role of education in enhancing the patterns of culture identity for El Azhar students. The study analyzed the thirty-four English books of the *Hello Series*, taught from the primary fourth year to the secondary third year of the school year 2004/2005. The findings of the Abdur Rauf (2008) are congruent with the current study, since both found that the Egyptian culture is mostly represented and is followed by references to foreign cultures.

Another study analyzing the cultural representation in the EFL school textbooks is that of Abdel Wahab (2013) who evaluated the content of the book of the first grade at Al Azhar secondary institutes in the light of the Islamic-Arabic culture. He found that the Islamic-Arabic culture was not sufficiently represented in the analyzed schoolbooks, which led learners to retain negative views of the EFL school textbooks.

Amore recent study investigating the cultural representations in the EFL school textbooks in the Egyptian context is that of El Sheikh (2019). El Sheikh (2019) analyzed the cultural representation in widely used EFL textbook series, *Hello*. While the Egyptian culture was found to be represented, some foreign references were made to the foreign cultures: celebrities and world cities. The dominant reference to the Egyptian culture is a common finding between Abdur Rauf (2008), El Sheikh (2019) and the current study. While the representations of the foreign cultures in the current study empower learners to develop intercultural communicative competence, the representations of the foreign cultures in El Sheikh (2019) are limited to basic information about celebrities and general information.

Despite the difference in scope between Abdur Rauf (2008) and Abdel Wahab (2013) studies, both found that the Arabic-Islamic cultures are backgrounded while other cultures are foregrounded. In contrast to Abdel Wahab (2012) and Abdur Rauf (2008), the current study found that the Islamic culture, i.e. such as information about Ramadan and Eid Al Fitr is presented in the EFL school textbooks used for grade four in the public schools in Egypt. Furthermore, both Abdur Rauf (2008) and the current research found that the Egyptian culture was positively represented and was found to be ahead of the other cultural identities. The point is because both Abdur Rauf (2008) and Abdel Wahab (2013) focused on the EFL books Al Azhar, learners expected that in line with other curricula, there would be more focus on the Arabic and Islamic culture. This is why both studies support the negative influence of the exclusion of Arabic and Islamic cultures on the learners' perception of EFL. This is thought to be an obstacle for the learners to develop their English language proficiency, let alone their intercultural communicative competence or critical awareness. However, the finding of the current study proposes that the cultural activities in the EFL school textbook would prepare learners to develop intercultural competence.

The portrayal of Egyptian culture is a common finding between Abdur Rauf (2008), El Sheikh (2019) and the current study. Furthermore, while the representations of the foreign cultures in the current study empower learners to develop intercultural

communicative competence, the representations of the foreign cultures in El Sheikh (2019) are limited to basic information about celebrities and general information.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study investigated the representation of the three developmental stages of culture in the EFL school textbook used in grade four in the public schools in Egypt. The three developmental stages are: culture as a noun, culture as a verb and intercultural communicative competence. While culture as a noun refers to decontextualized factual information in EFL activities about the Anglo-American culture, culture as a verb is used as an umbrella term for the EFL activities introducing learners to the Anglo-American cultural practices, behavior, values and habits. Intercultural communicative competence refers to the EFL cultural activities developing learners' skills to compare, contrast and reflect on the similarities and differences between the images, practices, norms, beliefs and structures of the Egyptian culture and other cultures: Anglo-American, Asian,..etc.

The analysis revealed that Egyptian culture is positively represented through: nature, food items, people demographics, authors, holidays, national festivals, detailed geographical and economic information about some Egyptian governorates, such as Damietta and Hurghada, different types of houses in the city and the country, sample plants and animals.

While the model of analysis, Table 1, was compiled with the aim of the analyzing the representation of different levels of Anglo-American cultures, the study found that these cultures are neither idealized nor foregrounded in the analyzed EFL school textbooks. Rather, the books provided sample activities from various cultures: Algerian, Australian, Chinese, English, French and Romanian. These cultural activities were found to enhance learners' development of intercultural communicative competence. Examples of these activities include: sample stories from different cultures, role play activities, comparison between local, religious and international festivals in addition to the different ways of celebrating them.

## **7. Recommendations for further research**

It is recommended that future research should investigate the representation of different levels of culture in more advanced educational stages in the primary, preparatory and secondary stages. Moreover, other teaching resources, such as the teachers' guide, learners' workbooks and online supplementary materials are recommended to be included in the analysis, since they would provide more comprehensive analysis about the portrayal of both home and target cultures. It is also recommended to collect data from the learners studying the EFL school textbooks in order to investigate the influence of the books on them.

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## Appendix A

### List of Figures from the EFL School Textbooks in Grades Four and Five

**Figure 1**

*Some pieces of Jewelry designed by ancient Egyptians*



What can you see in the photo? Look and say



**Figure 2**

*Egyptian Landmarks*

 **Read and add the correct capital letters**

hi! i'm shorouk! i live in alexandria. the

library of alexandria is a big and famous

library in my city. yesterday it was sunny. my

family visited the park

at the montaza palace.



**Figure A3**

*Egyptian Looking Characters and Raising Awareness About Egyptian Products*

**LESSON 1**  
**FOOD AND DRINK**

 **Listen and read. Where are Mom and Maged?**

**Mom:** Lunch is ready. I made some special food for us.

**Maged:** Mom, it looks delicious!

**Mom:** Which food comes from our country, do you think?

**Maged:** I think we grow rice in Egypt.

**Mom:** Yes, that's right. What else?

**Maged:** Hmmm, I think we raise chickens in Egypt.

**Mom:** Yes, and tomatoes and onions. Egyptian farmers produce many things you see on this table. Let's eat!

**Maged:** Yum!



**Mom and Maged**



**Figure 4**

*A Wheel-chaired Boy Playing Basketball*

2



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**Figure A5**

*A Chinese Story About Honesty*

Cheng lived long ago in China. The most important man in China was the **emperor**. He lived in a beautiful **palace**. One day the emperor said, "There will be a **competition**. I will give a seed to each **gardener**. The one who can grow the most beautiful plant from the seed will be the next emperor."



"Take the pot and the seed. Plant it," says the emperor. "Make it grow into a beautiful plant. Then bring the plant back to me."

Cheng was very good at growing things and looking after his garden. He put the seed in the sun and gave it water. But nothing happened. Cheng tried for weeks but no plant grew. The other gardeners had plants that grew.

At the palace, all the gardeners have beautiful plants.

"Where is your plant?" the emperor asks Cheng.

"I worked very hard. I watered it every day," says Cheng. "But it didn't grow."

"Then you win!" says the emperor. "The seeds I gave everyone were dead. The seeds cannot grow. Only you are good and **honest**. So you will be the next emperor!"

Figure 6

*Animals living in the Egyptian Environment*




Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 28)



**Figure A7**

*Egyptian Looking Characters, Names and Vegetables*

**PLANTS AND SEEDS**

**1**  **Listen and read**

**Dad:** Come and look!

**Seleem:** What is it, Dad?

**Dad:** Our tomato plants are growing on the **balcony**! Look, can you see the leaves and the flowers?


**Seleem:** Oh yes, but why are the tomatoes green?

**Dad:** Tomatoes are green before they are red.

**Seleem:** How do we grow new tomatoes?

**Dad:** Tomatoes have seeds inside.  
We can take the seeds and grow new tomatoes!  
We plant a seed and the plant grows. That is called **germination**. We **water** the plant every day, and the roots grow under the soil. The plant grows flowers and the flowers become tomato fruits.

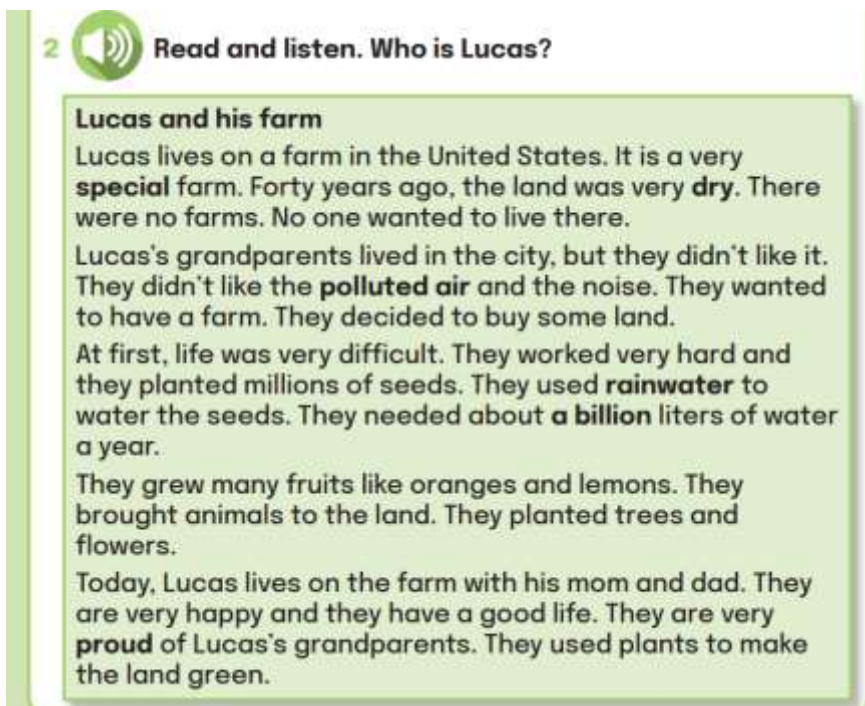
**Seleem:** That's awesome! And I found a red tomato! Let's have it for lunch!




Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 34)

**Figure A8**

*A Story About American Family*



**2**  **Read and listen. Who is Lucas?**

**Lucas and his farm**

Lucas lives on a farm in the United States. It is a very **special** farm. Forty years ago, the land was very **dry**. There were no farms. No one wanted to live there.

Lucas's grandparents lived in the city, but they didn't like it. They didn't like the **polluted air** and the noise. They wanted to have a farm. They decided to buy some land.

At first, life was very difficult. They worked very hard and they planted millions of seeds. They used **rainwater** to water the seeds. They needed about **a billion** liters of water a year.

They grew many fruits like oranges and lemons. They brought animals to the land. They planted trees and flowers.

Today, Lucas lives on the farm with his mom and dad. They are very happy and they have a good life. They are very **proud** of Lucas's grandparents. They used plants to make the land green.


Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 40)

### Figure A9

*An Activity Asking Learners to Solve A problem Related to Egypt*

Egypt wants to plant more than 100 million palm trees across the country. This means we need to plant **billions** of seeds.

A billion is a thousand million: 1,000,000,000.



Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 42)

### Figure A10

*A Sample Activity on A Plant from Ancient Egypt*

**Papyrus**

Papyrus is a very special plant. It is famous because Ancient Egyptians used papyrus to make paper. They also made sandals and baskets from papyrus.

Papyrus needs a lot of water and warm weather to grow quickly. It grows in the Nile Delta near the river.



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**Figure A11**

*Sample Houses from the Egyptian Community*



Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 55)

**Figure A12**

*An Activity of An Egyptian Girl Talking about her City; Hurghada.*

Figure A12 shows a writing activity page titled "WRITING". It includes a section for reading Mariam's article about Hurghada. The article is titled "Hurghada—My town" and describes the city's location, population, and attractions. A map of Egypt is included, showing the location of Hurghada on the Red Sea coast, south of Cairo.

**WRITING**

1 Read Mariam's article about Hurghada

**Hurghada—My town**

Hi, I'm Mariam. I live in a city called Hurghada. It's in the east of Egypt on the Red Sea. It's a big city and about 190,000 people live here.

In Hurghada, there's a **beach** and there are lots of interesting things to do. There is the **Sahara Desert** where lots of tourists go on safaris. We have **Sahl Hasheesh** in the south of Hurghada. It has some beautiful houses and interesting **bazaars**.

**Mariam**

**Hurghada on the map**

Primary Four, Term 1, Unit 1 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 64)

**Figure A13**

*Sample Interesting Information about other countries*



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 7 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 3)

**Figure A14**

*Interesting Information about Food in Other Countries*



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 19)



**Figure A15**


*A Sample Reading Passage for American Learners*

Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 19)

**Eid Al-Fitr in Egypt**

Eid Al-Fitr is a Muslim festival. The month before Eid is called Ramadan. In Ramadan, many Muslims **fast** during the day. This means they don't eat or drink until sunset.

In the month of Ramadan, people think about the past year. They think about the things they did well and the things they want to do better. It is also a time to help other people.



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 26)

**Figure A16**

*A Sample Activity Linking Islamic Cultural Habits to those of Other Countries*



**Find out**

How do people celebrate Eid Al-Fitr in other countries?



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 27)

**Figure A17**

*A Sample Activity on Sham El Nessim*

Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 28)

**Figure A18**

*A Sample Reading Passage and Image about Christmas Tree*

**2 Read and say. What do people put on Christmas trees?**

In many countries, people **decorate** Christmas trees at Christmas. These trees are always green. The trees **represent** new life. People decorate the tree with lights, colored balls, and stars.



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 32)

**Figure A19**

*A Lesson on What Makes Egyptians Different: Food, People Demographics*

**What makes us special?**

We often **celebrate** things in our country's history. A country like Egypt is famous for its history and we should continue to celebrate its rich culture. Let's look around us and say why we should be **proud** of our beautiful country.

Here are some ideas:

**The food**

Our food can be described with one word: **wonderful!**

Maybe the most famous is *Ful Medames*, beans cooked very slowly, **served** with lots of olive oil and garlic.

Maybe you want something **sweet**? How about *Basbousa*, a thin, sweet **semolina** cake with syrup.

**The People**

More than half of Egyptians are under the age of 30. This means we are full of energy. We are helpful to each other and we are very friendly to visitors. We are very **hospitable** people.



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 8 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 42)




### Figure A20

*A Lesson on What Makes Egyptians Different: Food, People Demographics*

UNIT  
**9**


**Nature**

Many people think that Egypt is only a desert. It's true that about 90% of Egypt is desert, but we also have green lands. Near the Nile it is green and beautiful. There are mountains in the south and east. It even snows in the Sinai region.



**Culture**

We make a lot of movies and many of them are famous. We have **authors** who won important prizes. And of course, we love sports! Anyone who loves **karate** knows the name of one very famous karate player, Ferial Abdelaziz.



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 9 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 43)

### Figure A21

*An Interesting Piece of Information about Means of Transportation from A Different Country*



**Did you know?**

The Ghan in Australia is the longest passenger train in the world. It is about 774 meters long. The train has up to 44 **passenger carriages**.

65

Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 11 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 69)

**Figure A22**

*Example of World Cities Fighting Air Pollution*

**2 Read the text. Why is air pollution dangerous?**

Cities have many cars. Cars make air pollution. They put **chemicals** into the air. We can't always see the chemicals, but they are dangerous.

Air pollution is very dangerous for us. When we breathe the polluted air, we cough and feel sick.

Does this happen to you in your city or town? Is the air dirty or clean?

 Some cities are trying to stop the air pollution. In London, England, parents do not drive children to school. The children walk or cycle to school. Cars do not go near the school.

 In Shenzhen, China, they have electric buses. These buses do not make air pollution.

Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 11 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 78)

**Figure A23**

*Example of World Cities Fighting Air Pollution*



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 11 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 79)

**Figure A24**

*Activity on Games Around the World*

**GAMES AROUND THE WORLD**

1 Look at the pictures. Do you know how to play these games? Read and check

**Party Games**

When we get together with our family and friends to celebrate something like a birthday or a wedding, the children often **play games**. Here are some **traditional games** people play around the world.

**Pass the parcel**

We all love to **give presents**. It's even more fun to **open presents**.

**How to play:**  
**Wrap** a small present and cover it in lots and lots... and lots of paper.  
The players sit in a circle.  
**Play some music.**  
Players give the present to the next person as the music plays. When the music stops, the player holding the present takes off one piece of paper.  
The player who **unwraps** the present keeps it.



**Musical chairs**

Run but be ready to sit!

**How to play:**  
Put out some chairs. If you have 6 players, you only need 5 chairs.  
**Play some music.**  
Players run around the chairs. When the music stops, everyone sits down. The player without the chair is 'out'.  
**Take away** one chair and play again.



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 9 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 36)

Figure A25

Activity on Festivals Around the World

**FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD**

1 Read the captions. What do you think is happening in each of the photos?

2  Now listen and number the pictures

Can you see the cheese?

How many kites can you see?

Happy New Year!

Wear some old clothes!



Primary Four, Term 2, Unit 9 (Drury & Gardner, 2021 P. 38)